David Konstan

Introduction

Comparing Emotions Historically

It is now widely accepted that the description of emotions may differ from one culture to another. The idea that there is a limited set of so-called basic emotions that are universal and readily identified across cultures, whether by facial expression or some other indicator, has been subjected to devastating criticism.[1] What is more, the very idea of emotion as a distinct psychological category varies, and indeed is not identified at all in some folk taxonomies of mental faculties. Nevertheless, the emotions seem to be grounded in, or at least have some relation to, certain constants of human nature, and several theories have offered to explain just how.

One such approach is to distinguish between the immediate object of an emotion, which may vary even among individuals who live in the same society, and some property that these objects share. For example, Florian Cova and Julien Deonna observe that, despite differences in their specific objects, all the objects of a given emotion share some common feature:

> Different instances of an emotion-type will have different particular objects (e.g. I may be angry at a colleague, and angry at the government), but the formal object will remain the same (e.g. if I am angry, I experience both the colleague and the government as offensive). My various episodes of fear, sadness, guilt, and so on, will be directed at and take as objects a rich variety of things, but I will always see as dangerous what I fear, see as a loss what I am sad about, and see as a wrongful act what I feel guilty about. It is an essential feature of each emotion-type that we construe the particular object of the emotion in a way that is specific to that emotion-type. In addition to the fact that it sheds light on the nature of an emotion-type, the formal object of an emotion also constitutes a feature in virtue of which it is possible to evaluate the intelligibility and the appropriateness of an emotion. For instance, we would say of an instance of fear that is directed at something that seems quite harmless and innocuous that it is unintelligible or inappropriate.[2]

The difficulty with this approach is that it assumes that "emotion types" are constant across cultures. Take anger: is this the only response to something that is offensive? We may be angry at an insult, indignant at a miscarriage of justice, or

1 For the basic emotions, cf. Ekman (1973), (1980), (1984), (1992). In response to criticism, Ekman has recently modified his view so as to accept a degree of cultural variation in the emotions.

2 Cova/Deonna (2014) 450.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110784312-001

disgusted by an offensive odor. Again, is guilt the only response to a wrongful act? What of languages that speak of shame but appear to have no term that quite corresponds to our notion of guilt? We may believe, as I do, that all cultures have ways of expressing personal responsibility for one's actions, but it is not clear to me that the resulting emotions share a single "formal object."

Gerrod Parrott and Niko Frijda have offered a different way of reducing the variety of emotions across cultures to a set of shared experiences. As Parrott has put it, we may "use the term *ur-emotion* to refer to the commonalities shared by otherwise different emotions of various species." Parrott explains:

> there are many differences between the emotions *marah* (in Indonesian), *ikari* (in Japanese), *song* (in Ifaluk), and *anger* (in English), but in all of them the ur-emotion of *antagonism* is evident – all four are aimed at an object that is appraised as interfering in some way with one's concerns, and all four give rise to a motivation to stop that interference in different, culturally specific ways . . . The recognition of these components across cultures leads to the intuition that there is something universal about emotions, but it is a mistake to suppose that there exist universal "basic emotions" – *marah*, *ikari*, *song*, and *anger* are not the same emotion! Rather, it is the presence of the ur-emotion of *antagonism* that provides the intuition of universality.[3]

Elsewhere, Frijda and Parrott observe that ur-emotions are "intentional states" that are accompanied by a "mode of action readiness," of which there are eighteen in all, including such postures as acceptance, attending, avoid, reject, desire, exuberance, domination, submission, tenseness, and inhibition).[4] But is "antagonism" an emotion, whether ur- or otherwise? Frijda and Parrott affirm that "Ur-emotions are elicited by events as appraised,"[5] which makes them look very much like regular emotions. What is it that distinguishes antagonism from, say, "anger" as the term is employed in English?

A better course may be to discriminate between emotions proper and a more elementary kind of response, analogous to emotions, to which we may, following Silvan Tomkins, apply the label "affect."[6] Tomkins himself was not consistent in the application of this distinction, and it has not had a major impact on recent psychophysiological studies of the emotions. A more systematic differentiation between emotions and proto-emotions was developed by the Stoics, and more especially by Seneca, writing in the first century A.D. On the Stoic view, certain kinds of judgment are specific to emotions in the full sense of the word and are not shared by pre- or proto-emotions. In his treatise, *On*

3 Parrott (2012) 248.
4 Frijda/Parrott (2011).
5 Frijda/Parrott (2011) 410.
6 See Tomkins (1995).

Anger, Seneca gives an account of these elementary responses which calls "the initial preliminaries to emotions" (*principia proludentia adfectibus*, 2.2.6), as opposed to emotions or *adfectus* proper. He defines these preliminary reactions, which some Greek Stoics called *propatheiai* as opposed to *pathê*, as "motions that do not arise through our will," and are therefore irresistible and do not yield to reason. Seneca provides a variegated list of these proto-emotions, which includes shivering or goose-pimples when doused with cold water, aversion to certain kinds of touch, hair rising upon hearing bad news, blushing at obscene language, vertigo produced by heights, sentiments we feel while reading or in the theater, or witnessing punishments even when they are deserved. Seneca also adds contagious laughter and sadness to the inventory.

