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## Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions

### Abstract

What are some of the general methodological issues involved in writing a history of the emotions? Before answering this question, we need to address a major problem. If emotions are, as many scientists think, biological entities, universal within all human populations, do they—indeed can they—have much of a history at all? Once it is determined that they are less universal than claimed (without denying their somatic substratum), a host of problems and opportunities for the history of emotions emerge. In this paper, I propose that we study the emotions of the past by considering “emotional communities” (briefly: social groups whose members adhere to the same valuations of emotions and their expression). I argue that we should take into consideration the full panoply of sources that these groups produced, and I suggest how we might most effectively interpret those sources. Finally, I consider how and why emotional change takes place, urging that the history of emotions be integrated into other sorts of histories—social, political, and intellectual.

### **“Universalist” and “presentist” views of emotions**

Today, a significant proportion of the psychological literature is dominated by the work of Paul Ekman and his associates on the universal facial expressions of emotion.<sup>1</sup> Ekman’s original hypothesis, “that particular facial behaviors are universally associated with particular emotions,” has been reaffirmed in numerous studies, often using sets of photographs of faces prepared by Ekman.<sup>2</sup> The “particular emotions” that Ekman identified—happiness, sadness, disgust, surprise, anger, and fear—are now generally assumed to be the “basic emotions” common to all human beings. “Normal” people are expected not only to express these emotions as they are expressed in Ekman’s photographs but also to correctly see and interpret these emotions on the faces of others. Thus, some psychologists associate mental abnormalities with an individual’s failure to correctly identify emotions from Ekman’s prototypes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The classic paper is Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen, “Constants across Cultures in the Face and Emotion,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 17(2) (1971), pp. 124–39. For a recent reaffirmation, see Marc D. Pell et al., “Recognizing Emotions in a Foreign Language,” *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 33(2) (2009), pp. 107–120: “Expressions of basic emotions (joy, sadness, fear, disgust) can be recognized pan-culturally for the face.” (from the article Abstract, p. 107). For a recent critique, see Ruth Leys, “How Did Fear Become a Scientific Entity and What Kind of Entity Is It?” *Representations* no. 110 (2010): 66–104. I wish to record my thanks here to Rüdiger Zill of the Einstein Forum; to members of the Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung, who hosted a lecture derived from this paper in July 2009 and who offered extremely pertinent comments (I here record particular gratitude to Jan Plamper and Ute Frevert); and to this journal’s anonymous reader, from whose suggestions I have profited.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, *Pictures of Facial Affect* (Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> Photographs from Ekman and Friesen, *Pictures of Facial Affect*, were, for example, recently used to differentiate between patients with mild frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and cognitively healthy subjects (HC): those with FTD were said to be “impaired in the recognition of basic emotions” because they did not correctly identify the emotions represented by the faces. See Janine Diehl-Schmida et al., “The Ekman 60 Faces Test as a Diagnostic Instrument in Frontotemporal Dementia,” *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology* 22(4)

In the last ten years or so, neurobiologists and geneticists have added their techniques to such studies. They, too, have tended to work within Ekman's paradigm. Elizabeth Carter and Kevin Pelphrey, for example, recently published a study using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to assess brain activation when subjects recognized happy and angry faces.<sup>4</sup> They found that angry faces activated expected areas of the brain (the amygdala and superior temporal sulcus) as well as unanticipated areas (the lateral fusiform gyrus, for example), while happy faces activated other brain regions. Genetic researcher Catherine Hayes and her colleagues, meanwhile, found that carriers of the Huntington's disease (HD) gene were impaired in the facial expression of disgust.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Marco Battaglia and his co-researchers associated certain genetic variations with the variable ability of young children to correctly interpret "other children's facial expressions of emotions."<sup>6</sup>

It is true that some neurobiological and genetic studies have nothing to do with facial expressions. However, this does not obviate their generally uni-

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(2007), pp. 459–64, [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com). Ekman's association of particular facial expressions with "genuine" emotions has been used to identify liars in court and potential terrorists, whose feelings are said to "leak out" through the facial muscles and may be spotted by trained observers: see the notice on an exhibit of Ekman's original photographs at San Francisco's Exploratorium: Jascha Hoffman, "How Faces Share Feelings," *Nature* 452 (7186) (2008), p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth J. Carter and Kevin A. Pelphrey, "Friend or Foe? Brain Systems Involved in the Perception of Dynamic Signals of Menacing and Friendly Social Approaches," *Social Neuroscience* 3(2) (2008), pp. 151–163.

<sup>5</sup> Catherine J. Hayes, Richard J. Stevenson, and Max Coltheart, "Production of Spontaneous and Posed Facial Expressions in Patients with Huntington's Disease: Impaired Communication of Disgust," *Cognition & Emotion* 23(1) (2009), pp. 118–134.

