
Afterword

W. Gerrod Parrott

With its inaugural issue, *Emotions: History, Culture, Society* makes a strong statement about the high quality and creativity of scholarship that readers may anticipate finding in future issues; it also demonstrates the wide range of topics, disciplines and methods that will be welcomed and discussed here. This journal will fill a gap that has been growing for years as a variety of disciplines, largely in the humanities, have undertaken studies of how emotions occur and function within particular social, cultural and historical contexts.

The seven articles in this issue span a dazzling array of topics and approaches. This variety not only advertises the scope of scholarship now addressing the history of emotions, but also raises the questions about what unifies this far-reaching interdisciplinary field. What is it that scholars are trying to learn about when they examine emotions as historically situated phenomena? How do observations about emotions from different times and cultures inform one another, and what (if anything) can they say about emotions as a general category, abstracted from their historical and cultural context? In this Afterword, I want to consider what the contents of *EHCS* Volume 1 Number 1 suggest about the subject matter this journal claims to address.

What about emotion is the history of emotion about?

As different as these seven articles are, all of them exhibit some degree of movement between the particulars of their temporally situated subject and some more general, abstracted, conceptual framework that extends beyond those particulars. The relative proportion of particular and general varies widely, with some articles focusing mostly on their contextually embedded phenomena, one mostly on theory and meta-theory, and others blending the two. But every article involves some degree of both, and, considered as a set, the articles in *EHCS* Volume 1 Number 1 demonstrate that the history of emotion is devoted to advancing a set of overarching themes and principles as well as to investigating how emotions are enmeshed in particular places, events, performances or experiences. There are specific topics addressed by individual scholars, but there also are topics that are common to many and are debated and refined as the field evolves.

This observation is noteworthy because it is not always obvious. In a recent critique of the field of emotion history, Peter Stearns contrasted the nature of the field now with when he started in the 1980s, noting that there used to be more of a sense of emotion research being an interdisciplinary enterprise in which investigators from multiple fields make contributions about a shared topic.¹ Now, Stearns argues, the explosion of interest in emotions has had the paradoxical effect of isolating the findings of different disciplines; researchers find it easier to share their findings with colleagues in their own fields than to undertake the effort to engage in a collective enterprise with scholars who do not share their field's assumptions, background knowledge or methods.² By neglecting the broader collective enterprise, Stearns argues, historians of emotion have missed opportunities to contribute to an interdisciplinary collaboration about the nature of shame; social psychologists proceeded to define and study shame in an ahistorical fashion which would have benefitted from greater historical understanding of changes in shame practices and in the sense of self and of honour.³

It is worth pointing out that there is nothing about Stearns's argument to imply that there is anything wrong with historians studying emotions for the purpose of engaging with more general historical topics or with the fine arts. To do so would imply by analogy that there is something wrong when researchers in my own field of social psychology apply their advances in understanding emotion to longstanding topics in our field. For example, no one in social psychology finds it problematic that research on envy and *Schadenfreude* now often blurs into research on prejudice, stereotyping and intergroup conflict; on the contrary, it seems desirable that the theories linking these hostile emotions to feelings of inferiority prove useful in understanding topics central to social psychology.⁴ So neither should it be a

1 Peter Stearns, 'Shame, and a Challenge for Emotions History,' *Emotion Review* 8, no. 3 (2016): 197–206.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.; Peter Stearns, *Shame: A Brief History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, in press).

4 Steven Fein and Steven Spencer, 'Prejudice as Self-Image Maintenance: Affirming the Self through Derogating Others,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73, no. 1 (1997): 31–44; Colin Wayne Leach and Russell Spears, "A Vengefulness of the Impotent": The Pain of In-Group Inferiority and Schadenfreude Toward Successful Out-Groups,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95, no. 6 (2008): 1383–96; Wilco van Dijk, Jaap Ouwkerk, Yoka Wesseling, and Guido van Koningsbruggen,

problem if scholarship on the history of emotions is applied to enriching our understanding of the history of the French wars of religion or the meaning of Latin Lucretian poems in sixteenth-century Italy.⁵ The point is not that emotion research in history or social psychology must always orient to an interdisciplinary understanding of what emotions are and how they function, but rather that participating in that interdisciplinary effort is a good thing to do, and that it would be unfortunate were such collaboration to fall by the wayside because researchers no longer need to go searching in other disciplines to find colleagues interested in emotions.