Genuine emotions, according to Seneca, differ from these preliminary affects in that they depend on willing assent, unlike the latter, which are not subject to our will (*voluntas*) and so are "invincible and inevitable" (2.2.1). In the case of anger, for example, Seneca writes: "There is no doubt but that what arouses anger is the impression [*species*] that is presented of an offense [*iniuria*]" (2.1.3). As Seneca says, this is similar to Aristotle's definition of anger as "a desire, accompanied by pain, for a perceived revenge, on account of a perceived slight [*oligôria*] on the part of people who are not fit to slight one or one's own" (*Rhetoric* 2.2, 1378a31–33). Anger is aroused by an impression of an offense – in this respect, Seneca seems to agree with Cova and Deonna – but it requires further that we assent to the proposition that the offense has wronged us. As Seneca states:

> We maintain that anger does not venture anything on its own but only when the mind approves. For to accept the impression of an injury that has been sustained and desire vengeance for it – and to unite the two judgments, that one ought not to have been harmed and that one ought to be avenged – this is not characteristic of an impulse [*impetus*] that is aroused without our will [*voluntas*]. For the latter kind is simple, but the former is composite and contains several elements: one has discerned something, grown indignant, condemned it, and takes revenge: these things cannot occur unless the mind consents to those things by which it was affected". (2.1.4)

Genuine emotions involve an ability to formulate propositions to which one may give or withhold assent, based on one's values and sense of propriety. This is what distinguishes emotion both from purely physical reactions such as goosebumps or vertigo and from the fear- or pity-like responses we may experience upon viewing a tragedy. Animals other than human beings do not possess this capacity, and so do not have emotions in the full sense of the word. As Seneca states: "We must affirm that wild animals, and all creatures apart from human beings, are without anger; for since anger is contrary to reason, it does not arise except where reason has a place. Animals have violence, rabidity,

ferocity, aggression, but do not have anger any more than they have licentiousness . . . Dumb animals lack human emotions, but they do have certain impulses that are similar to emotions." In the terms employed by Frijda and Parrott, animals may experience the ur-emotion of antagonism, but not anger proper. As Seneca goes on to observe, animals "do not have fears and worries, sadness and anger, but rather things that are similar to these" (*On Anger* 1.3.4–8; in the *Consolation to Marcia* 5.1, Seneca remarks that animals do not experience sadness and fear, any more than stones do). If Seneca does not describe animal reactions as "preliminaries to emotions," it is presumably because with animals there is no further stage.

I once tried to construct a set of correlations between specific emotions and pre-emotions, drawing upon various writings of Seneca. Thus, I connected shame with blushing, although Seneca notes that not everyone blushes and not all blushes are evidence of shame. I further associated grief with a primitive sense of the loss of a loved one, which even animals experience, and fear with the kind of nameless dread we may feel in a dark tunnel, even if we know that there is no real danger.[7]

Now let me try to apply the distinction between affect and emotion, if those are the right terms, to the development of emotional concepts over a period of some two thousand years in Greek history, that is, from Homer to the high Byzantine epoch (a comparison with modern Greek terms is the subject of Stavroula Kiritsi's chapter). We may begin with anger. We have already seen that anger is said to involve a primitive feeling of antagonism, according to Frijda and Parrott, and by the impression of an offense, according to Cova and Deonna, as well as Seneca. But Seneca adds that we must "accept the impression of an injury that has been sustained and desire vengeance for it," and he remarks too that anger is contrary to reason, which is one reason why animals are not susceptible to it, since they do not possess reason and so cannot experience its absence. The medical writer Galen described anger as "a sickness of the soul," and recalled that his mother "was so very prone to anger that sometimes she bit her handmaids; she constantly shrieked at my father and fought with him." This wariness of anger was widespread, but Christians writing under the Roman Empire had to come to terms with the fact that God was clearly subject to this passion, according to the Bible, and so it could not be entirely an evil. Thus Tertullian, writing in the second century A.D., opined that God "will grow angry rationally [*indignabitur deus rationaliter*] at those whom he ought to" (*On the Soul* 16.5), for he will be angry at those who are wicked but

7 Konstan (2016).

desire salvation for the good. Two centuries later, Lactantius noted that anger is a reaction to harm, to which God is not vulnerable, and is a perturbation of the mind, which is foreign to God's nature (*On the Anger of God* 5). And yet, Lactantius says, if God is not angry at the impious and unjust, neither can he love (*diligit*) the pious and just, for as he loves the good, he hates (*odit*) those who are evil: the two emotions are inseparable. There is thus a just and an unjust anger (*ira iusta et iniusta*, ch. 17), and when Seneca spoke of anger as a desire for revenge (De *ira* 2.2), he was referring, Lactantius says, to the unjust kind; proper anger seeks rather to correct wickedness (so too Basil of Caesarea, *Homily against Those who are Angry* 365.26–30 Migne). But is a desire to correct evil the same emotion as a desire for revenge? Does God's desire arise from seeing evil as offensive, as Cova and Deonna argue, or from a sense of antagonism, as Frijda and Parrott suggest? If God is indignant, as Tertullian suggests, is this the same emotion as anger – though Aristotle himself was careful to distinguish the two?

Or take pity, an emotion universally recognized in ancient accounts, for example by Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 2.1, 1378a20–23), Cicero (*De oratore* 2.206; *Brutus* 188), and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Demosthenes* 22), though it is strikingly absent from modern discussions of the emotions, perhaps in part because it is regarded nowadays as expressing a certain contempt, and hence a politically incorrect sentiment. (David Hume already noted this negative side of pity.) It is missing too from Thomas Hobbes' list of "seven simple passions" (*Leviathan* Part 1, chapter 6) and from Descartes' "principal passions" (*Les passions de l'âme*, articles 68–69).

