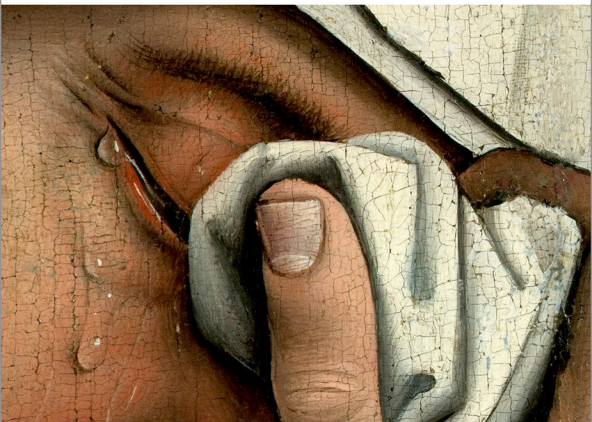


OXFORD

Thinking about the Emotions

A Philosophical History



Edited by Alix Cohen & Robert Stern

Thinking about the Emotions

MIND ASSOCIATION OCCASIONAL SERIES

This series consists of carefully selected volumes of significant original papers on predefined themes, normally growing out of a conference supported by a Mind Association Major Conference Grant. The Association nominates an editor or editors for each collection, and may cooperate with other bodies in promoting conferences or other scholarly activities in connection with the preparation of particular volumes.

Director, Mind Association: Julian Dodd

Publications Officer: Sarah Sawyer

Recently published in the series

The Epistemic Life of Groups: Essays in the Epistemology of Collectives

Edited by Michael S. Brady and Miranda Fricker

Reality Making

Edited by Mark Jago

The Metaphysics of Relations

Edited by Anna Marmodoro and David Yates

Thomas Reid on Mind, Knowledge, and Value

Edited by Rebecca Copenhaver and Todd Buras

Foundations of Logical Consequence

Edited by Colin R. Caret and Ole T. Hjortland

The Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant

Edited by Joachim Aufderheide and Ralf M. Bader

How We Fight: Ethics in War

Edited by Helen Frowe and Gerald Lang

The Morality of Defensive War

Edited by Cécile Fabre and Seth Lazar

Metaphysics and Science

Edited by Stephen Mumford and Matthew Tugby

Thick Concepts

Edited by Simon Kirchin

Thinking about the Emotions

A Philosophical History

EDITED BY

Alix Cohen & Robert Stern

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© the several contributors 2017

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

First Edition published in 2017

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016962766

ISBN 978-0-19-876685-8

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

Contents

<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	vii
Introduction	1
<i>Alix Cohen and Robert Stern</i>	
1. Thinking Historically/Thinking Analytically: The Passion of History and the History of Passions	9
<i>Daniel Garber</i>	
2. The Subject of the Virtues	29
<i>T. H. Irwin</i>	
3. Emotions and Rational Control: Two Medieval Perspectives	60
<i>Dominik Perler</i>	
4. Affects and Ideas in Spinoza's Therapy of Passions	83
<i>Lilli Alanen</i>	
5. 'I've Got a Little List': Classification, Explanation, and the Focal Passions in Descartes and Hobbes	109
<i>Amy Schmitter</i>	
6. The Passions and Actions of Laughter in Shaftesbury and Hutcheson	130
<i>Laurent Jaffro</i>	
7. Alkali and Acid, Oil and Vinegar: Hume on Contrary Passions	150
<i>Elizabeth S. Radcliffe</i>	
8. Kant on the Moral Cultivation of Feelings	172
<i>Alix Cohen</i>	
9. Grace, Freedom, and the Expression of Emotion: Schiller and the Critique of Kant	184
<i>Christopher Bennett</i>	
10. Affect and Cognition in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche	206
<i>Christopher Janaway</i>	
11. Thrills, Orgasms, Sadness, and Hysteria: Austro-German Criticisms of William James	223
<i>Kevin Mulligan</i>	
12. Methodological Anxiety: Heidegger on Moods and Emotions	253
<i>Sacha Golob</i>	

13. Sartre on Affectivity	272
<i>Anthony Hatzimoyisis</i>	
14. In Pursuit of Emotional Modes: The Philosophy of Emotion after James	291
<i>Fabrice Teroni</i>	
<i>Index</i>	315

Notes on Contributors

LILLI ALANEN is Professor emerita of History of Philosophy at Uppsala University, Sweden. She is the author of *Descartes' Concept of Mind* (2003), and has published a number of articles on early modern theories of mind, epistemology, and moral psychology, focusing primarily on Descartes, Spinoza, and Hume. She currently works on self and reason in early modern naturalist accounts of the passions.

CHRISTOPHER BENNETT is a Reader in the Philosophy Department at the University of Sheffield. He is the author of *The Apology Ritual* (2008), which sets out an expressive theory of punishment; and is currently working, among other things, on the topic of action expressive of emotion.

ALIX COHEN works at the University of Edinburgh. She is the author of *Kant and the Human Sciences: Biology, Anthropology and History* (2009), the editor of *Kant's Lectures on Anthropology: A Critical Guide* (2014), *Kant on Emotion and Value* (2014), and Associate Editor of the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*.

DANIEL GARBER is Stuart Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University, and Associated Faculty in the Program in the History of Science and the Department of Politics. He specializes in the history of philosophy and science in the early-modern period, and is also interested in issues in epistemology and the philosophy of science. In addition to numerous articles, he is the author of *Descartes' Metaphysical Physics* (1992), *Descartes Embodied* (2001), *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad* (2009), and is the co-editor (with Michael Ayers) of *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (1998).

SACHA GOLOB is a Lecturer in Philosophy at King's College London; prior to that he was a Junior Research Fellow at Peterhouse, Cambridge. His research focuses on the intersection between Kantian/Post-Kantian Philosophy and contemporary work on the philosophy of mind, on aesthetics, and on philosophical methodology. He is the author of *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity* (2014), and the editor of the forthcoming *Cambridge History of Moral Philosophy* (2017).

ANTHONY HATZIMOYSIS is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the History and Philosophy of Science Department of the University of Athens. His main interests are in the theory of value, the analysis of emotion, and the nature of the self. He is currently working on the distinction between self-consciousness and self-knowledge, and on the nature of emotions that involve one's assessment of oneself. He is the editor of *Philosophy and the Emotions* (2003), *Self-Knowledge* (2011), and the author of *The Philosophy of Sartre* (2011).

T. H. IRWIN is Professor of Ancient Philosophy in the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Keble College. From 1975 to 2006 he taught at Cornell University. He is the author of Plato's *Gorgias* (translation and notes), Clarendon Plato Series (1979), Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (translation and notes, 1999), *Aristotle's First Principles* (1988), *Classical Thought* (1989), *Plato's Ethics* (1995), and *The Development of Ethics*, 3 vols (2007–9).

LAURENT JAFFRO is Professor of Moral Philosophy at Pantheon-Sorbonne University, Paris. He is a fellow of the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Institut universitaire de France. His research focuses on moral judgement and motivation, and the history of moral philosophy, especially in the eighteenth century. His most recent publications include *Croit-on comme on veut? Histoire d'une controverse* (ed., 2013) and papers on Shaftesbury and Reid.

CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southampton. He has written extensively on the philosophy of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer and on aesthetics. His books include *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy* (1989), *Images of Excellence: Plato's Critique of the Arts* (1995), *Schopenhauer: A Very Short Introduction* (2002), and *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy* (2007). He has also edited several collections of articles: *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator* (1998), *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer* (1999), *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value* (with Alex Neill, 2009), and *Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Normativity* (with Simon Robertson, 2012).

KEVIN MULLIGAN has filled the chair of analytic philosophy at the University of Geneva since 1986. His publications are mainly in analytic metaphysics, the philosophy of mind and the history of Austro-German philosophy from Bolzano to Wittgenstein. His book *Wittgenstein et la philosophie Austro-Allemande* (2012) has recently been published in Italian and Spanish.