Thus, in appreciating the contents of this issue, I think it's worth noting not only how the authors generalise from their particular subjects to broader statements about the nature of emotions, but also how the authors do so by engaging with disciplines outside history and the fine arts – disciplines such as psychology, sociology, philosophy and neuroscience which could both contribute to and benefit from research that examines emotions located in time and space. In raising this second issue I want to make very clear that I view history and the fine arts as equal partners in this interdisciplinary project and that the neuroscientists, social scientists and philosophers have just as much to gain from becoming informed about history and fine arts as vice versa. That the historians have so far paid far more attention to the psychologists, neuroscientists and evolutionists than the other way around makes this point all the more essential; I know of no major work in the psychology of emotion that pays the same level of attention to history that certain important historians have paid to psychology.⁶ Nevertheless, the

'Towards Understanding Pleasure at the Misfortunes of Others: The Impact of Self-Evaluation Threat on Schadenfreude,' *Cognition and Emotion* 25, no. 2: 360–8.

5 Yasmin Haskell, 'Poetic Flights or Retreats: Latin Lucretian Poems in Sixteenth-Century Italy,' in *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, ed. David Norbrook, Stephen Harrison, and Philip Hardie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 91–121; Jennifer Spinks, 'Civil War Violence, Prodigy Culture and Families in the French Wars of Religion,' in *Disaster, Death and the Emotions in the Shadow of the Apocalypse, 1400–1700*, ed. Jennifer Spinks and Charles Zika (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 113–34.

6 Three excellent examples would be Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. Keith Tribe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Barbara Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions,' *Passions in Context: International Journal for the History and Theory of Emotions* 1 (2010), <http://www.passionsincontext.de>; William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

opportunities for dialogue and cross-fertilisation are endless, so it merits consideration in every case.

Generalisations and interdisciplinary engagements

As the Editors have noted in their Foreword, the seven articles in this issue converge, not only by examining how emotions are spatially and temporally located and thus vary across cultures, but also in addressing themes that, rather unexpectedly, recur in multiple papers. It is indeed striking how many of the papers address how memories, the material world, and locations and spaces are charged with emotion. As outlined above, I wish to highlight two other aspects of these papers: one is how they step back from their particular topic to address broader issues which concern the topic of emotion more generally, and the other is how they engage (or could engage) other disciplines.

Although all seven of the papers generalise, some primarily focus on their temporally situated subject, another primarily focuses on theoretical frameworks, while several balance the specific with generalisations. An example of the latter is Richard Reid's survey of narratives of violent upheaval in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Africa, combining the history of emotion with generalisations about how the construal of violence can have social and political effects at the cultural level of analysis.⁷ His essay oscillates between the historical particulars of how mourning and melancholy pervade African collective memory after wars and colonialism (such as of the Nyoro, of the Sukuma, of Unyanyembe, of the rulers of the Mali, of the Zulu and of Ethiopia) and general themes about the form and function of such emotional narratives. The power of this generalisation derives from Reid's finding commonalities among these African cases, as well as from comparison with responses to violent conflict in other cultures (such as the Thirty Years War, the American Revolution and Civil War, and France in 1871). The result is an essay that is both a historical study of responses to war in specific cultural and historical contexts and a contribution to the interdisciplinary study of emotional collective narratives. Reid draws upon research on collective

7 Specifying the level of analysis at which functions occur is helpful, especially in psychology where it is common to address the same phenomenon biologically, psychologically, socially and culturally. For clarifications, see James Averill, *Anger and Aggression: An Essay on Emotion* (New York: Springer, 1982); Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt, 'Social Functions of Emotions at Four Levels of Analysis,' *Cognition and Emotion* 13, no. 5 (1999): 505–21; W. Gerrod Parrott, 'Components and the Definition of Emotion,' *Social Science Information* 46, no. 3 (2007): 419–23.

memory and on generational shifts in attitudes to frame his findings. The result is an analysis that will inform these fields just as they have informed his analysis: sociologists, for example, analyse crime data to show that murder rates increase after wars; social psychologists study how emotion influences identity construction; emotion researchers examine generational differences in emotional responding.⁸ Reid's essay engages such work by doing historical research and then generalising from it.

Another essay with explicit generalisation and interdisciplinarity is the one by Jane Davidson, Frederic Kiernan and Sandra Garrido about emotions in music. Indeed, that paper is the most explicitly interdisciplinary of the set, and actually reverses the usual order of incorporating disciplines; rather than start with history and generalise to other fields, this paper starts with psychology and shows how psychological mechanisms of learning allow cultures ample room to shape the emotional effects of music. Specifically, before presenting a case study of a short work by Monteverdi, the authors review modern philosophical theories of how music arouses emotions and then present psychologist Patrik Juslin's theory of psychological mechanisms that can arouse emotions in response to music. These mechanisms are reflexive, physiological, associational or cognitive in nature. Although the reflexive and physiological mechanisms are fairly pan-cultural, the associational and cognitive mechanisms allow for culturally specific meanings and associations. These historical associations are explored by presenting several excerpts of music and then presenting early modern European ideas about music that would have shaped the responses of Monteverdi's seventeenth-century audiences. The paper then reports an empirical study of emotional responses of a twenty-first-century audience to a performance of Monteverdi's score.