Aristotle provides a characteristic definition (*Rhetoric* 2.8.2): "Let pity, then, be a kind of pain in the case of an apparent destructive or painful harm to a person who does not deserve to encounter it, which one might expect oneself, or one of one's own, to suffer, and this when it seems near." We may note first the specification that the misfortune that elicits pity must be undeserved; as Cicero puts it, "no one is moved by pity at the punishment of a parricide or a traitor" (*Tusculan Disputations* 4.18; cf. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1386b26–29). Second, to feel pity one must be vulnerable, according to Aristotle, to the same kind of adversity as the person who is pitied, though not actually suffering it at the moment (for then one no longer expects it). This is a crucial restriction: Aristotle himself observes that those who have been prosperous all their lives, and so do not anticipate calamities, are less given to pity. On this basis, an omnipotent deity would be wholly incapable of such an emotion. The case is further complicated by the Stoic view of the emotions, developed in the generation after Aristotle's death, according to which the sage was entirely free of passions, including pity (see Seneca *De clementia* 2.5). Among other drawbacks, pity, like anger,

threatens to distort the judgment, rendering one unduly lenient in assigning punishment and hence corrupting the judge. Such an emotion seems inappropriate to a strictly just deity, who would be expected to be as little moved by favor as by ire.

What, then, of the Jewish and Christian idea of a merciful God? Gregory of Nyssa, writing in the fourth century A.D., affirms in his sermon on the fifth beatitude, "Blessed are those who pity, for they shall be pitied" (Matthew 5:7): "The obvious meaning of the text summons human beings to be loving and sympathetic to each other because of the unfairness and inequality of human affairs." He then offers a definition pity as "a voluntary pain that arises at the misfortunes of others" (*On the Beatitudes* 44.1252.28–30). Aware that this brisk statement may need further explanation, Gregory adds: "Pity is a loving shared disposition [ἀγαπητικὴ συνδιάθεσις] with those who are suffering under painful circumstances." We may note first that Gregory's definition takes no account of whether the misfortunes are merited: it simply preaches a universal sympathy for the plight of others. What is more, the notion of a shared disposition suggests a merging of identities that is characteristic of modern definitions of sympathy. Thus Adam Smith observes that when we pity another, "By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations." Today, this sentiment looks less like pity than like compassion or empathy, a modern coinage dating to the nineteenth century (indeed, the Latin noun *compassio* is found for the first time in Tertullian). If pity has been displaced by sympathy or empathy as a basic emotion, is there any core affect subtending the two sentiments that may be said to unites them? Seneca includes the feeling we experience upon seeing people being punished even when we know that they deserve it under the rubric of preliminaries to emotion, and this might be a good candidate for the ur-sentiment that lies behind both classical pity and Christian mercy or compassion.

Fear would seem to be a universal sentiment, and yet it too is subject to different interpretations. We might associate fear with an instinctive drive to flee, but often it motivates us to fight back. Aristotle defines it as follows: "let fear be a kind of pain or disturbance deriving from an impression of a future evil that is destructive or painful . . ., these if they are not distant but rather seem near so as to impend. For things that are remote are not greatly feared" (*Rhetoric* 2.5, 1382a21–25). This sounds something like Cova and Deonna's "formal object" of fear, of which they write: "I will always see as dangerous what I fear." It may also remind us of one of Frijda and Parrott's "modes of action readiness," namely "avoid." Aristotle, however, goes on to say that fear makes us more deliberative (2.5, 1382a5), and so helps us to make wise decisions, for

example about whether or not to go to war against a powerful enemy. In itself, it is not paralyzing; rather, it encourages a careful calculation of the balance of forces.

We might detect an analogous attitude toward fear in Paul's advice to the Philippians: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (2:12; cf. 2Corinthians 7:15, 1Corinthians 2:3, Ephesians 6:5). Fear would seem here to be a motive to rational reflection. In his homilies on Paul's letter to the Philippians, John Chrysostom expatiates on the phrase:

> What do you want, Paul? Tell me. "Not for you to listen to me but *with fear and trembling to work for your own salvation*. I mean, it's not possible for the person who lives without fear to display something authentic and wonderful." And he didn't say simply "*fear*," but "*and trembling*," which is an intense manifestation of fear. That's the fear that Paul had. That's why he said too: "*I'm afraid that after preaching to others, I myself should be disqualified*" (1 Corinthians 9:27). For if it's not possible to conduct our temporal business successfully without fear, how much more so our spiritual business? Tell me, who learns to read and write without fear? Who becomes master of a craft without fear . . . ? Tell me, if you were continually standing next to the ruler, wouldn't you be standing in fear? And if you're standing beside God now, can you laugh and be laid back and not be afraid or even shudder? Don't despise his forbearance: his patience is leading you towards repentance . . . If you continually have this attitude, you'll continually be in *fear and trembling*, the reason being that you're standing next to the king.[8]

We might say that the good Christian is terrified of damnation, surely an impending and painful evil, and so conforms to Aristotle's conception of fear. But the anxiety that John Chrysostom describes is more existential, and pertains to a personal sense of sinfulness: it is this that is the immediate cause of trembling, and inspires not avoidance but repentance, a rather different kind of reaction.