DOMINIK PERLER is Professor of Philosophy at Humboldt-Universität, Berlin. His research focuses on medieval and early modern philosophy. He is the author of *Theorien der Intentionalität im Mittelalter* (2002), *Zweifel und Gewissheit. Skeptische Debatten im Mittelalter* (2006), *Transformationen der Gefühle. Philosophische Emotionstheorien 1270–1670* (2011), and most recently editor of *The Faculties: A History* (2015).

ELIZABETH S. RADCLIFFE is Professor of Philosophy at the College of William & Mary. Her research interests lie in Hume on the passions, motivation, practical reasoning, and morality; and in contemporary action theory and the Humean theory of motivation. Radcliffe is past co-editor of *Hume Studies* and editor of *A Companion to Hume* (2008).

AMY M. SCHMITTER is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Alberta, an editor of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, and co-editor of *Hume Studies*. She works mostly

in the history of early modern philosophy (particularly on Descartes and Hume) and the philosophy of art, but has teaching and research interests in a number of areas. Recent publications include works on Descartes, and on passions and affections, as well as a series of articles for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2012).

ROBERT STERN is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield. His publications include *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit* (2nd edn, 2013), *Hegelian Metaphysics* (2009), *Understanding Moral Obligation* (2012), and *Kantian Ethics* (2015).

FABRICE TERONI is Associate Professor in philosophy at the University of Geneva. He works in the philosophy of mind and epistemology, with a marked interest in the philosophy of memory, of perception, and of affective states. He is the author of several articles and monographs on the general theory of emotions (*The Emotions: A Philosophical Introduction*, 2012), on the nature of shame (*In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*, 2011), and on memory.

Introduction

Alix Cohen and Robert Stern

It is now commonplace to say that, until recently, philosophical research in the emotions was meagre if not nonexistent. While for much of the twentieth century philosophers of mind and psychologists tended to neglect the study of emotions, in recent years they have become the focus of vigorous interest in philosophy, in particular through the proliferation of increasingly fruitful exchanges between researches of different stripes. However, less acknowledged is the fact that many if not most of the great philosophers of the tradition have developed highly sophisticated accounts of emotion that often reflect their differing philosophical perspectives.

This volume proposes to investigate the philosophical history of the emotions by bringing together leading historians of philosophy and covering a wide spectrum of schools of thought and epochs, from ancient philosophy up to twentieth-century accounts. It provides resources that should enable its readers to step back from the contemporary perspective and ask fundamental questions that will stimulate philosophical reflection on the topic.

As demonstrated by the contributions in this volume, philosophers and their commentators have used a wide variety of terms to refer to our affective states, from ‘affects’, ‘affections’, ‘passions’, ‘feelings’, ‘sentiments’, and ‘agitations’ to the more contemporary term ‘emotions’. The term ‘emotion’ is of course a rather late invention as far as the history of philosophy is concerned. While there is some disagreement regarding the history of the term, the word itself dates from the sixteenth century for the French and the seventeenth century for the English.¹ Lisa Shapiro and Martin Pickavé talk about a ‘family resemblance between a range of terms and their referents’, but given the immense diversity of the accounts of emotion presented in this volume, we can safely conclude that the issue of the nature and unity of emotions remains an open question.²

A number of contemporary theorists of the emotions lay claim to a historical heritage, trace back their views to historical predecessors, or identify philosophical precursors. Aristotle is of course a common source: he is cited by both Anthony Kenny and Magda Arnold, who are in many ways precursors in their respective fields, and his account of virtue is a focal point of most if not all virtue-based approaches of the emotions.³ The Stoics are also an important reference in Martha

Nussbaum's account of emotions as judgements, and of cognitivist accounts in general.⁴ Hume is often referred to in feeling theories of emotion, as in Richard Wollheim or Irwin Goldstein's hedonic theory.⁵ William James remains a ubiquitous inspiration for theories that put the body at the centre of their accounts, as do Jesse Prinz or Jenefer Robinson.⁶ Finally, less familiar references are found to Nietzsche and Sartre in Robert Solomon, and Spinoza in Aaron Ben-Ze'ev and Antonio Damasio. Yet overall, as Amélie Rorty already noted over twenty years ago, philosophers of the emotions tend not to think historically about their topic, nor do they show much interest in previous theories.⁷

Nonetheless, as Peter Goldie noted in his Introduction to the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, 'how much there is still to be learned from a careful study of the history of philosophical work in the emotions: without this kind of study, the history of philosophy, like history, is bound to repeat itself, often with little or no gain on what has gone before'.⁸ This volume is a contribution to this task. Inspired by the burgeoning field of the history of the philosophy of the emotions, it offers the first overview of the emotions in the history of philosophy.⁹ Far from being limited to determining how emotions are situated within broader theories of the mind, the essays in this volume tackle a wide range of questions about the nature of emotions as well as their contribution to human life.

However, given the breadth of the material under consideration, the aims of this volume remain limited. It does not aspire to put forward a narrative that would account for the historical development of the notion from ancient philosophy onwards.¹⁰ Nor can it hope to be exhaustive. While we have attempted to cover a wide array of views, many are still missing. As is unavoidable for such collections, exhaustiveness is impossible and a number of issues are too briefly covered if at all. We chose not to emphasize particular periods or topics but rather give our authors some leeway in selecting their angle to tackle this notion within their period of choice.

The collection opens with a paper by Daniel Garber, which sets the scene for what follows by asking what role the historian of philosophy can play in relation to current research. Garber begins by highlighting what he sees as two distinctive features of the recent 'analytic' approach to the emotions as this has developed from the 1960s onwards. First, most of this literature has been largely ahistorical in its approach; and second, it has emerged as a rather self-contained sub-field. It is this second feature which Garber then contrasts with three key early modern philosophers from the tradition: Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche. For Descartes, he argues, his account of the passions connected not just to Cartesian natural philosophy, but also to moral issues. The latter is said to be equally true of Spinoza, in a way that had theological implications, while such implications were also important to Malebranche. While Garber does not intend any direct criticism of contemporary analytic philosophy by drawing this contrast in approach, he nonetheless argues that it is suggestive, and may perhaps indicate that we should expect this current work on emotions to be less self-contained than is generally supposed.

Subsequent papers then focus on specific historical thinkers and periods, beginning with a discussion of Aristotle by T. H. Irwin, and particularly his division of the soul into a rational and non-rational part. As Irwin brings out in detail, Aristotle's account of this issue is complex and subtle, and bears importantly on his account of the virtue of character. Irwin defends a reading whereby Aristotle attributes rational desires to the rational part of the soul, and that virtue of character requires the correct rational desires. Irwin also explores how these issues play out in Aquinas's account of the passions, and why they are subjects of virtue. We thus find in Aristotle and Aquinas important contributions to debates concerning the relation between reason and the emotions, and the place of both within theories of the virtues.

This issue is further developed in the next chapter by Dominik Perler, in which he considers the Thomistic position in more detail, and in particular Aquinas's claim that the emotions 'are subject to the commandment of reason and will' and are to be located in the sensory faculty. Perler contrasts this view with the alternative proposed by William of Ockham, who argued for rational emotions. He explores the background to this difference in approach between the thinkers, and the assumptions on which each account relies. He also looks at the implications of the two views, particularly as regards the unity or disunity of the soul, questions concerning responsibility, and the problem of irrational emotions.

In her paper, Lilli Alanen brings us back to a discussion of Spinoza, and in particular to his account of how we can turn passive affects into active emotions, in a way that constitutes a 'therapy of the passions'. Alanen considers how far this picture draws Spinoza into a kind of rationalism that stands in tension with his naturalism, by attributing a rational power to the mind in relation to these affects, which would then seem to set it apart from the body. This difficulty can be addressed, Alanen suggests, if we see this 'therapy' as consisting in forming a clear and distinct idea of the cause of the affect, which while it does not free us from it, may nonetheless give it a different place in the order of our thoughts, and the way it influences our behaviour.

