# EXPRESSING AFFECTIVITY IN SACRED TEXTS

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*Abstract: Human affectivity is an extremely vast domain, approachable from an interdisciplinary perspective by focusing on the areas of interest of different sciences: psychology, sociology, philosophy. Last but not least, it enters the scope of linguistics, being studied by all language sciences (lexicology, pragmatics, grammar, discourse analysis, rhetoric, argumentation). Putting together an inventory of the types of feelings is quite a difficult attempt – an impediment to the classification process being the fact that some emotional reactions cannot be subsumed into rigid patterns.*

*Keywords: affectivity, language, emotion, classification, sacred*

**1.** "The term *affect* is understood as a generic name for more or less different affective processes such as emotions, feelings, passions, but also for states or attitudes (conditioned by the former)"[1]. Therefore, the term *affect* is an archilexeme, a hypernym, which includes as hyponyms *emotions*, *feelings*, *passions* and *dispositions*[2]. In pragmatics, *emotion* is considered a generic term. The attempt of making an inventory of affect types is a rather difficult one. In his book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), Daniel Goleman refers to the theories which propose their classification into families of basic *emotions/feelings*: *joy*, *love*, *surprise*, *disgust*, *shame*, *fear*, *anger*, *rage*,each containing a variable number of members[3]. The difficulty in classifying them lies in the fact that some affective manifestations cannot be subsumed into rigid patterns. "There are no clear answers; the scientific struggle regarding the way in which emotions should be classified continues"[4].

The nature of emotions is situational, they appear as a reaction to those events that are significant to an individual and reflect his/her relation to the emotion triggering situation. "The pragmatics of the emotional expression takes into account the situation, i.e. the triggering event and the basic changes in the state of mind of the emotionated subject. This approach broadly corresponds to an emotion definition of the type: *Stimulus → Response*"[5]. Emotional stimuli affect the individual physically, psychically, or at both levels and reflect their necessity to adapt to a certain situation. Also, the process of expressing emotions, and, implicitly, feelings manifests itself both at the emission pole and at the reception pole. The source conveys his/her own affective states in order to arouse certain emotions in the receiver. The latter's reaction can be identical to the one intended of different, sometimes even opposite to it. There have been identified several ways of expressing emotions: a) emotions expressed spontaneously, b) emotions supressed but involuntarily shown by other types of manifestations and c) emotions deliberately/pragmatically expressed (either as a result of observing the Principle of Politeness, or related to the manipulative perlocutionary intentions of the source – in an attempt to gain an advantage emotionally). At the same time, there are are various ways of expressing emotions: linguistic, paralinguistic or extralinguistic.

[1] Bidu-Vrănceanu, Angela, *Câmpuri lexicale din limba română*, Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2008, p. 226.
[2] Cosmovici, Andrei, *Psihologie generală*, Iaşi, Editura Polirom, 1996, p. 223-238.
[3] Goleman, Daniel, *Emotional Intelligence*, New Zork, Bantam Books, 1995, p. 289-290.
[4] Goleman, Daniel, *Emotional Intelligence*, New Zork, Bantam Books, 1995, p. 290.
[5] Cf. Christian Plantin, https://icar .univ-lyon2.fr/Members/cplantin/recherche.htm/01.02.2019.

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The basic Book of Christianity, *The Bible*, provides a vast research material both for theologues and for linguists. Written by different authors, from different social and intellectual milieus, *The Holy Scripture* contains an abundance of paragraphs which relate to emotion-triggering situations.

**2.** The present study approaches the "domain" of affectivity as it appears in *Synoptic Gospels.*TheGospels are those parts of *The Bible* written either by one or another of the twelve Apostles (Matthew, John), or by people who latter became Jesus'disciples (Mark, Luke), and present Jesus Christ's life and works. The syntagm *Synoptic Gospels* refers to the first three gospels (Matthew's, Mark's and John's) and it relates to the fact that these gospels are organized as a synopsis, i.e. in parallel columns, in order to notice the similarities and differences among them in describing the same events[6]. Our interest lies in the forms (types or modalities) of manifesting emotions in sacred texts. Regarding the means of lexicalization, our research is limited to pointing out several significant examples. To select our corpus, we have used two versions of *The Bible/Biblia*sau *Sfânta Scriptură/The Bible or The Holy Scriptures*, an edition of The Holy Synod[7] and a translated version by Dumitru Cornilescu (1924, revised in 2016)[8].