<sup>6</sup> Marco Battaglia et al., "Effect of the Catechol-O-methyltransferase valsuperscript 1-sup-5-sup-8met Genotype on Children's Early Phases of Facial Stimuli Processing," *Genes, Brain & Behavior* 6(4) (2007), pp. 364–374, quote at p. 354 (the Abstract). For another study of genes and facial expressions, see Udo Dannlowski, et al., "5-HTTLPR Biases Amygdala Activity in Response to Masked Facial Expressions in Major Depression," *Neuropsychopharmacology* 33(2) (2008), pp. 418–24.

versalizing tendencies.<sup>7</sup> Almost all such studies are also inclined to be “presentist”; they suggest that today’s emotions were the emotions of the past and will remain those of the future.<sup>8</sup>

Evolutionary psychologists have the potential to challenge this view. But the most important theorists of the evolutionary perspective, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby and their followers, fail to do so.<sup>9</sup> They argue that, “the mind is a set of information-processing machines that were designed by natural selection to solve adaptive problems faced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors.”<sup>10</sup> The mind has “specialized circuits,” or “modules,” each with a particular function. There are, for example, a mate-finding module and a module for hunting animals.<sup>11</sup> These modules were created in the Paleolithic period, an era that Cosmides and Tooby consider to have been quite static. Each module represents an adaptation by hunter-gatherers to relatively simple and constantly recurring demands: “finding mates, hunting animals, gathering plant foods, negotiating with friends, defending ourselves against aggression, raising children, choosing a good habitat, and so on ... Those whose circuits were better designed for solving these problems left more children,

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<sup>7</sup> Consider the recent study of the relationship between attention to “words related to anxious and dysphoric emotional states” and “the short allele in a variable repeat sequence of the promoted region of the serotonin transporter gene (5-HTTLPR)” in Christopher G. Beevers et al., “Serotonin Transporter Genetic Variation and Biased Attention for Emotional Word Stimuli among Psychiatric Inpatients,” *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 116(1) (2007), pp. 208–12.

<sup>8</sup> Typical is Paul Ekman, *Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life* (New York: Times Books, 2003), pp.196–7, who identifies an Italian adjective for proud, *fièro*, as expressing “pride in achievement” and claims that “the desire to experience *fiero* [sic] has been essential throughout human history, as it has helped to motivate great efforts and great achievements.”

<sup>9</sup> Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, “Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer.” <http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/primer.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Cosmides and Tooby, “Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer.”

<sup>11</sup> For a somewhat more elaborate discussion of this issue, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, “The Uses of Biology: A Response to J. Carter Wood’s ‘The Limits of Culture?’” *Cultural and Social History* 4 (2007), pp. 553–58.

and we are descended from them.”<sup>12</sup> Cosmides and Tooby assume that the human mind has not changed since this period; people had no time to adapt to the conditions—relatively populous and permanent communities—of the Neolithic and subsequent periods. Hence Cosmides and Tooby’s startling conclusion: “our modern skulls house a stone age mind.” While not, strictly speaking, “presentist,” this view freezes human emotions (and other responses) into one form—the form that we have today and that was formed during the prehistoric era.<sup>13</sup>

### **Challenging the presentists and universalists**

Scholars have confronted these studies in two main ways: by critiquing the experiments (of psychologists) and the assumptions (of the evolutionists) that have produced the universalist/presentist positions; and by asserting the social constructionist theory of emotions.

Some scientists have challenged the universalist/presentist research on its own ground. Anthropologist E. Richard Sorenson, for example, was present when Ekman did his initial work on faces among the Fore people of New Guinea. Although Ekman concluded from this work “that particular facial behaviors are universally associated with particular emotions,” in fact, his protocol was to have a translator-assistant tell each subject an “emotion story.” Each story was intended to connote a specific emotion. The subject was then asked to choose from among three photographs of faces the one that best expressed that emotion. For example, for “happiness,” Ekman’s assistant told the subject the following story: “His (her) friends have come, and he (she) is happy.” As Sorenson observed, “It was likely that at least some responses were influenced by feedback between translator and subject ... The

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<sup>12</sup> Cosmides and Tooby, “Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer.”

<sup>13</sup> Summarizing this view, to which he subscribes, Keith Oatley makes explicit the connection between universalism and presentism: Keith Oatley, *Emotions: A Brief History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 28: “If we take the adage of Tooby and Cosmides—‘the past explains the present’—and run it backwards, we can look at what we recognize as modern emotions—happiness, love, sadness, anger, and so on—and project them back into the past.”

suggestion that free exchange of information was 'cheating' was quite incomprehensible to the Fore and alien to their view of language as an element of cooperative interaction among close associates."<sup>14</sup> Reviewing the testing situation, psychologist James A. Russell pointed out that the Fore people may have thought that the faces were responding to situations, not expressing emotions.<sup>15</sup> In that case, the experiment was not particularly about emotions. When Sorenson showed Ekman's photographs to Fore subjects and asked them to name an emotion directly from the appearance of the face, "many displayed uncertainty, hesitation and confusion. Some were completely tongue-tied; others trembled and perspired profusely or looked wildly about."<sup>16</sup> A table providing the results of this interrogation shows that the Fore subjects who had had the least contact with Westerners gave many "wrong" responses. For example, all respondents used the equivalents of the words "anger" or "happiness" to describe the face intended to demonstrate disgust. The same was true for the "sadness" face.<sup>17</sup> That Ekman's method produced more positive results may be due to the fact that it was a "forced choice" test.<sup>18</sup>