One theme all these papers raise implicitly, alongside others in the collection, is how to categorize the various passions and emotions: this issue is explicitly addressed by Amy Schmitter, particularly in relation to Descartes and Hobbes. As she argues, such categorization issues are usually more than merely taxonomic or matters of intellectual house-keeping, but can tell us a great deal about the assumptions underlying the proposed classifications. She explains how Descartes set 'wonder' at the head of his scheme, while for Hobbes 'glory' received prominence, and she shows the significance they gave to each; both claims were innovative in their time, and likely to strike us as curious today. Schmitter suggests that this indicates how far our understanding of the emotions, and indeed emotions themselves, are mediated by their historical and social context.

A phenomenon that not everyone might classify as an emotion is laughter. In his paper, Laurent Jaffro discusses it as a 'moral emotion', and how this conception of laughter plays an important role in the thought of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. While arguing that they shared some common ground, Jaffro nonetheless points to a significant difference of emphasis between them: while Hutcheson saw laughter as primarily a response to a

value, Shaftesbury focused more on its social role, and how it can be used against 'enthusiasm'. This then raises questions concerning our ability to control laughter, and what norms should govern its use. As Jaffro shows, for both Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, laughter forms an important and interesting part of their conception of a liberal society, but while Hutcheson favours regulation, for Shaftesbury it is seen as a self-regulating form of human interaction, with its own immanent system of normative control.

In her paper, Elizabeth S. Radcliffe turns to Hume, and his account of contrary passions. As Radcliffe shows, Hume provides an elaborate and perhaps not fully consistent taxonomy of the passions, while they are central to his account of sympathy and function according to the principles of Hume's associationist psychology. This enabled him to offer a complex account of how various passions interrelate, and how they also might be used to control one another. In this way, Hume could allow for this control while avoiding rationalism, and at the same time escape the implication that our passions are merely chaotic and disordered.

The question of the relation between reason and the affective states is also at the heart of Kant's philosophy, where Alix Cohen considers this issue as it relates to his account of morality. She counters the common view that he rejects any role for such states, emphasizing instead the significance Kant attached to their cultivation. Cohen considers how Kant made this cultivation an indirect duty, and how doing so is still compatible with his account of freedom. In general, she argues, taking these issues seriously shows how Kant recognized our embodied natures, and what this meant for the proper fulfilment of morality in human terms. To this extent, Kant's account of feelings and emotions can stand as a corrective to a common perception of his ethics as failing to come to terms with these phenomena.

One post-Kantian who helped fuel this perception is Friedrich Schiller, who forms the focus of the article by Christopher Bennett. Bennett argues that in his conception of grace, Schiller recognized what he saw to be an important issue for Kant's theory of freedom: if spontaneous action is action responsive to principles of practical reason, how can this be reconciled with the fact that we sometimes act expressively, out of emotion, as in the case of graceful actions. Bennett shows how Schiller was looking for ways in which to reconcile reason and sensibility, and saw the expression of emotion in these terms, where it is from this reconciliation that his distinctive conception of freedom arises, one that puts pressure on the standard Kantian view while also pointing forward to more rationalistic conceptions of the emotions.

In his paper, Christopher Janaway discusses both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, contrasting the way each see the relation between emotions and cognition: whereas Schopenhauer argues that the former impair the latter, Nietzsche holds that they are required in order to make cognition possible. Janaway explores the background to this difference, relating to their respective epistemologies and metaphysical views, as well as their conceptions of the emotions. He also considers possible challenges to Nietzsche's account, and how it can best be understood, showing that the position can be made plausible and attractive.

William James is the focus of the next chapter, by Kevin Mulligan, who considers the criticism offered of James's very influential view of the emotions by thinkers in the nineteenth-century Austro-German tradition, particularly Carl Stumpf, Edmund Husserl, and Max Scheler, where all were variously influenced by Franz Brentano. On James's account, emotions are to be identified with the feeling of bodily changes; Mulligan shows how this was challenged by these heirs of Brentano, while contrasting their critique of James with one also offered by Wittgenstein. In doing so, he shows how James's position stood at the centre of these debates, and provides some assessment on the effectiveness of the critique that was offered.

Turning now to the twentieth century, Sacha Golob presents Heidegger's treatment of the emotions against the background of his distinctive challenge to traditional philosophical approaches and thinking. He focuses on Heidegger's account of 'moods', and shows that while his work bypasses some standard issues in accounts of the emotions, it connects with others—particularly the normative significance of the emotions in relation to agency, and the role emotions can play in how we relate to the world around us. Golob considers Heidegger's account of 'anxiety' in this light, and discusses some of the difficulties that it raises.

The next chapter, by Anthony Hatzimoysis, discusses Sartre's position, and in particular his treatment of the emotions in two key texts: the *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* of 1939, and *The Imaginary*, which was published the following year. Hatzimoysis shows how each text seems to offer a contrasting view of the emotions—as actions and as perceptions respectively—and thus raises worries about consistency. However, Hatzimoysis argues, Sartre's view in each text is more complex than this implies, while suggesting that they can be made consistent if we think of each work as operating from a different theoretical standpoint: the *Sketch* from the third-person standpoint, and the *Imaginary* from a first-personal one.

The volume concludes with a paper by Fabrice Teroni, which takes us back to William James but also forward to the contemporary analytic tradition, which James did so much to shape and to influence, both positively and negatively. Teroni brings out how far James broke with previous traditional approaches, while we continue to struggle with finding a fully successful alternative to his bodily account in attempting to assimilate emotions to beliefs on the one hand or to perceptions on the other. As Teroni suggests, this remains a live debate, and one which philosophers will doubtless continue to take forward as the history of our engagement with the emotions develops further.¹¹

Acknowledgements

This collection of papers is based on the inaugural conference of CHiPhi, the Centre for the History of Philosophy, which took place at the University of York, 13–15 May 2011. The Centre was originally founded by Mike Beaney, Alix Cohen, and Robert Stern to support and enhance research in the history of philosophy in Yorkshire thanks to a grant from the White Rose University Consortium. Although Mike Beaney and Alix Cohen have now left Yorkshire,

CHiPhi continues to flourish under the guidance of Robert Stern together with Keith Allen and Gerald Lang.

This volume would not have been possible without the help of many people. First, we would like to thank Peter Momtchiloff for helping us bring the project to completion—his constant support throughout the process is very much appreciated. We also want to express our gratitude to all the contributors for making our lives much easier by providing excellent contributions. Particular thanks go to Mike Beaney, who worked behind the scenes to organize the original conference in York and supported us throughout. Thanks also go to James Lewis for preparing the index. Finally, we would like to thank the Mind Association, the White Rose Consortium, the British Society for the History of Philosophy, and Oxford University Press for enabling us to organize the inaugural conference on which this volume is partly based.

Notes

1. Contrast, for instance, Thomas Dixon, “‘Emotion’: The History of a Keyword in Crisis”, *Emotion Review* 4 (2012): 338–44, with Amy M. Schmitter, ‘Passions, Affections, Sentiments: Taxonomy and Terminology’, in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. James A. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 197–225. While Dixon notes that the modern acceptance of the term as a psychological category dates from the nineteenth century, Schmitter points to Lord Kames’s definition of ‘emotion’ as a mental term in 1762. Baldwin’s *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* states that ‘The use of the word emotion in English psychology is comparatively modern. It is found in Hume, but even he speaks generally rather of passions or affections. When the word emotion did become current its application was very wide, covering all possible varieties of feeling, except those that are purely sensational in their origin’ (J. M. Baldwin, ‘Emotion’, in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (London: Macmillan, 1901), I, p. 316).
2. Lisa Shapiro and Mark Pickavé, ‘Introduction’, in *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Lisa Shapiro and Mark Pickavé (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 7.
3. Magda Arnold, *Emotion and Personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); A. J. P. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963). For virtue-based approaches, see for instance Christine Swanton, *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) and Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
4. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Robert Solomon, ‘Emotions and Choice’, in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie Rorty (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 251–81.
5. Richard Wollheim, *On the Emotions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Irwin Goldstein, ‘Are Emotions Feelings? A Further Look at Hedonic Theories of Emotions’, *Consciousness and Emotion* 3 (2002): 21–33.
6. Jesse J. Prinz, *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of the Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
7. Amélie Rorty, ‘From Passions to Emotions and Sentiments’, *Philosophy* 57 (1982): 172.