We can make the difference between the various emotionally charged situations: there is one type of affectivity which is obvious in Jesus' parables or told stories (*The Parable of the Prodigal Son*, *The Parable of the Great Banquet*), and another which follows from the concrete situations Jesus found Himself in, relating either to His Person, or to those He was in contact with.

It is not only concrete events that have a powerful emotional content, but also the dialogues between Jesus and His disciples, the people who were listening to Him, or even political or spiritual leaders. Depending on these categories, the type of affective reactions change. Exemplifying the profound connection between the environment and affective human reactions, Tinca Creţu stated: "In case some part of the environment agrees with human needs, there appear positive affective processes which sustain the approachment to and the interaction with those particular aspects of reality, whereas disagreement results in negative affective processes, which draw man away from objects and situations, block their connections, paralyze their initiatives, reduce their psycho-physical energy necessary to maintain their connection to reality data"[9].

To illustrate the assertions above we offer two examples of authentic situations described by the authors of *The Bible*. The seventy disciples sent to preach "(...) returned full of joy" (Luke 10, 17), and this profound emotion of theirs led to inducing a positive affective state in Jesus Christ: "(...) in that hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit"[10] (Luke 10, 21) – a spontaneous positive response to a positive manifestation.

The other example illustrates the negative affective process. "As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, Jesus wept over it"[11] (Luke 19, 41). Jerusalem is the city whose people reject Christ's deeds to their benefit. The emotions generated in this situation are pain, grief, but also pity, obvious in the following verse: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your

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[6] https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangheliile_sinoptice/15.01.2019.
[7] *Biblia*sau *Sfânta Scriptură*(ediţie a Sfântului Sinod), Bucureşti, Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 2015.
[8] See https://biblia.resursecrestine.ro/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4uuD3M6d4QIVxgrTCh0-PQ2dEAAYASAAEgJjdPD_BwE/15.01.1019.

[9] Creţu, Tinca, *Psihologie generală*, Universitatea din Bucureşti, Editura Credis, 2003, p. 216.
[10] https://biblehub.com/luke/10-21.htm/26.01.2019.
[11] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+19%3A41-44&version=NIV/24.01.2019.

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children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing"[12](Luke 13, 34). The whole fragment is full of emotional charge rendered by the use of the Vocative – the direct addressing is closely connected to the personification of the city, to show affective proximity −, by the repetition of the city name, by the exclamation, but also by the extremely suggestive comparison used (the mother-hen gathering its chickens under its wings to offer them protection and support). The antithesis present in the text highlights the contrast between the violence manifested in the city and the kindness of the reaction.

**3.** All three forms of expressing emotions/feelings presented in the introduction can be found in the sacred text. A relevant example of a spontaneous emotional manifestation is represented by the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ shows His affective turmoil openly: "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me"[13] (Matthew 26, 38). The lexicalized feeling is *sadness*, a feeling presented at its maximum intensity by using the prepositional phrase *to the point of death*, a form of expressing the superlative degree. The final request is an expression of the essential human need, that of feeling empathy from the others (and represents the expected answer to the expressed need).

Concerning the second type, we cannot necessarily consider it a supressed emotion, but rather one that is non-lexicalized and involuntarily manifested by other means. Such means vary. The text of the *Gospels* (as other literary texts) "record also moments of high affective intensity which are, paradoxically, marked by silence. Affective non-lexicalization is, this time, the extreme form of emotional markedness"[14]. In the Parable of the king's son's marriage the question "Friend, how camest thou in hither without having on a weddding garment?"[15] gets a silent answer: "He was speechless." (Matthew 22, 12). The verb indicates the affective state of the interlocutor, expresses a great *anxiety*, a *fear*. The same type of answer is given by the Pharisees who remain silent when hearing Jesus' question: "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent"[16] (Mark 3, 4). Silence is a marker of hostility in this case. It can also be an expression of the feeling of *shame*: "Jesus asked them: «What were you arguing about on the road?» But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest"[17] (Mark 9, 34). Faced with His unjust blaming, "(…) Jesus remained silent and gave no answer."[18] (Mark 14, 61) – an attitude of resignation, caused by a deep *grief*, concerning people about whom He knew that no answer could change them.