Some psychologists note that the faces in Ekman's photographs do not show spontaneous, real-life emotions, but rather are posed. They therefore they lack "ecological validity."<sup>19</sup> Some studies suggest that in real life few

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<sup>14</sup> E. Richard Sorenson, *The Edge of the Forest: Land, Childhood and Change in a New Guinea Protoagricultural Society* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1976), p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> James A. Russell, "Is There Universal Recognition of Emotion from facial Expression? A Review of the Cross-Cultural Studies," *Psychological Bulletin* 115 (1994), pp. 102-141, here 127. Russell continues: "It is undoubtedly informative that people in isolated, illiterate cultures associate the same facial movements with greeting a friend, fighting, and smelling something bad, as do we," but it goes too far to associate these social behaviors with emotions, let alone universal emotions.

<sup>16</sup> Sorenson, *The Edge of the Forest*, p. 140.

<sup>17</sup> Sorenson, *The Edge of the Forest*, Table 8, p.141. Further compounding the problems, the responses were either in Pidgen or Fore language.

<sup>18</sup> Russell, "Is there Universal Recognition?", p. 123.

<sup>19</sup> Leslie R. Brody, "Gender Differences in Emotional Development: A Review of Theories and Research," *Journal of Personality* 53 (1985), pp. 102-149, here p. 117. The debate on the

facial expressions of emotion resemble those in staged photographs and, further, that most facial expressions are ambiguous, requiring contextual clues to make them intelligible.<sup>20</sup>

Paul Turke, an evolutionist who takes issue with Cosmides and Tooby, challenges the idea that emotions were formed once and for all in the Old Stone Age. He points out that it is an empirical issue whether or not prehistoric culture was stable while changes in the Neolithic period were “too rapid” to allow for adaptation.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, we know rather little about the Paleolithic period, and hypotheses about it are (ironically) largely informed by what we know about emotions in our own time.<sup>22</sup> Even if the Paleolithic era were the only period of human adaptation, it is not clear that we would therefore have “stone-age minds.” According to evolutionary biologist Richard Alexander, the social and cultural challenges of the Old Stone Age were every bit as complex (and changing) as those of our own, and the kinds of adaptation required then—selecting individuals who had the best skills for negotiating status, masking self-interest, and forming alliances—made for

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ecological validity of Ekman’s faces was pointedly raised by James A. Russell, “The Contempt Expression and the Relativity Thesis,” *Motivation and Emotion* 15(2) (1991), pp. 149–68. This was met by a rejoinder: Paul Ekman, Maureen O’Sullivan, and David Matsumoto, “Confusions about Context in the Judgment of Facial Expression: A Reply to ‘The Contempt Expression and the Relativity Thesis,’” *Motivation and Emotion* 15(2) (1991), pp. 169–76, followed by Russell’s reply and yet another rejoinder from Ekman et al. For a study of facial expressions in their social context, see Robert R. Provine, “Yawns, Laughs, Smiles, Tickles, and Talking: Naturalistic and Laboratory Studies of Facial Action and Social Communication,” in *The Psychology of Facial Expression*, ed. James A. Russell and José Miguel Fernández-Dols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 7.

<sup>20</sup> James A. Russell, “Reading Emotions from and into Faces: Resurrecting a Dimensional-Contextual Perspective,” in *Psychology of Facial Expression*, chap. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Paul W. Turke, “Which Humans Behave Adaptively, and Why Does it Matter?” *Ethology and Sociobiology* 11 (1990), pp. 305–39, here 316.

<sup>22</sup> Turke, “Which Humans Behave Adaptively?”, p. 317. For example, the module for “detecting social cheats” is based on the results of a modern psychological test given to modern subjects; see Leda Cosmides, “The Logic of Social Exchange: Has Natural Selection Shaped how Humans Reason? Studies with the Wason Selection Task,” *Cognition* 31 (1989), pp. 187–276.

well-adapted humans today.<sup>23</sup> In addition, as Turke notes, “evolutionary psychologists pay little attention to the findings of neural scientists that demonstrate that the structure of the brain remains plastic at all stages of life.”<sup>24</sup> Robert Turner and Charles Whitehead cite studies using fMRI and MEG (magnetoencephalography) imaging to show that the very “functional anatomy and microstructure of the brain” are “shaped by experience.”<sup>25</sup>

New approaches to the biology of heredity also suggest that contemporary human beings are unlikely to harbor stone-age minds. Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb persuasively argue that evolution selects for plasticity, for “the capacity to adjust in response to conditions.”<sup>26</sup> Our current environment affects gene expression and in some instances (in very simple organisms and at specialized cell levels) induces non-random mutations in genes.<sup>27</sup> Most importantly, much of human evolution has nothing to do with genes: cellular, behavioral, and symbolic inheritance systems are epigenetic. Adaptive evolution through these mechanisms—which are ongoing—is far more rapid than genetic evolution.<sup>28</sup> These observations give ballast to the idea that emotions may change over time and that a history of the emotions is not only possible, but essential to understanding the human condition.