8. Peter Goldie (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 5. Interestingly, as Fabrice Teroni pointed out to us, Aristotle is by far the most cited historical figure in this volume.
9. See in particular Susan James's *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Richard Sorabji's *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), and William Reddy's *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Thomas Dixon's *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), and Lisa Shapiro and Martin Pickavé (eds) *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
10. Contrast with Thomas Dixon's *From Passions to Emotions* or Solomon's *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Garden City, N. Y: Doubleday, 1976).
11. Thanks to Anthony Hatzimoysis, Amy Schmitter, and Fabrice Teroni for their helpful feedback on the introduction.

Bibliography

- Arnold, Magda. *Emotion and Personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).
- Baldwin, J.M. 'Emotion', in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (London: Macmillan, 1901).
- Dixon, Thomas. *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- Dixon, Thomas. "'Emotion': The History of a Keyword in Crisis", *Emotion Review* 4 (2012): 338–44.
- Goldie, Peter (ed.). *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Goldstein, Irwin. 'Are Emotions Feelings? A Further Look at Hedonic Theories of Emotions', *Consciousness and Emotion* 3 (2002): 21–33.
- James, Susan. *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Kenny, A. J. P. *Action, Emotion and Will* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963).
- Knuuttila, Simo. *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Nussbaum, Martha C. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- Prinz, Jesse J. *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of the Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Reddy, William. *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- Robinson, Jenefer. *Deeper than Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Rorty, Amélie. 'From Passions to Emotions and Sentiments', *Philosophy* 57 (1982): 159–72.

- Schmitter, Amy M. 'Passions, Affections, Sentiments: Taxonomy and Terminology', in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. James A. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 197–225.
- Shapiro, Lisa and Mark Pickavé. 'Introduction', in *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Lisa Shapiro and Mark Pickavé (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 1–8.
- Solomon, Robert. *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976).
- Solomon, Robert. 'Emotions and Choice', in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie Rorty (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 251–81.
- Sorabji, Richard. *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Swanton, Christine. *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Wollheim, Richard. *On the Emotions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).
- Zagzebski, Linda. *Virtues of the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

1

Thinking Historically/Thinking Analytically

The Passion of History and the History of Passions

Daniel Garber

The main theme of this volume is the history of philosophical thinking about the passions and emotions. This is a subject that needs no justification: like other topics in the history of philosophy, it is of clear and obvious interest to those of us who enjoy living in the past, at least philosophically speaking. But even if we spend most of our time in past centuries, we also live in the present, and teach in departments with colleagues whose intellectual lives are centred on current philosophical thought. And for most of us, that means dealing on a regular basis with current Anglo-American analytic philosophy. This raises an interesting question: how is the study of the passions in the early modern period different from the way in which they are studied now? In what ways is it similar, but in what ways are our ancestors involved in a different kind of project?

Not surprisingly, I will begin historically. Not as one might suspect, though, with the history of the passions in the distant past, but with the question of how the passions came to be established as a subject in current Anglo-American analytic philosophy. This will give us some insight into its current status within the Anglo-American tradition. I will then turn to three central historical figures, Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche, and examine some aspects of the way they treated the passions and the emotions. I will end with some thoughts about how the earlier project relates to what is currently understood as the philosophical study of the passions.

Before we begin, though, I would like to make some preliminary remarks. First, I have no rigorous definition of analytic philosophy or the contemporary Anglo-American philosophical tradition. I'm using it here in a rough-and-ready way, as a category more sociological than intellectual, for what's taught in departments of philosophy in the Anglophone world. Though different varieties of analytic philosophy

may only bear a family resemblance to one another, I think it is safe to say that we all know it when we see it. That's good enough for me, at least at this first pass. And secondly, I will not make a radical distinction between the study of the passions and the study of the emotions. The distinction will certainly come up from time to time in what follows, particularly in connection with Descartes and Spinoza. But in general I will use the word 'emotions' in a broad enough way so as to include everything generally treated within the domain.

One last preliminary remark. It would be nice if this exercise eventuated in some salient lessons for the philosophy of the passions that we might be able to learn from studying their history. But as an historian of philosophy, I cannot tell my analytic colleagues how to do their business. Instead, I would like to point out what seem to be some interesting and salient differences between the way in which the subject was handled back then, and what I can gather of the present state of the question, at least as it is reflected in the materials that I have examined. I leave it to others to draw conclusions about what lessons should be drawn from historical practice for contemporary theories.

1.1 Theories of the Passions: The Analytic Tradition

The emotions and passions are prominent in philosophical discussions from the ancients on down. But surprisingly enough, interest in the emotions comes very late to Anglo-American analytic philosophy. First, my sources. I began by going where we all do these days, to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, where there is an excellent review article by Ronald de Sousa, one of the recent philosophers who is a major contributor to the area.¹ His article was most recently revised in January 2013. I also consulted a review article by Peter Goldie ('Emotion') published in the *Philosophy Compass* in 2007,² and the introduction to the 2004 edition of Robert Solomon's Oxford University Press anthology, *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*. I also looked again at the important anthology that Amélie Rorty published in 1980, *Explaining Emotions*.³ Finally, and most recently, there is the essay by Fabrice Téroni published in this volume, 'In Pursuit of Emotional Modes: The Philosophy of Emotion after James'.⁴ This is, of course, far from a complete survey of the study of the passions and emotions as it is currently practised in analytic departments of philosophy. But that's not my intention here. For the moment, at least, I would like to chart the beginnings of the study of the passions and emotions as a domain in Anglo-American departments. These sources paint a pretty consistent picture of the pioneers and the conception of the project that emerged out of these early efforts.

Now, in the twentieth century, one can certainly find interest in the emotions in the so-called Continental philosophical tradition, in Heidegger and especially in Sartre. But interest in the emotions in the analytic tradition comes rather late in the game. Solomon writes:

... the philosophy of emotion is by one measure quite recent. In the Anglo-American tradition, the subject of emotion was for a considerable period disreputable, typically dismissed as 'mere subjectivity' or, worse, as nothing by physiology plus dumb sensation. ... It was only with occasional pieces by Princeton philosopher George Pitcher and Edinburgh philosopher Errol Bedford and then a book by Anthony Kenny that the subject started to become noticed at all, although it was several years more before it began to attract an audience and deserve recognition as a 'field'.⁵

De Sousa largely agrees, noting Bedford and Kenny at the founding, adding Irving Thalberg but forgetting poor George Pitcher.⁶ Errol Bedford's founding piece, 'Emotion' was published in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* in 1957. Pitcher's article, 'Emotion' appeared in *Mind* in 1965, and Kenny's book, *Action, Emotion and Will* was published in 1963. A quick glance at Amélie Rorty's 1980 bibliography confirms this view.⁷ Her bibliography is divided into sections: (I) General and Historical Studies; (II) Physiological Studies; (III) Biological Studies; (IV) Psychological Studies; (V) Psychoanalytic Studies; (VI) Anthropological Studies. She ends with '(VII) Philosophical Studies', separated off from the others. Leaving aside Sartre and Stanislawski's *An Actor Prepares* (1936), which somehow insinuated itself into this list, and a few other items like Ryle's *Concept of Mind* that don't really belong, there is almost nothing before 1960 beside Bedford. Between 1960 and 1965 there are only a handful of articles. And then the field begins to take off.