As a psychologist who can always ask for more information about emotions from living people, I admire historians' resourcefulness in gleaning information from limited evidence about the emotions of people long gone. John Demos'

8 Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner, 'Peacetime Casualties: The Effects of War on the Violent Behavior of Noncombatants,' in *Violence: Perspectives of Murder and Aggression*, ed. Irwin Kutash (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978), 219–32; Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, 'The Cultural Construction of Self and Emotion: Implications for Social Behavior,' in *Emotion and Culture: Empirical Studies of Mutual Influence*, ed. Shinobu Kitayama and Hazel Rose Markus (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1994), 89–130; W. Gerrod Parrott and Rom Harré, 'Princess Diana and the Emotionology of Contemporary Britain,' *International Journal of Group Tensions* 30 (2001): 29–38.

examination of insults in Puritan court records, Barbara Rosenwein's inferences from medieval tombstones – there is ingenuity in these historians' research techniques.⁹ Stephanie Trigg's technique of studying the reception and discussion of literary texts is another of these. She first identifies the existence of a phenomenon: that many literary and artistic works evoke or depict emotions that are not only experienced but analysed and discussed, both at the time of their creation and often for years and generations afterward. Trigg then exploits this phenomenon as a source of evidence about historical changes in emotions. Her example focuses on George Eliot's novel *The Mill on the Floss*, on how Trigg shared her response to the novel over Facebook 156 years after the novel's publication, how that led to a friend's recollection of yet another response to Eliot, this time by A. S. Byatt and, in a sense, by a fictional character in one of Byatt's novels. Most of Trigg's essay explicates the connections between these varied participants – living, dead, real, fictional – and that is its specific historical analysis. The generalisation that Trigg extracts from this contextually situated phenomenon is that it is a token of an informative type, that it is but one example of a widely available and highly informative source of data about the history of emotions which can be analysed with concepts already in use (such as emotional community, or social *habitus*).

Trigg's interdisciplinarity is focused on linking literary studies to history, but other disciplines could well be appended. For example, her observation that household objects have important emotional meaning in both the Eliot and Byatt novels resonates with one of the mechanisms that Patrik Juslin proposes can allow musical elements to activate emotions, namely the evaluative conditioning that provides musical associations with cultural significance. Household objects may elicit emotions in part for the same reason. Psychologists study how literature elicits emotions, and that field may someday contribute to understanding the emotions resulting from the reception and social sharing of literary texts. It is noteworthy that one of the most influential works in the psychology of emotion in the 1990s was Keith Oatley's integration of cognitive science, narrative literature and psychiatry.¹⁰

9 John Demos, 'Shame and Guilt in Early New England,' in *Emotion and Social Change: Toward a New Psychohistory*, ed. Carol Stearns and Peter Stearns (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), 69–86; Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

10 Keith Oatley, *Best Laid Schemes: The Psychology of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

That work featured a detailed analysis of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, as well as discussion of Tolstoy's depiction of emotions in *Anna Karenina*. In addition to being a prominent emotion theorist, Oatley has also written three novels, one of which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Novel. So Oatley's analysis of *Middlemarch* constitutes a literary response every bit as remarkable as A. S. Byatt's to *The Mill on the Floss*. I wonder whether there is something special about Eliot's fiction that shapes the emotional response of her readers; she (like Tolstoy) has a special interest in depicting emotions, and her narrator occasionally injects observations and theory in ways that few other novelists' narrators do. Trigg is well-positioned to compare the reception histories of different writers; in addition to the analysis of Eliot in this issue, she has published about reception histories of Langland and of Chaucer. Does an author's literary style affect the emotional responses amongst readers in ways that influence the course of their works' reception histories?