At the opposite pole there is the emotion expressed by raising one's voice. A shout is often a marker of fear, of terror, the feelings that the disciples were confrunted with in two particular situations: Jesus' walking on the lake and the silence before the tempest: "but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified" (Mark 6, 49-50); "(...) the disciples approached Him and awoke Him crying: «Lord, save us, as we perish!»" (Matthew 14, 13) – the feeling of grief hidden behind the wish of being alone, of taking refuge in a deserted place.

The suffering in the garden of Gethsemane, before the crucifixion, is described by the disciples and lexicalized in very suggestive terms: "deeply grived to the point of

[12] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+13%2C+34&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[13] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3A38&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[14] Gabriela Stoica, "Mărci lexico-semantice ale afectivităţii în romanul cavaleresc de la sfârţitul secolului al XVIII-lea", in *Limba română. Stadiul actual al cercetării* (Gabriela Pană Dindelegan coord.), Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2007, p. 705.
[15] https://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/22-12.htm/24.01.2019.
[16] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+3-4&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[17] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+9%3A34&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[18] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+14&version=NIV/24.01.2019.

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death"[19] (Matthew 26, 38; Mark 14, 34), "anguish/agony"[20] (Luke 22, 44). Both terms used in lexicalizing emotions – *grief* and *anguish/agony* (*întristare* and *chin* in Romanian) – are set to their maximum intensity by the noun *death* (explicit in the former example or implicit in the latter) which expresses the superlative of suffering. Unlike *întristare*/*grief* that is a zero level term in point of gradability, the lexemes *anguish/agony* (*chin* in Romanian) contain in their lexicographic definitions the marker of intensity "intense physical or moral suffering"[21]. Together with these terms, there appear indications of the authors about physical conditions, which describe the intensity of emotional states: "(...) and his sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground"[22] (Luke 22, 44). Facial perspiration is a sign of strong emotions, and its change into blood represents the highest degree of mindstate intensity.

Prostration represents an attitude which expresses a strong *fear*, but also respect. "When the disciples heard this (the voice heard during the Transfiguration, our note), they fell facedown to the ground, terrified"[23] (Matthew 17, 6). The act of kneeling down is a sign of *veneration* or *humility*, often accompanied by *fear*: after the miraculous fishing "Simon Peter (...) fell at Jesus' knees (...) overwhelmed by fear" (Luke 5, 8-9), a woman healed after touching Jesus' cloak "came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear"[24] (Mark 5, 33); or by the feeling of *uselessness* in extreme situations: "Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying"[25] (Luke 8, 41-42).

*Joy* is expressed in the episode of the triumphant entering Jerusalem through actions, too: "A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!'[26]" (Matthew 21, 8-9)

*Fear* is accompanied by trembling: a miraculously healed woman came to Jesus *trembling with fear*[27]/*înfricoşată* şi *tremurând* (Mark 5, 33); on Jesus' Resurrection, when the angel appeared, "(...) The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men."[28] (Matthew 28, 4).

*Surprise* is followed by lack of any action, by immovability, by total astonishment: on finding Child Jesus in the temple talking to the preachers, "When his parents saw him, they were astonished" (Luke 2, 48); after resurrecting Jairus' daughter, people "At this [they] were completely astonished" (Mark 5, 42); in the episode about the walking on the lake the disciples "were completely amazed" (Mark 6, 51).

*Anger* is not lexicalized in the episode when the merchants were banished from the temple, but it is inferred from Jesus' actions: "Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves" [29](Matthew 21, 12).