Among the pioneers in the field, Anthony Kenny certainly takes an historical approach to his topic. *Action, Emotion and Will* begins with a chapter focused on Descartes' *Passions de l'âme*, and the rest of the book is heavily leavened with discussions of Aristotle and St Thomas. But Bedford and Pitcher don't show any such interest in the historical background to the question.

Bedford begins as follows: 'The concept of emotion gives rise to a number of philosophical problems. The most important of these, I think, concern the function of statements about emotions and the criteria for their validity.'⁸ The paper starts out with a quick reference to McTaggart and Russell, a couple of brief nods at Stout's *Manual of Psychology* and William James's *Principles of Psychology*, and later, a nod to Aristotle in passing.⁹ But the emphasis is on refuting what he calls 'the traditional theory of the emotions', the view that 'an emotion is a feeling, or at least an experience of a special type which involves a feeling'.¹⁰ After the introduction, the paper takes a quick turn to the linguistic. Bedford is interested in correcting 'the logical mistake of treating emotion words as names, which leads in turn to a misconception of their function'.¹¹ He asks: 'Does the truth of such a statement as "He is afraid" logically require the existence of a specific feeling?'¹² The view that he substitutes for the 'traditional theory' is a kind of behavioural view on which statements about emotions interpret behaviour.¹³ For example, Bedford notes that the statement 'He raised his voice and began to thump the table' is evidence for the statement 'He was very angry'.¹⁴ The view is not as crude as that might suggest. Bedford ends by noting that 'emotions concepts ... are not purely psychological: they presuppose concepts of social relationships and institutions,

and concepts belonging to systems of judgment, moral, aesthetic and legal'.¹⁵ But it is framed clearly in terms of terms and statements, their referents, and their truth conditions.

George Pitcher's treatment is no more historical than Bedford's is. He begins by referring to the same passage in William James that Bedford cites, and he refers to Bedford as well.¹⁶ Hume enters briefly, but only in order to be quickly dismissed.¹⁷ In Pitcher's essay, Bedford's 'traditional theory', the position that emotion words refer to feelings, becomes the 'Traditional View', now capitalized. Like Bedford, Pitcher advances a dispositional view of emotions, but he also focuses on emotion as having an object (involving an apprehension or misapprehension) and involving an evaluation of that object.¹⁸ Like Bedford, Pitcher focuses on the use of emotion words, and their functions in language, though he employs a complex Wittgensteinian conception of language.¹⁹

So the discussion of emotion begins. From this acorn, grew a mighty oak. Or, if not a mighty oak, at least a pretty sturdy shoot. Over the intervening years, the study of the emotions has emerged as lively sub-area within contemporary analytic philosophy.

The area as it is presently constituted is nicely summarized in Peter Goldie's 2007 review article of work in the field. Goldie's article is divided into two parts: a presentation of 'the facts that an account of emotion needs to accommodate' and an organized list of the principal theories that have been proposed to account for those facts.²⁰

The following are the 'facts':

- (1) *Diversity*: Goldie notes here that emotions can be different in duration, in focus and specificity, in complexity, in physical manifestation or lack thereof, in consciousness, in 'degree of development' (mild annoyance vs full anger), their connection with action.
- (2) *Evolution*: At least some emotions seem to be connected with human evolution, are shared by all humans in all cultures, and presumably contribute to the survival of the species.
- (3) *Beasts and Babies*: Some higher non-human creatures seem capable of emotions, as do babies, and 'an acceptable account of emotion must accommodate this fact'. (This, of course, is connected with the evolutionary 'facts'.)
- (4) *Intentionality*: Emotions are characteristically intentional in the sense that they have an object (an object of anger, an object of love, etc.). This seems central.
- (5) *Feelings and Phenomenology*: Emotions often (though not always) have a characteristic 'feel'. (There is much debate about how relevant feelings are, as we saw in Bedford and Pitcher.)
- (6) *Importance*: 'Your emotions are about things that matter to you.'
- (7) *Rationality*: One makes judgments of rationality with respect to emotions. It can be rational to be angry or irrational to be proud.
- (8) *Connection to action*: 'Emotions seem to motivate us to do things.'
- (9) *Responsibility for emotions*: Some emotions we are responsible for, some we are not. We are not characteristically responsible for surprise, but we can be held responsible for a feeling of loathing of foreigners.²¹

So much for the facts. Goldie divides theories of the emotions into three groups: non-cognitive feeling theories, cognitive theories, and perceptual theories.²² Non-cognitive feeling theories, as Goldie understands them, are the kinds of theories that Bedford and Pitcher opposed in their articles, theories deriving broadly from William James on which emotions are associated with characteristic non-cognitive feelings. Cognitive theories, on the other hand, see emotions as kinds of appraisals and value judgments. Perceptual theories see emotions as a kind of perception or analogous to perceptions: emotions are reactions to the world around us and the people in it in just the way that our perceptions are.

This is not the place to go more deeply into contemporary theories of the emotions; the literature is vast at this point, and my goal is not to provide yet another general survey of the field.²³ But what I want to emphasize is a very general feature of the current philosophical approaches to the question that the twentieth and twenty-first century history of the field and these surveys suggest. What is notable here is that the theory of the emotions as it has emerged in the last fifty or sixty years constitutes a coherent and autonomous domain of philosophical inquiry with its own phenomena to be explained, problems to be explored, and set of alternative theoretical frameworks. It is a field, or, at least, a subfield of philosophy with a pretty robust identity.²⁴

At this point I would like to turn to treatments of the passions among three central figures in the history of philosophy: Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche.²⁵ There are many other historical figures that could be examined in this context, including ancient and medieval figures, not to mention later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophers.²⁶ But these three will be sufficient to show us an interestingly different way of thinking about the passions and emotions than what we found in the brief examination of recent writings. Unlike what appears to be the dominant trend in recent studies, the passions and emotions as treated in these three figures are deeply intertwined with other intellectual domains and larger philosophical projects, and are not taken to constitute an autonomous discipline.

1.2 Descartes

Let me begin with some remarks about Descartes' account of the emotions in his *Passions de l'âme* (1649).²⁷ In the letters to an unknown friend that constitute a kind of preface to the work, Descartes tells his friend and the reader what the point of the treatise is: 'My intention was to explain the passions only as a natural philosopher [*en physicien*], and not as a rhetorician or even as a moral philosopher.'²⁸ It is clear enough what it means to examine the passions as a rhetorician, who wants to teach how to arouse certain passions in his listeners. It is a bit less clear what it means to examine the passions as a moral philosopher, though this is an issue that I want to talk about shortly. But what does Descartes mean when he talks about explaining the passions '*en physicien*'?

First, a word about natural philosophy or physics. Any educated person in Descartes' day would have studied natural philosophy or physics as part of the standard 'arts'

curriculum, what we would have called the undergraduate years. Physics was usually divided into two parts, the general and the particular. In the Aristotelian framework, the general part of physics included such things as the three principles of physics, matter, form and privation, space and time, the four causes, etc. Special physics began with cosmology, then terrestrial physics, minerals, and ended with living things, plants, animals, and man. The study of living things, though, generally begins with an account of the soul, the principle of life, that which differentiates the dead or inanimate from the living thing. In this way the study of the soul is part of physics, properly speaking.²⁹

Now, Descartes' physics was not Aristotelian, of course. But the large-scale structure shared a lot. In his *Principia philosophiae*, after part I, 'The Principles of Human Knowledge', Descartes begins the physics proper in Part II with what might be read as an update of the general part of physics: his account of notions like body, space, time, motion, and the laws of motion. Part III offers a cosmology, and then Part IV a terrestrial physics. Descartes had intended a Part V and a Part VI, where he would deal with living things, including man.³⁰ Unfortunately, Descartes died before writing them, but in the beginning of Part I of the *Passions de l'âme* we get some of what he might have included in those unwritten sections.³¹ On Descartes' view, many of the life functions that the Aristotelians attributed to a soul are really a function of the size, shape, and motion of the smaller parts that make up bodies. Many, but not all: thought, sensation, volition, and reason all pertain to a soul, an immaterial substance that is distinct from body. But the study of this soul and its relation to the organic body presumably remains a part of natural philosophy or physics.