Three of the papers in this issue devote most of their attention to emotions as situated in historical or cultural contexts; two of them address historical contexts (Lemmings and Zika), while the other presents an autobiographical account from his own life (Smith). David Lemmings discusses the professionalisation of the courts in eighteenth-century England and how that change was resisted by the general public, which perceived justice in terms of common-sense intuitions and emotions, not in terms of obscure legal reasoning. Lemmings explores a gold mine of historical evidence about the everyday emotions that characterised this 'affective jurisprudence': authors expressing the popular point of view have left ample documentation in the form of novels, plays, poems and true crime pamphlets. Even while focusing on the emotions of the eighteenth century, Lemmings taps into broader issues. Professionalisation required that professional judges engage in emotional labour of the sort that sociologists study. Popular affective jurisprudence conflicted with judicial control in what could be described as competing emotional regimes or emotional communities. The conflict between popular affective jurisprudence and professional law can be observed by psychologists in the twentieth century as well as by historians in the eighteenth; in American and British courts, legal standards for differentiating manslaughter from murder have occasionally deviated from the intuitions of laypersons, creating a sense of injustice parallel to what Lemmings describes in the eighteenth century.¹¹

11 See Norman Finkel and W. Gerrod Parrott, *Emotions and Culpability: How the*

Charles Zika concentrates on describing the remarkably varied and changing emotional effects of the Austrian shrine of Mariazell. In doing so, he touches on issues of general interest to historians of emotion: emotions as speech acts and embodied practices, the ability of objects and ideas to arouse emotions. A psychologist would be interested in Zika's paper for its examples of how appraisals were evoked by images, spaces and clothed statues. A sociologist would be fascinated by how the rituals in Mariazell involved the performance of emotions and embodied actual physical pain. Zika's paper reaches across disciplines by exemplifying these topics.

Mick Smith's more personal account highlights how emotionally intense events can become incorporated into autobiographical narratives which become part of a person's self-concept. When Smith explicitly draws connections to other disciplines, it is to psychological work on memory and its role in creating self-definition. The story Smith tells evokes some of the classic findings in the psychology of memory, such as Frederic Bartlett's demonstrations that memories of chaotic or disjointed events gradually become more coherent and structured along conventional narrative lines.¹² It connects directly with a literature on how psychotherapeutic interventions can help patients use their emotional memories in beneficial ways.¹³

The one paper that focuses more on theory than on historical study of temporally situated emotions is Katie Barclay's, which argues that the New Materialism deserves a place in the epistemology of the history of emotions. Although historians who work with verbal sources may be attracted to theories in which language is constitutive of emotion, Barclay presents compelling reasons why they are problematic, the existence of uncontrollable or excessive emotion being just one.

I am not sure that Barad's quantum physics buys much for historians, although it is refreshing to hear this idea coming from a philosopher who is actually a trained theoretical physicist. Yet, neither emotions nor history are quantum phenomena, so the quantum mechanics can only be metaphorical

Law is at Odds with Psychology, Jurors, and Itself (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2006).

12 Frederic Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

13 Jefferson Singer, 'Memory, Emotion, and Psychotherapy: Maximizing the Positive Functions of Self-Defining Memories,' in *Memory and Emotion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Bob Uttl, Nobuo Ohta, and Amy Siegenthaler (Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 211–32.

and one can get similar methodological insights from mainstream philosophies of science and of history.

Nevertheless, the ideas that Barclay distils from Barad and other New Materialists ring true and merit consideration. Barad's claim that the historical record 'kicks back' is a welcome assertion of realism and objectivity. The emphasis on the corporeal basis of emotion offers a connection of major importance with other disciplines. A well-developed field of philosophy proposes that even non-emotional cognition depends on non-symbolic characteristics of the physical body.¹⁴ Psychologists also have demonstrated the embodiment of cognition and shown that emotion is embodied in many ways.¹⁵ One example comes from studies showing that appraisals of self-blame are not necessary for the experience of guilt; if a person is blamed unreasonably, feelings of guilt arise even when self-blame is low, which suggests that guilt can arise interpersonally as a way for repairing relationships.¹⁶ Barclay's paper has significant interdisciplinary relevance.

In summary, this first issue of *Emotions: History, Culture, Society* demonstrates some of the many topics and approaches that will be welcomed in this new journal. The focus on emotions as they are embedded in historical and cultural context will engage emotion researchers in multiple other disciplines. Given that *EHCS* aims to be even more than what this first issue can contain, I look forward to future volumes.

Georgetown University
parrottg@georgetown.edu

14 Robert Wilson and Lucia Foglia, 'Embodied Cognition,' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), ed. Edward Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/embodied-cognition/>.

15 Paula Niedenthal, Lawrence Barsalou, Francois Ric, and Silvia Krauth-Gruber, 'Embodiment in the Acquisition and Use of Emotion Knowledge,' in *Emotion and Consciousness*, ed. Lisa Feldman Barrett, Paula Niedenthal, and Piotr Winkielman (New York: The Guilford Press), 21–50; Paula Niedenthal, 'Embodying Emotion,' *Science* 316 (2007), 1002–5.

16 Brian Parkinson and Sarah Illingworth, 'Guilt in Response to Blame from Others,' *Cognition and Emotion* 23, no. 8 (2009), 1589–1614.