Social constructionism has the potential to second this conclusion. Briefly, this theory holds that emotions—how they are experienced, expressed, and

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<sup>23</sup> Richard D. Alexander, *The Biology of Moral Systems* (Hawthorne, N.Y.: A. de Gruyter, 1987); idem, “Evolution of the Human Psyche,” in Paul Mellars and Christopher Stringer, eds., *The Human Revolution: Behavioural and Biological Perspectives on the Origins of Modern Humans* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 455–513.

<sup>24</sup> Turke, “Which Humans Behave Adaptively?” p. 315.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Turner and Charles Whitehead, “How Collective Representations can Change the Structure of the Brain,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 15(10–11) (2008), pp. 43–57, quote at p. 45. I thank Bob Turner for supplying me with pertinent bibliography on this topic.

<sup>26</sup> Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb, *Evolution in Four Dimensions: Genetic, Epigenetic, Behavioral, and Symbolic Variation in the History of Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 76–78.

<sup>27</sup> Jablonka and Lamb, *Evolution in Four Dimensions*, pp. 52, 63–71, 92–101.

<sup>28</sup> Jablonka and Lamb, *Evolution in Four Dimensions*, p. 184.



interpreted—are shaped by the societies in which they are embedded.<sup>29</sup> The idea is an offshoot of cognitive psychology, which sees emotions as types of appraisals.<sup>30</sup> Although few cognitivists work on the topic, their theories show that it is possible—indeed likely—for different cultures to encourage different sorts of emotional assessments. This idea is taken to its logical conclusion by social constructionists like Sarah Tarlow, for whom emotions are “unbounded, existing only through cultural meaning, culturally specific, and subject to transformation or disappearance through time.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, however, even social constructionists rarely look at emotions’ historical dimensions. Rather, their work has led above all to fine micro-studies of cultures whose emotions differ from our own. Catherine Lutz’s book on the Ifaluk (inhabitants of an atoll in the Caroline Islands of Micronesia) is a good example of this. Noting that these islanders had words for emotions that corresponded very poorly to Western terms, Lutz rejected the notion that emotions were biological or, in her word, “natural.”<sup>32</sup> The feeling of *fago*, for example, could be described only very inadequately by the odd combination of “compassion, love, and sadness.”<sup>33</sup> But Lutz never asked whether *fago* had always been an emotion term for the Ifaluk or, even if it had been, whether it had always had the same meaning for them. She was not interested in its history.

Social constructionism and biological approaches to emotions have opposite tendencies. But their differences are not insuperable. There is no theoretical reason why an Ifaluk in the throes of *fago* could not undergo an fMRI test to see what areas of his or her brain have been activated. One might even

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<sup>29</sup> The classic set of studies is *The Social Construction of Emotions*, ed. Rom Harré (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>30</sup> A recent overview is Gerald L. Clore and Andrew Ortony, “Appraisal Theories: How Cognition Shapes Affect into Emotion,” in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. Michael Lewis, Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones, and Lisa Feldman Barrett (3d ed.; New York: Guilford Press, 2008), pp. 628–44.

<sup>31</sup> Sarah Tarlow, “Emotion in Archaeology,” *Current Anthropology* 41(5) (2000), pp. 713–46.

<sup>32</sup> Catherine Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>33</sup> Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions*, p. 144.

hypothesize that *fago* should be associated with the very regions that are today correlated with love and sadness, both of which have been studied with brain scans.<sup>34</sup> The social constructionist approach to non-Western populations has the potential to be a fruitful source of biological and anthropological collaboration, though, as of now, rather little has been done.<sup>35</sup>

### **Toward a history of the emotions**

The universalist and presentist views of the emotions are thus problematic enough to open the way for a history (or, no doubt, multiple histories) of the emotions. Such a history must not deny the biological substratum of emotions, since it is clear that they are embedded in both the body and the brain. At the same time, a history of emotions must problematize the feelings of the past, addressing their distinctive characteristics. Even bodies (and, as we have seen, brains) are shaped by culture.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> E.g. S. Ortigue et al., "The Neural Basis of Love as a Subliminal Prime: An Event-Related Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 19(7) (2007), pp. 1218–1230; Cynthia H. Fu et al., "Neural Responses to Sad Facial Expressions in Major Depression Following Cognitive Behavioral Therapy," *Biological Psychiatry* 64(6) (2008), pp. 505–512. Note that here as in other studies of sadness, "depression" is taken as a synonym. This, however, is not Ekman's definition of sadness, for he thinks that emotions are of short duration. See Paul Ekman, "All Emotions are Basic," in *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions*, ed. Paul Ekman and Richard J. Davidson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 15–19. So far as I can tell, "compassion" has not been mapped in brain-scan studies.

<sup>35</sup> See the similar remarks of Turner and Whitehead, "Collective Representations," p. 54.