To treat the passions of the soul 'en physicien' presumably means, then, to study the way the soul is acted on by the body to which it is attached: when Descartes talks about passions of the soul, he means them in this literal sense, passions, or acting-upon that are coordinate with actions of the body.³² Understood broadly, passions include sensations and imaginations as well as emotions, states of the soul that are caused by the sense organs or the activity of the brain, and are 'referred' to things outside of ourselves, like the state that the soul is in when we are perceiving an apple through our senses. But in the *Passions de l'âme*, Descartes particularly concerns himself with those passions that we 'refer' to the soul itself.³³

An example of the kind of account that Descartes gives in the *Passions de l'âme* is the case of fear. Descartes imagines that we see a fierce animal approaching us. The light reflected from the animal's body forms images on the retina of each of the eyes, which are then transmitted as motion through the optic nerves to the pineal gland in the centre of the brain, where the motions that trace back to the two retinas merge in the gland.³⁴ This merged impression in the pineal gland has two consequences. On the one hand, it causes a particular passion in the soul, a characteristic kind of feeling:

If...this shape is very strange and terrifying—that is, if it has a close relation to things which have previously been harmful to the body—this arouses the passion of anxiety in the soul, and

then that of courage or perhaps fear and terror, depending upon the particular temperament of the body or the strength of the soul, and upon whether we have protected ourselves previously by defense or by flight against the harmful things to which the present impression is related.³⁵

But, in addition, it may also cause certain things to happen in the body, for example, it may cause the legs to move in such a way that it flees the animal:

...in certain persons these factors dispose their brain in such a way that some of the spirits reflected from the image formed on the gland proceed from there to the nerves which serve to turn the back and move the legs in order to flee.³⁶

It is important here that this motion does not derive in any way from the soul; it is simply a result of the makeup of the body: 'the body may be moved to take flight by the mere disposition of the organs, without any contribution from the soul'.³⁷ This may suggest that the passion of the soul is just a feeling that accompanies the physiological state of the body that causes the motion of the legs that carries us away from the perceived danger. But the feeling, the passion in the soul has a role to play as well. Descartes writes:

...it must be observed that the principal effect of all the human passions is that they move and dispose the soul to want the things for which they prepare the body. Thus the feeling of fear moves the soul to will [*vouloir*] to flee, that of courage to will [*vouloir*] to fight, and similarly with the others.³⁸

The initial perception of the frightful animal directly causes the body to flee in many people. In those people it may also cause the passion of fear in the soul. This passion of fear *in the soul* will then cause *the soul* voluntarily, through its will, to do that which reinforces the initial impulse to flee. This secondary impulse, caused by the passion, which, in turn, influences the volition, is fundamentally different in kind from the non-thinking impulse to flee. (Descartes also envisions that there are others for whom the initial perception of the animal causes them to stand and fight, and then have a passion of courage which reinforces the initial impulse.³⁹)

For Descartes, then, the point of the passions of the soul is to reinforce through an act of will the impulse that the body naturally is inclined to do by virtue of its physical configuration. This is an example of treating the passions 'en physicien'. Regarded in this way, the project is to understand how the passions of the soul function within the context of living things as understood by Cartesian physics. The project is to understand what they are, and what they do. But it is important to keep in mind the centrality of Cartesian physics in this enterprise. Descartes' account of the passions is fundamentally shaped by the physics in which it sits: *it is an account of the passions appropriate for the Cartesian man*, the union of an incorporeal thinking substance and an extended body governed by mechanistic laws of nature. Taken outside of the context of this conception of man, the enterprise makes no sense. It is precisely because in his larger programme for (natural) philosophy Descartes is introducing a new conception of the human being that he must offer a new conception of the passions, and cannot use the one inherited, through St Thomas, from the Aristotelian tradition.

In Descartes I have emphasized the way in which the Cartesian theory of the passions is situated in the context of the Cartesian natural philosophy. But there is also a moral dimension to the project. At the end of the *Passions de l'âme* Descartes writes:

Now that we are acquainted with all the passions, we have much less reason for anxiety about them than we had before. For we see that they are all by nature good, and that we have nothing to avoid but their misuse or their excess, against which the remedies I have explained might be sufficient if each person took enough care to apply them.⁴⁰

In the postil of the last section, Descartes asserts that 'it is on the passions alone that all the good and evil of this life depend'. The last sentence of the section, the last sentence of the book then advises that:

...the chief use of wisdom lies in its teaching us to be masters of our passions and to control them with such skill that the evils which they cause are quite bearable, and even become a source of joy.⁴¹

The central goal of Descartes' morality in the *Passions de l'âme* is the proper control of the passions: good in themselves, when excessive they lead to trouble. In this way the treatment of the passions 'en physicien' in Descartes is in the service of a moral project. It is interesting here to remember Descartes' tree of philosophy, whose roots are metaphysics, whose trunk is physics, and whose branches, growing out of the trunk, include morals.⁴² The account of the passions grows out of the trunk of physics; it yields fruit in morals when we come to understand the true good in this life. But again, I would want to emphasize that the tree of philosophy in question is the centrepiece of the *Cartesian* garden, and the ethics in question a fruit that issues from a *Cartesian* conception of philosophy and the world: it is an ethics for the Cartesian man.

1.3 Spinoza

The moral dimension of the theory of the passions and the emotions is central in Spinoza's account. First a word about vocabulary and about texts. While Descartes does use the term 'emotion' with some regularity in the *Passions de l'âme* and other writings, his focus is on the passions.⁴³ An emotion (*émotion, commotio*) is a general term that designates 'an alteration or motion excited in the humours, spirits or the mind', to quote the definition given in the 1762 Académie Française dictionary. (This is the oldest dictionary definition I could find.) But Descartes' focus is on the passions strictly speaking: those states of mind (emotions) that are the consequences of something external acting on the mind. Spinoza's usual term in the *Ethica* is 'affect' ('*affectus*'). While it could certainly be translated as 'emotion', it is usually translated as 'affect'. Occasionally he uses the term '*commotio animi*', or what is more naturally interpreted as 'emotion'.⁴⁴ But Spinoza makes a clear distinction between active affects (actions) and passive affects (passions, strictly speaking).⁴⁵

I noted that Spinoza's account of the affects is connected with his moral philosophy. In fact, it is, in a way, the centrepiece.⁴⁶ We should of course remember that the title of

Spinoza's main philosophical work is the *Ethica*. As in Descartes, the ethical project is conceived of in terms of attaining a highest good. The ethical project conceived in this way is set out most clearly in the opening sections of the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione* (TdIE). The TdIE begins as follows:

After experience had taught me that all the things which regularly occur in ordinary life are empty and futile, and I saw that all the things which were the cause or object of my fear had nothing of good or bad in themselves, except insofar as [my] mind was moved by them, I resolved at last to try to find out whether there was anything which would be the true good, capable of communicating itself, and which alone would affect the mind, all others being rejected—whether there was something which, once found and acquired, would continuously give me the greatest joy, to eternity.⁴⁷

After considering wealth, honour, and sensual pleasure, Spinoza finally finds what he is looking for:

But love toward the eternal and infinite thing feeds the mind with a joy entirely exempt from sadness. This is greatly to be desired, and to be sought with all our strength.⁴⁸

This, in brief, is the goal of the *Ethica*: to lead us to this highest kind of love, a love of God, what he calls in E5 beatitude.