If we extend our purview to the Byzantine era, we find that once again there is a notable shift of emphasis. There is a new attention to sentiments such as joy [*terpsis*] and wonder [*thauma*], for example the amazement or awe inspired by gazing at the nighttime sky (Theodore Metochites, *Sententious Remarks* 43). Wonder, moreover, is said to be inspired by what is incomprehensible [*tôi de alêptôi thaumazêtai*]' (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 38.7). Another prevailing passion is something like astonishment. As Symeon the New Theologian writes: "Whoever has inside the light of the most holy Spirit, cannot endure to see it and falls head-on on the ground. He shouts and yells in amazement [*ekplêxei*] and fear by seeing and experiencing a thing that is beyond nature, word, or thought"

8 Trans. Allen (2013).

(*Theological and Practical Chapters* 3.21). John Sikeliotes (eleventh century), in his commentary on the ancient rhetorical writer Hermogenes, includes in his list of the primary emotions "the painful" (*to lupron*), "the marvelous" (*to thaumastikon*), "the shocking" (*to skhetliastikon*), and "the grievous" (*to thrênêtikon*), which sound like states of intense feeling rather than the kinds of object-directed emotions that ancient thinkers like Aristotle had in mind. Ur-emotions may well be discovered to lie behind each of these sentiments, but they may not resemble those that Frijda and Parrott identified for the emotions they explored. Or perhaps they are more like Seneca's proto-emotions, which are involuntary and not subject to assent.

In her book, *The Emotions in Early Chinese Philosophy*, Curie Virág quotes a passage from the *Analects*, in which Confucius explains to his disciple, Zigong, how to describe his teacher: "Why did not you not just say, 'He is the type of man who becomes so impassioned (*fa fen* 發憤) that he forgets to eat, who becomes so full of joy (*le* 樂) that he forgets his worries (*wang you* 忘憂), and who does not notice the coming of old age?'" (7.19).[9] I do not know whether the formal objects of these sentiments resemble those that Cova and Deonna identify for their list of emotions, or whether there are ur-emotions or Stoic pre-emotions that cross the boundaries between ancient Greek and Chinese accounts of the passions. Perhaps there are some universals that we can elicit, such as the idea of *phrikê* or "shuddering" that Douglas Cairns has explored to such excellent effect,[10] that will subtend Aristotelian fear, Pauline trembling, Theodore Metochites' wonder, and even Chinese *ju* 懼, not to mention the Arabic *al-shidda*, "literally, pressure, intensity, strength" but also signifying "disaster, hardship, misfortune, harm, calamity, pain," according to Lale Behzadi.[11]

Recent accounts of the emotions have recognized that they have an indispensable cognitive dimension. In fact, some theorists, both ancient and modern, have gone so far as to affirm that the emotions are nothing but judgments. Richard Lazarus, one of the founders of the approach that nowadays goes under the name of appraisal theory, has stated: "cognition is both a necessary and sufficient condition of emotion." Robert Solomon, another of the leading figures in the discipline, put it succinctly: "*emotions are judgments*."[12] Interestingly, Lazarus traces the genealogy of this method straight back to Aristotle: "those

9 Virág (2017) 45.

10 See Cairns (2015).

11 Behzadi (n.d.).

12 Solomon (1993) viii (italics in the original). Contrast, for example, the still lively conviction that emotions are the very opposite of reason, or at least of what we might call propositional knowledge.

who favor a cognitive-mediational approach must also recognize that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* more than two thousand years ago applied this kind of approach to a number of emotions in terms that seem remarkably modern."[13]

We may contrast this emphatically cognitive view with the traditional attitude toward emotions, according to which they are irrational and quite without intellectual input. To take just one recent example among many, Hartmut Böhme, in a chapter bearing "Gefühl" or "Feeling," which appeared in a German handbook on historical anthropology, asserts that any connection between feelings and knowledge must be ironic, "since where the latter is, the former is not." Böhme concludes by citing the famous verses from Heinrich Heine's lovely poem, "Lorelei": "Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten, dass ich so traurig bin" ("I don't know what it may mean, that I am so sad"). Böhme explains: "Feelings mean nothing. They intend nothing. And they are not intended."[14] It is certainly true that we sometimes find ourselves feeling blue without being able to say precisely why. We all have moods, after all. But is a mood an emotion? And might the difference between a mood and an emotion be just that emotions require some kind of reflection on the reasons why we fell them? But consider the following example: You are standing on a street corner, just off the curb, and someone suddenly gives you a rough shove from behind, thrusting you forward. You will certainly have a reaction, and most likely you will identify it as anger. Now suppose you learn that you had been standing in the path of an oncoming car, and the person who pushed you in fact saved your life. Will you still be angry? Doubtless, the surge of adrenalin, or whatever it was that felt like an intense emotion when you were shoved, will still be there; one does not calm down at once. But as soon as you realize what the person's motive was, your anger dissolves and gives way, very likely, to something like gratitude. So the feeling itself isn't anger. But what about the anger you felt at first, before you became aware of the reason why you were pushed? Then too, you were evaluating the other person's intention, imagining, reasonably enough, that she or he was either deliberately jostling you or else was so careless as to be indifferent to the consequences – another form of insult or abuse.