One of the largely spread practices in Biblical times was one's tearing of their own clothes. It is a gesture which signifies profound *grief* (a *suffering*), expressing an emotional state of uppermost intensity. At the same time, it had a huge impact on those present, but also on those who just heard of such an action. Moreover, if this gesture was

[19] https://biblehub.com/context/mark/14.htm/24.01.2019.
[20] https://biblehub.com/luke/22-44.htm/24.01.2019.
[21] https://dexonline.ro/definitie/chin/24.01.2019.
[22] https://biblehub.com/luke/22-44.htm/24.01.2019.
[23] https://biblehub.com/matthew/17-6.htm/24.01.2019.
[24] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+5%2C+33&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[25] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+8%2C+41&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[26] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%2C+8-9&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[27] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+5%2C+33&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[28] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%2C+4&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[29] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%2C+12&version=NIV/24.01.2019.

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made by a political or spiritual leader, its emotional charge was even greater. In Synoptic Gospels, the gesture is mentioned only once, in the episode of Christ's judgement, when He admits His Divine nature to the Synedrium, a fact considered a blasphemy by the Jewish leaders: "Then the high priest tore his clothes" (Matthew 26, 65; Mark 14, 63). This gesture is part of the category of acts which represent emotions deliberately expressed pragmatically. It is connected to the perlocutionary intentions of the sender and is used with a manipulatory function, in order to obtain the agreement of the crowd in favour of Jesus Christ' death sentence. It is not an expression of the profound grief of the high priest, of his indignation because of the defamation of God's name (previous feelings such as hatred, anger against Christ, the decision to kill Him argue such an assertion), but an attempt to produce a strong emotion in the participants and, implicitly, in the people, thus easy to manipulate.

We have presented just a few of the gestures described in *The Bible* which are charged with emotions. There are countless actions with a high degree of emotivity: *the kiss* of the traitor, repentance symbolized by the *sackcloth* and *ashes* are only some of the acts performed for which emotion is present at the emission pole, at the reception pole, or at both. Also, if we consider the last Gospel, *John's Gospel*, the number of persuasive acts performed increases: we refer to the *washing* of the disciples' legs before the last supper or the *writing on* sand, in the episode about the adulterine woman (actions referred to only in this Gospel).

**4.** "On the plane of verbal structures, at lexical level, emotion is marked and distributed by using a series of «means»: a special vocabulary, imprecations and terms of endearment; exclamations and interjections; figurative language; intensifiers, etc."[30].

All these means are also present in the Biblical discourse. One of the expressive forms of the Gospels is represented by Vocative forms. In Jesus Christ' speeches, the Vocative clearly reveals the affective states of the speaker. The nouns in the Vocative used in the Savior's speeches ar either appellatives, or proper names (toponyms or anthroponyms). Generally, repetition is resorted to: *Jerusalem, Jerusalem; Simon, Simon* (Luke 22, 31), repetitions which suggest attachment to the places, people or realities evoked or even the speaker's tenderness – positive emotions, therefore, even if they are used in negative contexts (foreseeing the catastrophy which was to fall upon the city, for example). To express negative emotional states (*reprimand*, *disappointment*) unrepeated Vocative is used: "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"[31] (Luke 22, 48).

Common nouns in the Vocative refer to the group of disciples, to the crowd of followers, or to the religious leaders of the time and their choice clearly illustrates the affective attitude of the speaker in relation to these categories. The disciples are *my friends/prietenii mei* (Luke 12, 4), *a small flock/turmă mică* (Luke 12, 32) − *affection, love*; the others are: man/*omule*! – a neutral addressing term; but also *daughter/fiică*! (Matthew 9, 22), O *ye, of little faith/puţin credincioşilor*! (Matthew 6, 30), in a rhetorical interrogative context – a positive affective expression or: "O, neam necredincios şi pornit la rău!/O, unbelieving and perverse generation"[32] (Matthew 17, 17) – the apparently negative meaning expressed is mitigated by using the interjection; addressing the leaders is marked by profound *anger*. There are fragments where we can follow the gradual intensification of the feeling of anger simply by the use of the nouns (or nominal phrases) in exclamatory sentences: "(...) "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!"[33], "(...) woe to you, blind guides", "blind fools", "blind pharisee!", "snakes, brood of vipers"[34] (Matthew 23, 13-33).