And how is this state to be attained? For Spinoza, beatitude comes through understanding: it is through having more and more adequate ideas that we attain this state of beatitude. But having adequate ideas, for Spinoza, is the same as being active as opposed to being passive, having power as opposed to lacking power, having virtue as opposed to lacking virtue. All of these concepts travel together for Spinoza: having adequate ideas, having power, acting, and having inadequate ideas, lacking power, and being acted upon.⁴⁹ In a number of texts, Spinoza characterizes the path that we have to travel to beatitude in terms of coming closer and closer to a model of human nature that we choose for ourselves. In the preface to E4, Spinoza advances the thesis that 'good' and 'evil' must be understood in relation to a model that we have in mind in terms of which things are judged by the extent to which they agree with or fail to agree with the model. He then continues:

For because we desire to form an idea of man, as a model of human nature which we may look to, it will be useful to us to retain these same words with the meaning I have indicated. In what follows, therefore, I shall understand by good what we know certainly is a means by which we may approach nearer and nearer to the model of human nature that we set before ourselves. By evil, what we certainly know prevents us from becoming like that model. Next, we shall say that men are more perfect or imperfect, insofar as they approach more or less near to this model.⁵⁰

Later in E4 this model of human nature is plausibly identified with what Spinoza calls the 'free man', 'i.e., one who lives according to the dictate of reason alone', that is, one all of whose ideas are adequate.⁵¹

And here is where Spinoza's account of the affects enters. Before undergoing Spinoza's programme, we are subject to the passions. Part III of the *Ethica* is called 'On the

Origin and Nature of the Affects', and part IV, 'Of Human Bondage, and the Powers of the Affects'. Spinoza's account of the passions is very different from Descartes'. Descartes is concerned with passions of the *soul*: he conceives of the soul as a substance distinct from the body, and the passions of the soul are the result of something bodily acting on the soul. For Spinoza, on the other hand, the passions are passions of the *person as a whole*, whether conceived of as body or as mind (where, of course, the mind is the idea of body). Passions are actings-upon due to something impinging on the person from the outside, and causing changes.

Spinoza's account of the passions is grounded in his idea of *conatus*: 'Each thing, as far as it can, strives to persevere in its being.'⁵² This striving is basic, and is what we call will, appetite, or desire:

When this striving is related only to the Mind, it is called Will; but when it is related to the Mind and Body together, it is called Appetite. This Appetite, therefore, is nothing but the very essence of man, from whose nature there necessarily follow those things that promote his preservation. And so man is determined to do those things. Between appetite and desire there is no difference, except that desire is generally related to men insofar as they are conscious of their appetite. So *desire* can be defined as *appetite together with consciousness of the appetite*.⁵³

Two other passions that are especially important to Spinoza are joy and sadness:

We see, then, that the Mind can undergo great changes, and pass now to a greater, now to a lesser perfection. These passions, indeed, explain to us the affects of Joy and Sadness. By *Joy*, therefore, I shall understand in what follows that *passion by which the Mind passes to a greater perfection*. And by *Sadness*, that *passion by which it passes to a lesser perfection*.⁵⁴

It is in terms of these three passions that all the others can be explained: 'apart from these three I do not acknowledge any other primary affect'. For I shall show in what follows that the rest arise from these three.⁵⁵

Now, some passions are better than others. It is obvious that joy is better than sadness, for example, though they are both passions. But, Spinoza argues, we should seek to eliminate the passions as much as is possible. Corresponding to at least some of the *passive* affects (passions), there are *active* affects: 'Apart from the Joy and Desire that are passions, there are other affects of Joy and Desire that are related to us insofar as we act.'⁵⁶ These active affects correspond to adequate ideas. And insofar as we are guided by reason, we should seek more and more adequate ideas: 'What we strive for from reason is nothing but understanding; nor does the Mind, insofar as it uses reason, judge anything else useful to itself except what leads to understanding.'⁵⁷ And therefore, insofar as we are guided by reason, we should seek to transform passive affects into active affects as much as possible. This leads us directly to the intellectual love of God that constitutes beatitude, and is our greatest good. This is one of the main goals of the *Ethica*. He summarizes this theme in a passage from E5, just before the famous discussion of the eternity of the mind:

... the power of the Mind is defined by knowledge alone, whereas lack of power, or passion, is judged solely by the privation of knowledge, i.e., by that through which ideas are called inadequate. From this it follows that that Mind is most acted on, of which inadequate ideas constitute the greatest part... On the other hand, that Mind acts most, of which adequate ideas constitute the greatest part... From what we have said, we easily conceive what clear and distinct knowledge... can accomplish against the affects. Insofar as the affects are passions, if clear and distinct knowledge does not absolutely remove them..., at least it brings it about that they constitute the smallest part of the Mind... And then it begets a Love toward a thing immutable and eternal..., which we really fully possess..., and which therefore cannot be tainted by any of the vices which are in ordinary Love, but can always be greater and greater..., and occupy the greatest part of the Mind..., and affect it extensively.⁵⁸

Let me offer a couple of brief remarks on this. Although the goal in principle is to eliminate *all* of the passions and become completely active, this is impossible. When he wrote the TdIE, Spinoza claimed that 'man conceives a human nature much stronger and more enduring than his own, and at the same time sees that nothing prevents his acquiring such a nature'.⁵⁹ But by the time of the *Ethica*, he came to realize that only an infinite creature could hope to have all and only adequate ideas: 'It is impossible that a man should not be a part of Nature, and that he should be able to undergo no changes except those which can be understood through his own nature alone, and of which he is the adequate cause.'⁶⁰ And secondly, I have left out another important theme that leads us to convert passions into active affects. Basic to Spinoza's politics is the idea that only humans are of use to other humans, and they are more so to the extent that they are alike. And they are alike to the extent that they have active affects (adequate ideas) and eliminate the passions (inadequate ideas). For the sake of a stable society, we should all seek to transform our passions into active affects, and help and encourage others to do so too. This is connected to the other theme in an interesting and deep way. Since we know that we need the protection and comforts of society in order to be able to perfect the intellect and reach beatitude, we want to do that which will encourage others to perfect their intellects as well: 'The good which everyone who seeks virtue wants for himself, he also desires for other men; and this Desire is greater as his knowledge of God is greater [i.e., as he is more rational]'.⁶¹

In this way, to understand Spinoza's account of the passions and emotions, we must understand it as part of a larger programme. His interest is not in the passions and emotions in themselves, but as they contribute to this larger programme. Spinoza's philosophy takes us on a dramatic path from bondage to beatitude, from wandering in the desert to the realization of our greatest good, the intellectual love of God that gives us true happiness. The study of the passions and emotions is important to Spinoza largely in the context of this central Spinozistic project.⁶²

Before leaving Spinoza, let me add one further observation.⁶³ One of the interesting and surprising doctrines on the emotions that Spinoza advances in the *Ethica* is about humility: 'Humility is not a virtue, that is, it does not arise from reason.'⁶⁴ This follows almost directly from the very definition of humility Spinoza offers: 'Humility is a

sadness which arises from the fact that a man considers his own lack of power.⁶⁵ Since a sadness is ‘that passion by which [the mind] passes to a lesser perfection’, it is a passion, and not an action, a consequence of an inadequate idea and not an adequate idea.⁶⁶ And thus, it is something that Spinoza thinks we should eliminate, if we are to seek to be like the free man, the model of human nature that he thinks that we are emulating. At the same time, though, for the rationally imperfect many, those who may be unable to attain the full rationality that the philosopher seeks, humility (and other passive emotions) have their place. In a passage slightly later in the text Spinoza writes:

Because men rarely live from the dictate of reason, these two affects, Humility and Repentance, and in addition, Hope and Fear, bring more advantage than disadvantage. So since men must sin, they ought rather to sin in that direction. If weak-minded men were all equally proud, ashamed of nothing, and afraid of nothing, how could they be united or restrained by any bonds? The mob is terrifying, if unafraid. So it is no wonder that the Prophets, who considered the common advantage, not that of the few, commended Humility, Repentance, and Reverence so greatly. Really, those who are subject to these affects can be guided far more easily than others, so that in the end they may live from the guidance of reason, i.e., may be free and enjoy the life of the blessed.⁶⁷

Though the philosopher should avoid humility and other related emotions, there is a way in which they should be encouraged in the mob.