And yet, in spite of the crisp statement by Solomon, it is hard to believe that emotions are in fact nothing but judgments. Would a wholly disembodied mind experience emotions? Or, as the early Christians wondered, does God, who is immaterial, have emotions? Let's imagine that I've been shoved from

13 Lazarus (2001) 40.

14 "Gefühle bedeuten nichts. Sie intendieren nichts. Und sie werden nicht intendiert"; Böhme (1997), 525, 543.

behind, as in the anecdote related above, but I have no perceptible physical reaction at all, apart from that of falling forward (of course, if I really didn't have a body, it would be hard for someone to jostle me). I am conscious of having been pushed, and I raise my arms to protect myself as I lurch forward, but there is no tension. I may wonder why someone might have pushed me, and consider that it may have been an accident or, conceivably, intentional. I have reason to suppose, then, that an offense of some sort has been committed against me, but I feel no passion, it is simply a fact that I register. Would we call this anger? Probably not. Emotions, or at least emotions like anger, are not incorporeal experiences. As many researchers have argued, emotions are necessarily embodied. Indeed, there is even talk of "the bodily turn" in emotional psychology, as in other areas of philosophy and psychology. Barbara H. Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani, in their article, "Old and New in the History of Emotions," note how, in the wake of the largely cognitive interpretations developed by Peter Stearns, William Reddy, and Rosenwein herself, among others, the medievalist Gerd Althoff advanced the argument by stressing the role of the body in "the emotional displays of medieval rulers."[15] As the authors remark, Althoff's "point was not that the body was the seat of emotions, but rather that in the Middle Ages people in power used their bodies to communicate their policies, their religious piety, their favor and disfavor." Rosenwein and Cristiani go on to observe: **"**More recent directions may be styled as a *turn to the body*, a turn that rejects cognitivism's sway." But this is not to say that emotions are just reflections of bodily states, and William James had argued. Rather, this new approach "considers the body itself to be socially constructed. Of course, the human body has consisted – and no doubt always will – of nerves and muscles, hearts and stomachs, skin and bones." But these organic features "are subject to the same social, environmental, and epigenetic factors as every other element of human life and behavior."

How the body is socially constructed, and how this bears on the nature of the emotions, may seem opaque. If a modern physiologist were to describe the physical aspect of anger or any other emotion, she or he would naturally have recourse to such things as hormones, muscle tension, heartbeat, body temperature, galvanic skin response, and so forth. Now consider this extract from an ancient Chinese medical text some two thousand or so years old, called the *Su Wen*: "When essence *qi* 氣 collects in the heart, joy results. When it collects in the lung, sadness results. When it collects in the liver, anxiety results. When it collects in the spleen, fright results. When it collects in the kidneys, fear results.

15 Rosenwein/Cristiani (2018) 41.

These are the so-called 'the five accumulations'" (23).[16] This sounds as though it is a theory of emotion, positing a one-to-one correspondence between different emotions and bodily organs. But these same organs have other functions as well. "The heart is the official functioning as ruler. Spirit brilliance originates in it. The lung is the official functioning as chancellor and mentor. Order and moderation originate in it. The liver is the official functioning as general. Planning and deliberation originate in it. The gallbladder is the official functioning as rectifier. Decisions and judgments originate in it" (*Su Wen* 3). Cognition would appear to be distributed among the several inner organs, and not confined to the single region of the brain. That the organs corresponding to the several emotions enumerated have multiple functions suggests that there is no central location that is identified with emotion as such, and perhaps no reason to think that the emotions were thought of as constituting a specific class, even though five apparent emotions are listed in a row. The mysterious entity *qi* itself has a much wider application, and cannot be reduced to some kind of emotional energy.

If we switch to Greek sources, we might find some support for the mentalist conception of the emotions in a comment in one of the treatises in the Hippocratic corpus, a collection that ranges over a century or so. Thus, in the work entitled *On the Sacred Disease*, we read: "It ought to be generally known that the source of our pleasure, merriment, laughter and amusement, as of our grief, pain, anxiety and tears, is none other than the brain" (14 = 6.386–87 Littré). Here, everything is located in one place, the ruling function according to some ancient schools (especially the Stoics); but emotions are mixed up with other phenomena like pain, laughter, and tears, and it is not clear that they form a distinct class. What's more, this is an exceptional view in the corpus. Other contemporary texts place the seat of at least some emotions in other parts of the psyche, or as we might call it, the self. Thus anger is, as we will see, often associated with a function called the *thumos*, which, however, is not necessary conceived of as the seat of love or shame. Depending, then, on how the psyche or self is subdivided, in one or another popular or quasi-scientific taxonomy, the emotions too will be differently distributed, and in the process be paired with other sentiments or faculties that to our way of thinking have little to do with emotions as such. All of which suggests that there is nothing natural or inevitable about our modern category of emotion, which, as we have seen, is highly elastic and very variously construed.