<sup>36</sup> For brains, see n. 24 above. For bodies, see Tarlow, "Emotion in Archaeology," p. 718. The introduction by Michael Feher to *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff, and Nadia Tazi (3 parts; New York: Zone Books, 1989), part 1, p. 11 claims that "the history of [the body's] modes of construction can ... turn the body into a thoroughly historicized and completely problematic issue." This is what his multipartite book is about, and Feher contrasts it to the history of the body's "representations"—the body that the natural sciences study—which, he thinks, "always refers to a real body considered to be 'without history.'" But even the natural sciences have understood the "real body" quite variously—i.e., they, too, have constructed it. See, for example, Otniel Dror, "Creating the Emotional Body: Confusion, Possibilities, and Knowledge," in *An*

I wish to suggest here that the notion of “emotional communities” can guide the creation of a history of the emotions in fruitful ways.<sup>37</sup> Emotional communities are largely the same as social communities—families, neighborhoods, syndicates, academic institutions, monasteries, factories, platoons, princely courts. But the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling, to establish what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them (for it is about such things that people express emotions); the emotions that they value, devalue, or ignore; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.<sup>38</sup>

A textual community, as defined by Brian Stock in his book *The Implications of Literacy*, may sometimes be the nucleus of an “emotional commu-

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*Emotional History of the United States*, ed. Peter N. Stearns and Jan Lewis (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 173–194.

<sup>37</sup> There are many other approaches to the history of emotions. For my critique of the approach that explores one emotion at a time, e.g. happiness or anger, see below. The approach that studies the affective elements in public institutions—e.g. the role of words like love and hate and gestures like kisses—tends to emphasize the functional and to minimize the emotional, as e.g. Klaus Oschema, *Freundschaft und Nähe im spätmittelalterlichen Burgund. Studien zum Spannungsfeld von Emotion und Institution* (Köln: Böhlau, 2006). See also *Freundschaft oder “amitié”? Ein politisch-soziales Konzept der Vormoderne im zwischensprachlichen Vergleich (15.–17. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Klaus Oschema (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2007), p.11, where the editor asks: “Wie sollte sich schließlich feststellen lassen, was ein bestimmtes Individuum in einer bestimmten Situation gefühlt haben könnte?” continuing with “der Aporie, in die ein solcher Ansatz zweifellos führen müsste.” Oschema therefore considers the idea of emotional communities “optimistisch” and “problematisch” (p. 11, n.16). However, I do not claim that the study of emotional communities will teach us how “a certain individual feels in a certain situation.” I claim only that it will help us understand how people articulated, understood, and represented how they felt. This, in fact, is about all we can know about anyone’s feelings apart from our own.

<sup>38</sup> See Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions in History,” *American Historical Review* 107 (2002), pp. 821–45, esp. 842–45; eadem, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

nity.”<sup>39</sup> Usually, however, emotional communities are, almost by definition (since emotions tend to have a social, communicative role) an aspect of every social group in which people have a stake and interest. Emotional communities may be large or small. In the modern world, the historian may even treat a nation—an “imagined community”—as an emotional community.<sup>40</sup> Below, I suggest some methods for studying them.

**Gather a dossier of sources for each emotional community**

Ideally, the historian will be able to compile a dossier of sources produced by the group in question. How large must the dossier of sources be? The answer to this question may depend on what is available, and it may also depend on how thorough the study needs to be in the context of the larger history that the historian hopes to write. It is possible to use some representative works of one person as evidence of an emotional community if it is kept in mind that his or her writings were addressed to a public and therefore imply a wider group.<sup>41</sup> It is better, however, to have several different voices from the group to see where the commonalities lie.<sup>42</sup>

The focus should be on norms that are articulated or implied over a range of sources and within a coherent period. Historians interested in the “collective emotions” of crowds should consider the emotional community (or communities) to which the members of the crowd largely belong. It is also important for the historian to keep in mind that emotions are sometimes used not to express or to describe feelings but to label others: is an “angry mob” angry according to the participants or because it is thus described by hostile observers? If the latter is the case, the historian may wish to ask about

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<sup>39</sup> Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

<sup>40</sup> See Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (rev. ed., London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>41</sup> As I did with Gregory the Great in Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, chap. 3.

<sup>42</sup> As in Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, chap. 4, on the Neustrian court.

the place of anger in the emotional economy of the observers rather than its role in the mob. Emotional epithets and characterizations may be used by one group (self-defined by race, class, estate, and so on) for or against another.

It may be necessary to include in the dossier materials that come from different times and places if those sources have a canonical, normative position within the emotional community.<sup>43</sup> In other instances, emotional communities may coalesce around the memory of a charismatic figure; in that case, the myths about that figure are more important than any writings he or she may have produced.<sup>44</sup>

**Problematize emotion terms**

Many words and ideas have only fuzzy equivalents in the past. The word “state” is a good example. Early medievalists are currently engaged in a lively debate about whether or not the term *regnum* suggests that the notion of the state existed in the early Middle Ages. The argument largely turns on the question of whether or not the term was used as an abstraction.<sup>45</sup> But emotion words are more complex than most, posing two major issues. First is the problem of defining the emotion; second is the question of whether the word was at the time considered an emotion.

Let us consider these issues by looking at “happiness.” Darrin M. McMahon has studied the concept from ancient Greece to the present.<sup>46</sup> Relying largely on elite conceptions of felicity, his book is in some ways simply a subset of intellectual history. But emotions are more slippery than many other ideas. McMahon’s study relies on the presumed equivalence of a great

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<sup>43</sup> E.g. the works of Aristotle informed some of the ways in which emotions were understood and expressed by the Dominicans because of the authoritative position of Thomas Aquinas and his writings on the *passiones animae* within that community.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. the figure of Columbanus in Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, chap. 4.