Julie Cooper discusses the critique of these passages among contemporaries. (She notes especially Pierre Poiret, a French Protestant, François Lamy, a Benedictine Monk, and the Dutch Cartesian theologian, Christoph Wittich.)⁶⁸ Nor should such critical reactions be surprising. As Cooper emphasizes, humility is a central Christian virtue. Looking at Spinoza’s theory of the passions from the viewpoint of these critics reminds us of what was at stake with a theory of the passions in that period: Spinoza is not presenting a neutral scientific theory, but entering into a charged theological context. What he is doing, in essence, is denying the importance of a central theological doctrine in Christianity, and arguing that humility (and by implication, Christianity itself) is not a genuine good, but only a means of controlling the unruly masses.

1.4 Malebranche

The theological dimension is also very important for understanding the theory of the passions that Nicolas Malebranche advances in book V of his *Recherche de la vérité*.⁶⁹ Right from the opening sentences of Malebranche’s Preface, it is clear that there is a theological agenda in the book:

The mind of man is by its nature situated, as it were, between its Creator and corporeal creatures, for, according to Saint Augustine, there is nothing but God above it and nothing but bodies

below it. But as the mind's position above all material things does not prevent it from being joined to them, and even depending in a way on a part of matter, so the infinite distance between the sovereign Being and the mind of man does not prevent it from being immediately joined to it in a very intimate way.⁷⁰

As a result of Original Sin, Malebranche argues, our minds have become especially closely connected with our bodies:

...Original Sin has so strengthened our soul's union with our body that it seems to us that these two parts of us are but one and the same substance...⁷¹

Malebranche, of course, wants us to return to the prelapsarian state, loosen the connection by which the mind is bound with the body, and return to the proper connection between the mind and God. For Malebranche, this can be done by withdrawing the mind from the senses, and returning to reason and clear and distinct perception:

The body...fills the mind with so many sensations that it becomes incapable of knowing things that are at all hidden. Corporeal vision dazzles and distracts the mind's vision so that there is great difficulty in clearly seeing a given truth with the soul's eyes while we are using the body's eyes to know it. This shows that it is only by the mind's attention that any truths are discovered are any sciences acquired, because the mind's attention is in fact only its conversion and return to God, who is our sole Master...⁷²

In this way, Descartes' fundamental rule to believe only that which we can clearly and distinctly perceive turns out to be a theological maxim by which we are enjoined to turn our minds away from the body, and towards God.

But there is another way in which we can turn away from the corrupt corporeal world to which we have become bound in Original Sin, and return the mind to its proper connection with God: through the rejection of the passions. Malebranche defines the passions as follows: 'The passions of the soul are impressions from the Author of nature that incline us toward loving our body and all that might be of use in its preservation.'⁷³ As in Descartes' conception of the passions, they are given to us in order to 'incline...us to will what seems to be useful to the body'.⁷⁴ Thus they make us slaves of the body. But, Malebranche argues,

Only God makes us see clearly that we should yield to what He wishes of us; therefore, we should be slaves of Him alone. There is no certainty in the charms and endearments, in the threats and terror that the passions cause in us; they are only confused and obscure sensations to which we should not yield. We must wait until a purer light illumines us, until this time of passion passes away and God speaks. We must withdraw into ourselves and there search out Him who never leaves us and who enlightens us always.... But our passions continually draw us away from ourselves, and by their clatter and shadows they prevent us from being instructed by His voice and illumined by His light.⁷⁵

In that way, the passions bind us to the material world, and prevent us from reuniting with God and returning to the prelapsarian state.

In this way, Malebranche's account of the passions is closely linked to his central philosophical and theological project: it is an account of the passions that will help us to understand how it is that we have become separated from God. More than that, it is an account of the passions that will help lead us *back* to God.

1.5 Some Concluding Thoughts

I began with a few words about what the contemporary theory of the passions looks like, before my brief excursus into a few historical discussions of the passions. At this point I would like to venture some comparisons between the two.

Modern theorists seem to take it for granted that the emotions and passions form a kind of autonomous domain of phenomena that can be studied on their own terms. Certainly it bears connections with other domains, such as psychology and psychoanalysis, or moral theory. But even so, there is such a subject as the theory of the passions which can be pursued as its own kind of specialty in philosophy. That is to say, the domain of the theory of the passions seems to be largely independent of other philosophical projects: it is a philosophical project of its own.⁷⁶

But one of the very interesting facts about the earlier accounts that we briefly examined is precisely the way in which the accounts of the passions were thoroughly interconnected with other questions in other domains, and with the larger projects that the philosophers we have been examining were undertaking. For Descartes, the account of the passions of the soul is thoroughly connected with his radical new conception of the human soul and body, and how it fits into his radically new conception of the physical world. In a very related way, it is also connected with his revisionist conception of what constitutes moral philosophy. For Descartes, the theory of the passions constitutes a central piece of the explanation of how the science of morals fits into the account he gives of the tree of knowledge, where the science of moral philosophy is one of the branches attached to the trunk of the tree of philosophy, which is physics. Though influenced by Descartes, to be sure (and Hobbes as well), Spinoza's account of the passions and affects (emotions) bears a different relation to his larger programme for philosophy, though it is, in its way, as integrated as it is in Descartes' programme. For Spinoza, the account of the passions and their transformation into actions is a central part of the developmental narrative that forms the core of his thought. They are interesting not in themselves, but in the role that they play in the liberation narrative at the heart of his thought, the path from human bondage to beatitude. They are not a neutral and autonomous domain of inquiry, as they seem to be in contemporary analytic thought, but very much a charged part of the philosopher's journey to enlightenment and genuine happiness. This is not altogether unlike the role that the passions and emotions play in Malebranche's *Recherche de la vérité*, where they are an important part of the Augustinian drama in which we are trying to free ourselves from the body and return to the close connection with God that constitutes our prelapsarian state. In this

way, the theories of the passions we have been examining are very closely linked with very particular historical projects in the figures involved: we are dealing with accounts of the passions appropriate to a Cartesian, or Spinozistic, or Malebranchist philosophical project.

What does this all mean? What consequences can we draw from this study for contemporary theories of the passions? As I said at the beginning, as a simple historian of philosophy I hesitate to tell my analytic colleagues how to pursue their projects. But I would like to end with a question. The earlier theories of the passions and emotions we examined are embedded in a rich web of philosophical context; modern theories are more autonomous. Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche are interested in the passions and emotions not in and of themselves, but as part of larger philosophical projects; contemporary theorists, on the other hand, seem to regard the theory of the passions as an autonomous philosophical problem, one that can be treated independently of any larger project. Why? Is the philosophy of the passions as treated by our contemporaries really as autonomous as it appears to be? What is it that is different about contemporary discussions that allows us now to treat the domain in a coherent theoretical way without having larger metaphysical, or ethical, or theological questions relevant to the issues? The contrast between the historical accounts of the passions that we have examined and contemporary accounts suggest that it may be interesting to look for the larger context and connections that may be hidden in our contemporary theories.

When investigating historical figures and their ideas, the historian of philosophy naturally turns to larger intellectual (and sometimes social and political) context to make intelligible ideas that may be obscure to us. But even we historians swim in the same waters as our analytical colleagues in the departments in which we teach. In this way, our common context of philosophical assumptions can be largely invisible to us. Their philosophical accounts of the passions may well bring with them philosophical assumptions and connections with other philosophical programmes that we cannot see simply because we are too close to them, that is, because we take them for granted without even noticing that we do. It is one virtue of history that it may lead us to look at ourselves in a different, and, in a sense, more analytic way.

Notes

1. Ronald de Sousa, 'Emotion', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 edition; revised January 31, 2013), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/emotion/>>.
2. Peter Goldie, 'Emotion', *Philosophy Compass* 2 (2007), pp. 928–38. Robert C. Solomon, ed., *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
3. Amélie O. Rorty, ed., *Explaining Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).