16 Trans. Unschuld (2003).

Still in connection with the body, emotions are often associated with gestures, such as lowering the eyes in the case of shame, clenching teeth, making a fist, and many more. These movements are not uniform across cultures, though they may have some basis in nature or evolution, as Darwin argued with a wealth of examples from human beings around the world and various species of animals. Facial expressions in particular as a cue to emotion have been extensively studied, though the results have been subjected to criticism from various angles, and any necessary connection between a given look, such as wide eyes or a smile or a frown, and a specific emotion turns out to be highly problematic. Yet emotions have been thought to involve some sort of expression, however imprecise. If a person were to receive a strong dose of Botox, immobilizing facial expression altogether, we might suppose that it would not only inhibit one of the natural means by which our feelings are communicated to others but might even affect our very capacity to experience emotion. Some studies have suggested that an injection of botulinum toxin, which paralyzes the area between the eyebrows and hence renders frowning impossible, impairs the capacity to recognize emotions in others, presumably because responding to an emotion requires at least in part that we ourselves mimic it physically.[17]

A further physical aspect of emotion has to do with what is sometimes called action readiness. When we are afraid, we may run away from the danger but also brace to face it, or else, in certain circumstances, feel paralyzed: the alternatives are indicated alliteratively as flight, fight, or freeze. Shame may make us want to hide; envy can arouse a desire to handicap our rivals or else to work harder and outstrip them. When we pity others, we may be moved to help alleviate their suffering. From the physiology of emotions, to their expression and the desire they may induce to act, we see that emotions are not detachable from the body, purely mental entities that can be wholly captured in judgments that assume a propositional form. But again, judgments that are not necessarily accompanied by emotions may also lead us to act. As Seneca remarked, we do not need to be angry to stop a killer, or to defend ourselves against an enemy. In fact, strong emotion may get in the way of effective action. The Athenian Xenophon, who was among the disciples of Socrates and was also a distinguished general who guided the Ten Thousand out of Persia, composed a sequel to Thucydides' *History*, called *Hellenica*. In the course of this work, Xenophon describes a scene in which a general leads his troops against a city in a fit of rage (*orgistheis*), with the result that he himself is slain and his men massacred (5.3.5–6). Xenophon draws the conclusion (5.3.7) that masters ought not

17 Morris (2012) 118, citing Neal/Chartrand (2011).

even to punish slaves in anger, and that by doing so they frequently suffer more harm than they inflict. He explains: "to attack opponents in anger and without intelligence [*gnômê*] is a complete mistake, for anger is without forethought, but intelligence looks as much to avoiding harm to oneself as to doing harm to one's enemies." Anger indeed leads to action, but is ill advised, and the clear implication is that reason alone is a better guide. And yet, some modern studies of emotion have suggested that emotions may serve to focus our attention on a given object, and in this respect they allow us to act more rationally, at least in certain circumstances, rather than less. Aristotle, indeed, affirmed that fear makes people more deliberative, which may strike us as paradoxical. But, as we shall see, this is yet another way in which the comparative study of emotion may cause us to rethink our own conceptions.

We commonly experience emotions when we read a novel or watch a play or a movie, or when listening to music. But we do not normally leap up in fear and run out of the cinema, or seek to rescue a character whose sufferings are reported on the printed page. Aristotle famously defined the emotions proper to tragedy as pity and fear. Are these, then, truncated emotions that we feel, in which the action tendency has been somehow repressed? Or do such ostensibly aesthetic emotions, aroused by works of art rather than real life, have a distinct nature of their own? Saint Augustine reproached himself for feeling pity for Dido as he read Virgil's *Aeneid*, a fictional character whose misfortunes were unreal, while his heart remained unmoved by the distress of actual human beings.

One potential window on the way in which the emotions are conceived is the metaphors by which they are described. Anger today is often associated with heat, as in expressions such as "my anger was boiling" (here the idea of a container is also in evidence). One can be sunk or mired in grief, and wallow in self-pity. Often we speak of growing cold with terror, and physical symptoms such as shuddering, shivering or turning different colors (as in red with shame) may stand in for various feelings. Some regard the recourse to metaphors as universal, having its origin in the need to express what is abstract or hidden by reference to things that are perceptible to all. The assumption behind this approach, which picks out what are called conceptual metaphors, is that at some early stage of language acquisition such subtle ideas as time or sadness were beyond the linguistic capacity of our ancestors, and so they borrowed imagery from the visible world to denote them. Thus, time is treated as a path, with spatial distance transferred to temporal; sadness is associated with a downward direction, perhaps because of the shape of frown, whereas happiness is up. Even today we speak of feeling down, but for us that is a kind of dead metaphor, since we have developed a vocabulary to express mental or interior events.

Originally, the theory goes, such metaphors were the only way in which these states could be articulated. Attempts have been made to identify universal metaphors and the emotions to which they correspond, thereby presupposing that what we call emotions constitutes a natural category, and that its members are shared by all cultures. The common physiology of the human body accounts, for example, for the image of the body as a container.

Zoltán Kövecses, one of the leading exponents of conceptual metaphor theory, offers a more nuanced version, according to which the body does not entirely determine the metaphors; rather, it sets limits to the their nature, so that in no culture will such metaphors contradict human physiology. As he writes: "My view is that, given the universal real physiology, members of different cultures cannot conceptualize their emotions in a way that *contradicts* universal physiology (or maybe even their conceptualization of universal physiology); but nevertheless they can choose to conceptualize their emotions in many different ways *within the constraints* imposed on them by universal physiology."[18] The method has been fruitfully applied to ancient emotion terminology, as we shall see. I have some reservations about its theoretical underpinnings, which retain, I fear, some hidden assumptions about "primitive minds," but the approach does indeed illuminate multiple folk conceptions of the self as a psychophysical unity. Such metaphors, however, do not necessarily reveal what the several emotions have in common, and so do not provide evidence that they were, at any given time and place, gathered into a single class.