<sup>45</sup> See the articles in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> Darrin M. McMahon, *Happiness: A History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006).

variety of terms. For example, the words that the ancient Greeks used for happiness were (obviously) not the same as English and, indeed can be translated only loosely by any English word. McMahon is well aware of this; nonetheless, he does not hesitate to consider numerous terms to constitute the pre-history of “happiness.”<sup>47</sup> Thus he equates the meanings of *eu prattein* (“doing well”) and *eudaimonia* (“happiness”). Is he right to do so?

Perhaps; but even in that case, we must nevertheless wonder whether either or both of those words were categorized under a rubric anything like our “emotions.” It was only with Plato and, more importantly, Aristotle, that we see the emergence of the term *pathê*, a near-equivalent to the capacious word “emotions.” Interestingly, “happiness,” while today considered a basic emotion corresponding to a universal facial expression, was not among Aristotle’s *pathê*, which he listed as anger (*orgê*), mildness (*praotês*), love (*philia*), hate (*misos*), fear (*phobos*), confidence (*tharrein*), shame (*aischunê*), shamelessness (*anaischungia*), benevolence (*charis*), lack of benevolence (*acharistia*), pity (*eleos*), indignation (*nemesan*), envy (*phthonos*) and, lastly, desire to emulate (*zêlos*).<sup>48</sup> But, just as Aristotle did not recognize happiness as a *pathê*, who today would consider mildness an emotion?

***Make use, where possible, of theorists of emotions from the relevant time period***

How can historians know whether or not the words they are reading signified emotions? One way is to consult theorists of the time. Historians of the Hellenistic period, for example, may rely on Stoic and Epicurean theoreticians, who generated long lists of emotion words.<sup>49</sup> Historians of the thirteenth century are similarly blessed: the scholastics were interested in the *passiones animae*, and Thomas Aquinas wrote, in Simo Knuutila’s words, “the

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<sup>47</sup> See McMahon, *Happiness*, p. 486, n. 4 and p. 487, n.10 for various Greek words for happiness.

<sup>48</sup> See David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> On the Stoic lists, see Margaret R. Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), esp. pp. 56–57.

most extensive medieval treatise on the subject."<sup>50</sup> After 1600, theorists of the emotions abound. Historians should consider what they say not only because theory is important *per se* but also because consulting the terminology of the past helps control for anachronism.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, however, historians must beware of taking formal definitions at face value. Definitions are one thing; the ways that people really use terms are another.<sup>52</sup>

***Weigh the words and phrases to establish their relative importance***

The right vocabulary is not sufficient. The weight and significance of the terms need to be interrogated. A detailed examination of one emotion—say the history of anger—can be justified.<sup>53</sup> Anger was one of Aristotle's *pathê*; it was important in Stoic lists of emotion words and it went on to inspire medieval lists of vices.<sup>54</sup> Yet such an approach does not ask how important anger was in comparison with other emotions at any given time. Historians interested in the characteristics of particular emotional communities need to consider *which* emotions were most fundamental to their styles of expression and sense of self. To figure this out may well mean, in the first instance, counting words. The task is, admittedly, onerous. To be sure, it is possible to read sources to gain a general impression about an emotional community—that

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<sup>50</sup> Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 239.

<sup>51</sup> For historians working in periods in which there are no theorists of emotions, I suggest a method by which words that clearly signify affects may be used to discover other emotion words. See Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Emotion Words," in *Le Sujet de l'émotion au Moyen Âge*, ed. Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy (Paris: Beauchesne, 2009), pp. 93–106.

<sup>52</sup> This point is made in J. L. Briggs, "The Study of Inuit Emotions: Lessons from a Personal Retrospective," in *Everyday Conceptions of Emotion: An Introduction to the Psychology, Anthropology and Linguistics of Emotion*, ed. James A. Russell et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), pp. 204–5.

<sup>53</sup> *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>54</sup> For Aristotle, see Konstan, *Emotions*, chap. 2; for the Stoics, see Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practices in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. p. 404, n.1; for medieval vices, see Lester K. Little, "Anger in Monastic Curses," in *Anger's Past*, chap. 1.

anger and fear predominate, for example. But it is better (if possible, as it is to some degree for pre-modern historians) to establish the frequencies of specific terms. This is relatively easy to do in the case of digitized materials.<sup>55</sup>

Word counts out of context, however, are quite useless. They must be just the starting point of any investigation, alerting the historian to possible pre-occupations, values, and norms. The sources must be read in the old-fashioned, critical way that historians are trained to do, evaluating emotion words or their lack as part of a larger whole. Were emotions expressed physically? In the Burgundian chronicles of the Late Middle Ages, princes were expected to express their anger without movement, but they might laugh heartily.<sup>56</sup> Were emotion words used differently in connection with different social groups? During a rebellion at Bruges in 1436–38, two sets of norms were at play in the sources: princes were said to feel “displeasure” in their “hearts,” but the Brugeois acted out their “affliction” by falling on their knees and sobbing.<sup>57</sup> Are either (or both) of these depictions true? The historian must keep in mind that the emotions depicted in the sources are unlikely to be windows onto an objective external reality, but they do help to reveal the subjective reality of the writer of the source.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The on-line Patrologia Latina Database provides information on numbers of “hits” of words; e-MGH and LLT-A and LLT-B (Libraries of Latin Texts) work similarly. The Corpus Thomisticum, <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/> finds all instances of words or phrases in the works of Thomas Aquinas and some other scholastics.