[30] Christian Plantin, https://icar .univ-lyon2.fr/Members/cplantin/recherche.htm/24.01.2019.
[31] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22%2C+48&version=NIV/29.04.2019.
[32] https://biblehub.com/matthew/17-17.htm/05.01.2019.
[33] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[34] Ibidem.

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The use of synonyms highlights the affective reality evoked; semantically closely related words are employed in the text (at short distances from one another) in order to match the intention of increased expressivity and the persuasion communicative goal: a) *joy*: "*Rejoice* and be *glad* because great is your reward in heaven[35]/*bucuraţi-vă* şi *veseliţi-vă* pentru că răsplata voastră este mare" (Matthew 5, 12); "No one can serve two masters. Either you will *hate* the one and *love* the other, or you will be *devoted* to the one and *despise* the other[36]/nicio slugă nu poate sluji la doi stăpâni; căci *va urî* pe unul şi *va iubi* pe celălalt sau *va ţinea* numai la unul şi *va nesocoti* pe celalt" (Luke 16, 13) – an utterance made up of antithetic series, with a reversed word order; "But we had *to celebrate* and be *glad*[37]/trebuia *să ne veselim* şi *să ne bucurăm*" (Luke 15, 32); "He will be *a joy* and *delight* to you, and many will *rejoice* because of his birth"[38]/o pricină de *bucurie* şi de *veselie*" (Luke 1, 14); "*Rejoice* in that day and *leap for joy*, because great is your reward in heaven[39]/*bucuraţi-vă* în ziua aceea şi săltaţi de *veselie*" (Luke 6, 23); b) *sadness*: "people *crying* and *wailing* loudly[40]/unii care *plângeau* şi *se tânguiau* mult" (Mark 5, 38); "A large number of people followed him, including women who *mourned* and *wailed* for him[41]/norod de femei care *se boceau*, îşi băteau pieptul şi *se tânguiau* după el" (Luke 23, 27); c) *fear*: "When Zechariah saw him, he *was startled* and *was gripped with fear*[42]/Zaharia *s-a spăimântat*, când l-a văzut şi *l-a apucat frica*" (Luke 1, 12); "They were *startled* and *frightened*[43]/plini de *frică* şi de *spaimă*" (Luke 24, 37).

The co-occurrence of the synonyms presupposes the repetition (obviously, redundant) of the semantic information for intensive-affective and persuasive emphasis. Sometimes, in the same context, feelings not necessarily part of the same affect family are expressed: "He took Peter, James and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply *distressed* and *troubled*"[44] (Mark 14, 33); sometimes, affective states belonging to different, even antithetic spheres, are expressed: "So the women (i.e. the women come to the tomb in the morning of the Resurrection, our note) hurried away from the tomb, *afraid* yet *filled with joy*"[45] (Matthew 28, 8).

**5.** Affectivity at the level of the Biblical text can be noticed both at the level of the vocabulary and at that of the characters' actions and manifestations. Researching such actions reveals aspects of the society in Biblical times and points out the emotional reactions of the participants to those events. Many actions described in *The Bible* contain an emotional charge and they are varied, related to groups of individuals or society strata.

Regarding the affective lexicon, we encounter words which are affective proper such as: *love*, *joy*, *sadness*, *grief*, *fear* and also terms linked to socio-affective attitudes or to the emotional exteriorizing (of intense mindstates): *to kiss* (on the one hand) and *to cry*, *to weep*, *to wail*, *to tremble* (on the other).

Our research signals some of the issues regarding affectivity in sacred texts. The topic is rather vast, with multiple possibilities of approach and categorization, a topic which remains open to (interdisciplinary) study and interpretations.

[35] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%2C+12&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[36] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+16%2C13&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[37] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+15%2C32&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[38] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%2C+12&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[39] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+6%2C23&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[40] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+5%2C+42%29%3B+&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
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[42] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%2C+12&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
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[44] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+14%2C+33&version=NIV/24.01.2019.
[45] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%2C+8&version=NIV/24.01.2019.

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