So far, I have been calling into question the overall category of emotion, since it is so easy to take for granted that our conception of emotion is somehow natural and universal. As Anna Wierzbicka, an expert on language, has remarked, scientists have a tendency to "absolutize the English folk-taxonomy of the emotions."[19] In fact, something like the modern English assortment of emotions did emerge in classical antiquity, specifically with Aristotle. Richard Lazarus' remark about Aristotle's apparently prescient cognitive interpretation of the emotions may have an even wider relevance to modern conceptions that he suggested. Even so, we have to be cautious about assuming an easy equation between Aristotle's understanding of emotion and our own (to the extent that there is a single modern view, even among speakers of English).

As I indicated earlier, although there may be no universal consensus on just what sentiments or responses to group together under the heading "emotion," it is nevertheless possible to discuss given emotions in a historical perspective. But

18 Kövecses (2000) 165; emphasis in the original.
19 Wierzbicka (1999) 171.

here too, we must be always on guard for unsuspected differences, sometimes so great as to leave us wondering whether we are really dealing with the same emotion then and now. One of the stimuli to my own research on ancient Greek emotions was a pair of affirmations by Aristotle concerning the nature of anger. First, he claimed that we do not get angry with people of whom we are afraid. This seemed quite contrary to my own intuitions concerning anger. And then he said we do not tend to be angry with people who are afraid of us. Both statements seemed so odd to me that I was moved to wonder whether Aristotle and I shared the same notion of anger. After all, his word for anger was *orgê*, not "anger." By what right did I assume that *orgê* and anger meant exactly the same thing? Anna Wierzbicka noted the problem pointedly in her rejoinder to a statement by Paul Ekman, the leading representative of the view that the emotions are hard-wired in us, and so are universal, independent of cultural differences. Ekman had written: "Regardless of the language, of whether the culture is Western or Eastern, industrialized or preliterate, these facial expressions [reproduced in photographs in the text] are labelled with the same emotion terms: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and surprise."[20] Of course, it was a casual slip on Ekman's part to say that, "regardless of language," the expressions were identified as "happiness, sadness, etc." Those are plainly English words.[21] But it is revealing of our natural tendency to imagine that the emotions conform in their very nature to our own lexicon, and to set aside the possibility that others might describe them, and indeed even feel them, in ways that differ from our own.

As it happens, the term for anger, or that is most commonly translated as "anger," in the Homeric epics is not *orgê* – that word doesn't appear at all – but rather *kholos*, which is related to the word for bile. Ought we, then, to be on the lookout for subtle differences in connotation between the two terms? One tendency in modern scholarship, no longer dominant but still influential, has supposed that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* reflect an early stage in the evolution of Greek, or indeed human, thought, and a correspondingly distinct, even primitive conception of the self. Bruno Snell, the most important figure in this tradition, went so far as to deny that Homer had a coherent idea of the self at all. In his book, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought* (first published in German in 1946, and translated into English in 1953), wrote: "It has long been observed that in comparatively primitive speech abstractions are

20 Ekman (1980) 137–38.

21 Wierzbicka 1999: 168. Cf. Harris (2001) 36: "The study of classical emotions has been seriously impeded by our failure to realize, with a few noteworthy exceptions, that the relevant Greek and Latin terminology is very unlikely to correspond neatly to modern English usage."

as yet undeveloped."[22] Thus, there is no word in the epics that corresponds to "sight" in English, "and if they had no word for it, it follows that as far as they were concerned it did not exist" (p. 5). The same is true of the idea of the body, according to Snell. And, finally, "Homer has no one word to characterize the mind or soul" (p. 8). Given such a worldview, or view of the self, it would seem reasonable to wonder whether a putatively Homeric conception of anger or any other emotion would correspond not just to ours but even to Aristotle's, since Aristotle very clearly did have a term for "sight" and the rest. And yet, I am inclined to see more continuity than difference in the understanding of anger from Homer to Aristotle, a view that Aristotle himself evidently shared. The question cannot be settled once and for all, and what is more, even if Homer and Aristotle are in agreement with respect to anger, it does not follow that this coincidence obtains for all the emotions. There may well be emotions, or what we would regard as emotions, that appear in the Homeric epics but not in Aristotle, and vice versa. This is what makes the history of emotions such a fascinating field of investigation.

A study of the history of emotions must look beyond formal philosophical works, with their precise definitions and classifications. It is true that Aristotle, along with the Stoics, gives us the most explicit accounts, and these are enormously helpful, even indispensable tools. But there are many other kinds of evidence, in Greek and in Chinese, whether epic, drama, novels, historical works, dialogues, and more, in which we can see emotions in action. First and foremost, we want to know how the ancients conceived of the emotions, but it is also important to see how they played out in life. To take one example, it is only recently that we have seen serious studies of the role of emotions in politics, or in economic behavior. As G.E. Marcus observed back in the year 2000, "It has been common, at least since Madison [the reference is to *The Federalist Papers*], to treat emotion as an unavoidable factor in politics that should be constrained and minimized so that reason dictates judgment with minimal distraction."[23] But, as we have already seen adumbrated in the citation from Xenophon's *Hellenica* above, ancient historians were intensely alive to how emotions affected judgments in politics and war. The fact that Aristotle's major discussion of the emotions is to be found in his treatise on rhetoric is a sign of their crucial role in the courts as well as in the assembly. To take an especially dramatic and disturbing instance, I have found that appeals to emotion function differently in

22 Snell (1953) 1.
23 Marcus (2000) 221.

ancient examples of mass extermination than they do in the way modern motivations for genocide are represented.[24]