<sup>56</sup> Laurent Smagghe, “*Sur paine d’encourir nostre indignacion: Rhetorique du courroux princier dans les pays-bas bourguignons à la fin du moyen âge*,” in Damien Boquet and Pirooska Nagy, ed. *Politiques des émotions au Moyen Âge*, Actes du colloque EMMA3, Aix-en-Provence (15–17 mai 2008) (forthcoming).

<sup>57</sup> Jan Dumolyn and Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, “Propagande et sensibilité: La fibre émotionnelle au cœur des luttes politiques et sociales dans les villes des anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons. L’exemple de la révolte brugeoise de 1436–1438” in *Emotions in the Heart of the City (14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century)*, ed. Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), p. 47

<sup>58</sup> When writing about the public tears, sobbing, and groaning of people in the late Middle Ages, Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought and Art in France and the Netherlands in the XIV<sup>th</sup> and XV<sup>th</sup> centuries*, trans. Frederik J. Hop-



Grammar represents another context. Words may have many functions in a sentence, and their meaning may be different in one grammatical role than in another.<sup>59</sup> Does the emotion act or is it acted upon? Is it associated with any adjectives or other parts of speech—including cries or terms for body parts and gestures?

**Read the silences**

Some sources are unemotional in tone and content. These are as important as overtly emotional texts. Emotional communities generally avoid some emotions while stressing others. Or they avoid certain emotions in particular contexts. This is all grist for the historian's mill. For example, Jan Plamper made use of accounts of both soldierly lack of fear and expressions of fear to theorize a major change over time in Russian military psychology.<sup>60</sup> He did not assume that silence on the topic of fear in the early nineteenth-century meant lack of fear. But it did mean that fear-talk was non-normative for soldiers at that time. Later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, military psychologists sanctioned feelings of fear, and at that moment they became more commonly expressed.

William Reddy applied a different method to silences: he tried to determine whether the testimony in nineteenth-century French court cases was "dry," "emotional," or "mixed," concluding that private emotions were acceptable but public were not.<sup>61</sup> "Dry" and "emotional," however, are vague terms. Reddy's "mixed" may be my "emotional."

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man (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 14 pointed out that "unquestionably there is some exaggeration in these descriptions of the chroniclers." But he did not therefore study the culture of the chroniclers and their social circle. I, however, am suggesting the latter approach.

<sup>59</sup> David Konstan, *Pity Transformed* (London: Duckworth, 2001), pp. 102–3 points out that nouns, verbs, and adjectives with the same root may have different meanings.

<sup>60</sup> Jan Plamper, "Fear: Soldiers and Emotion in Early Twentieth-Century Russian Military Psychology," in *Emotional Turn? Feelings in Russian History and Culture*, ed. Jan Plamper; *Slavic Review* 68(2) (2009), pp. 259–83.

<sup>61</sup> William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Table 1, pp. 292–95.

**Read the metaphors**

What should historians do with emotional metaphors? When we read “I blew my stack” in a memoir by Tina Sinatra, Frank Sinatra’s daughter, we can be quite sure that she was using a common trope meaning, “I lost my temper” or, at least, “I was angry.”<sup>62</sup> The phrase signifies an emotion. Historians might reasonably wonder why Tina Sinatra used a metaphor rather than an emotion word, but they would be wrong to discount it just because it does not appear on anyone’s list of emotions. When the eighteenth-century Pennsylvanian Joseph Shippen wrote that “The rising tempest puts in act the soul, /parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole,” he meant that emotions drove men to action.<sup>63</sup> Historians need to be alert to these metaphors.

**Read the ironies**

They also need to know when emotions are meant to tease, shock, or mean the opposite of what they say. The sociologist Norbert Elias, whose theory of the civilizing of emotions is still regarded by many as a model in the field,<sup>64</sup> read all historical texts earnestly: irony escaped him, exaggeration and parody eluded him. When he read the paean to the joys of battle by the twelfth-century troubadour Bertran de Born, for example, he assumed that Bertran was serious (which is likely); that all medieval men enjoyed warfare (which is certainly untrue); and that all their joy was in slaughter (which even this poem disproves).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Tina Sinatra and Jeff Coplon, *My Father’s Daughter: A Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), p. 264.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Nicole Eustace, *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> E.g. Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

<sup>65</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (rev. ed., Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 162, quoting Bertran de Born, “Be-m platz lo gais temps de pascor.” Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 293–99 interpreted Bertran similarly. But more recently Bertran’s work has been read in more complicated manner. See Catherine Léglu, “Moral and Satirical Poetry,” in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay

Because Elias's concept of emotion was hydraulic—violent, ready to burst forth—he always read affect beneath manifestations of coarseness. This extended from spitting to murder. But spitting may have real value among certain groups (e.g., baseball players),<sup>66</sup> while violence may have many causes other than passion, including conceptions of duty, manliness, and honor.<sup>67</sup> These motives are no doubt related to emotions, but they are not equivalent to impulsive explosions. Just as silence should not be confused with the absence of emotion, so violence must not be confounded with emotion.