The chapters that follow treat a variety of emotions in classical and mediaeval Greek and Chinese writings. A study of anxiety or worry in Chinese divinatory and medical texts is followed by a study of hope as an emotion in Plato and Aristotle. The notion of daring in Chinese documents is followed, in turn, by an examination of anger in Greek and Roman texts. This chapter leads, in turn, to an overview of hatred and revenge in ancient China. The next two chapters treat emotions in performance: first, a discussion of tragic emotions as conceived by the Greeks, both in antiquity and in the modern reception of ancient tragedy, and then a cross-cultural investigation of emotions in classical Greece, China, and India. The last two chapters examine gendered patterns of emotion in Chinese biographies of emotions, and, finally, and an analysis of the concept of practical wisdom in relation to the emotions in Xúnzǐ's ethical theory. Taken together, the chapters not only treat a variety of sentiments, or experiences, that exhibit the wide range of the category "emotion," but they do so from a variety of perspectives and theoretical commitments. This is all to the good: the comparative study of the history of emotions is still in its infancy, and for that very reason we have not seen fit to impose a single formula or format for this volume. Some chapters cover a multitude of sources, others focus on a single author; some are lengthier, others shorter, according to the nature of the topic and the approach. For the most part, the essays treat either Chinese or Greek emotions (the outstanding exception is John Kirby's chapter), and comparisons across the two cultures are left to the reader to infer. At this stage of research, juxtaposition is itself methodologically justifiable, prior to the framing of an overarching theory. We trust, then, that the chapters collected here may serve as a springboard to further research and analysis.

Bibliography

Allen (2013): Pauline Allen, trans., *John Chrysostom, Homilies on Paul's Letter to thePhilippians*, Atlanta.

Behzadi (n.d.): Lale Behzadi, "Emotional Nuances of Distress in al-Tanūkhī's *Kitāb al-faraj baʿd al-shidda* (4th/10th century)," available online at NYU's Faculty Digital Archive; presented at a workshop on classical Greek and Arabic emotions, held in Abu Dhabi in 2015.

Böhme (1997): Hartmut Böhme, "Gefühl," in: Christoph Wulff (ed.), *Vom Menschen: Handbuch historische Anthropologie*, Weinheim, 525–48.

24 Konstan (2021).

Cairns (2015): Douglas L. Cairns, "The Horror and the Pity: *Phrikē* as a Tragic Emotion," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry: A Topical Journal for Mental Health Professionals* 35, 75–94.
Cova/Deonna (2014): Florian Cova and Julien A. Deonna, "Being moved," *Philosophical Studies* 169, 447–466.
Ekman (1973): Paul Ekman, ed., *Darwin and Facial Expression: A Century of Research in Review*, New York.
Ekman (1980): Paul Ekman, *The Face of Man: Expressions of Universal Emotions in a New Guinea Village*, New York.
Ekman (1984): Paul Ekman, "Expression and the Nature of Emotion," in: Klaus Scherer and Paul Ekman (eds.), *Approaches to Emotion*, Hillsdale NJ, 319–43.
Ekman (1992): Paul Ekman, ed., *Emotions in the Human Face*, 2nd ed., Cambridge and Paris.
Frijda/Parrott (2011): Niko H. Frijda and W. Gerrod Parrott, "Basic Emotions or Ur-Emotions?," *Emotion Review* 3, 406–415.
Harris (2001): William V. Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge MA.
Konstan (2016): David Konstan "Reason versus Emotion in Seneca," in: Douglas Cairns and Damien Nelis (eds.), *Emotions in the Classical World: Methods, Approaches, and Directions*, Heidelberg, 231–43.
Konstan (2021): "Motivations and Justifications of Genocide," in: Tristan Taylor (ed.), *A Cultural History of Genocide in the Ancient* World *(800 BC–800 AD)*, London, 51–71.
Kövecses (2000): Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*, Cambridge.
Lazarus (2001): Richard S. Lazarus, "Relational Meaning and Discrete Emotions," in: Klaus R. Scherer, Angela Schorr and Tom Johnstone (eds.), *Appraisal Processes in Emotion: Theory, Methods*, *Research*, Oxford, 37–67.
Marcus (2000): G.E. Marcus, "Emotions in Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, 221–50
Morris (2012): Katherine J. Morris, *Starting with Merleau-Ponty*, London.
Neal/Chartrand (2011): David T. Neal, Tanya L. Chartrand, "Embodied Emotion Perception: Amplifying and Dampening Facial Feedback Modulates Emotion Perception Accuracy," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 2, 673–678.
Parrott (2012): W. Gerrod Parrott, "Ur-Emotions: The Common Feature of Animal Emotions and Socially Constructed Emotions," *Emotion Review* 4, 247–48.
Rosenwein/Cristiani (2018): Barbara H. Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani, "Old and New in the History of Emotions," *Emotion Researcher*, 40–45; available at http://emotionresearcher.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Emotion-Researcher-March-2018.pdf (accessed 13 November 2021).
Snell (1953): Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, trans. Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, Cambridge MA.
Solomon (1993): Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life*, revised ed., Indianapolis.
Tomkins (1995): Silvan Tomkins, *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, ed., Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, Durham NC.
Unschuld (2003): P.U. Unschuld, trans., *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: Nature, Knowledge, Imagery in an Ancient Chinese Medical Text*, Berkeley.
Virág (2017): Curie Virág, *The Emotions in Early Chinese Philosophy*, Oxford.
Wierzbicka (1999): Anna Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals*, Cambridge.