**Consider the social role of emotions**

Although we tend to speak of the emotions of individuals, emotions are above all instruments of sociability. They are not only socially constructed and “sustain and endorse cultural systems,” but they also inform human rela-

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 47–65, esp. 55–57 and *The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born*, ed. William D. Paden, Jr., Tilde Sankovitch, and Patricia H. Stäblein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 334–45. Paden et al. point out that in “Be-m platz,” as in other poems of Bertran, the joy of the battlefield (*alegratge*) is matched by the poet's “strong love” (*am fort*) of a beautiful girl (*donzella*). In the editors' view, war for Bertran was not the direct expression of impulsive affect but rather “a source and emblem of moral value” (*ibid.*, p. 34). Gérard Gouiran, *L'amour et la guerre. L'oeuvre de Bertran de Born*, 2 vols. (Aix en Provence: Université de Provence, 1985), 1:ii points out that Bertran wrote, apart from songs of war, “des chansons d'amour où la délicatesse des sentiments rivalise avec l'ingéniosité de la forme, ou une méditation religieuse à la fois profonde et sincère.” The attribution of “Be-m platz” to Bertran is almost certain, and, in any event, his other poems point to the same conclusions. For a discussion of Bertran's authorship and the date of the poem, see Gouiran, *L'amour et la guerre*, 2, pp. 723–25.

<sup>66</sup> See Dan Gutman, *It Ain't Cheatin' If You Don't Get Caught: Scuffing, Corking, Spitting, Gunking, Razzing, and Other Fundamentals of our National Pastime* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990).

<sup>67</sup> For duty, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Les émotions de la vengeance,” in *La Vengeance 400–1200*, ed. Dominique Barthélemy, François Bougard, and Régine Le Jan (Rome: École française de Rome, 2006), pp. 237–57; for honor, see Jonas Liliequist, “Violence, Honour and Manliness in Early Modern Northern Sweden,” in *Crime and Control in Europe from the Past to the Present*, ed. Mirkka Lappalainen and Pekka Hirvonen (Helsinki: Academy of Finland, 1999), pp. 174–207.

tions at all levels, from intimate talk between husbands and wives to global relations.<sup>68</sup> Expressions of emotions should thus be read as social interactions. The emotional give and take among people form “scripts” that lead to new emotions and readjusted relationships.<sup>69</sup> When, in 1120, Juhel, the lord of Mayenne, got angry with Guarinus, his former serf, the underlying cause had little to do with the originating incident.<sup>70</sup> The real “function” of Juhel’s outburst was to renegotiate his relationship with Guarinus. Juhel’s anger, the response of various “honest men” around the two antagonists, and the eventual resolution of the conflict, all formed part of a narrative of negotiation initiated by the expression of an emotion.

These scripts sometimes lead historians to wonder whether an emotion is “sincere.” When late medieval French princes declared “peace,” their subjects always (according to the chroniclers) “rejoiced.”<sup>71</sup> Was this real joy? Gerd Althoff has shown that emotions could be used in public forums in clearly understood ways, constituting a virtual language of gesture.<sup>72</sup> Paul Freedman has demonstrated how elites could use the term “anger” as a label

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas J. Scheff, *Emotions, the Social Bond, and Human Reality: Part/Whole Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For the notion that emotions “sustain ... cultural systems,” see Claire Armon-Jones, “The Social Functions of Emotion,” in *The Social Construction of Emotions*, chap. 4.

<sup>69</sup> For emotions as scripts in the ancient world, see Robert A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 8–9, and further bibliography at 151, n. 17.

<sup>70</sup> Richard E. Barton, “‘Zealous Anger’ and the Renegotiation of Aristocratic Relationships in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century France,” in Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger’s Past*, chap. 7.

<sup>71</sup> E.g., joy was always expected as a reaction to peace in the France of the Hundred Years War. See Nicholas Offenstadt, *Faire la paix au moyen âge. Discours et gestes de paix pendant la guerre de Cent Ans* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2007), pp.196–201.

<sup>72</sup> E.g. Gerd Althoff, “Empörung, Tränen, Zerknirschung. ‘Emotionen’ in der öffentlichen Kommunikation des Mittelalters,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 30 (1996), pp. 60–79; idem, “Demonstration und Inszenierung: Spielregeln der Kommunikation in mittelalterlicher Öffentlichkeit,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 27 (1993), pp. 27–50. But see the counterarguments in Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

both to denigrate and praise.<sup>73</sup> None of these instrumental uses of emotions argues against their many other roles even at the same time: emotions often have over-determined functions and meanings. We should not worry about whether an emotion is authentic unless the particular emotional community that we are studying is itself concerned about authenticity. Even in our own day, when sincerity is highly valued, most psychological studies of emotions use posed faces. There is no question of “real” emotion there at all. And with good reason: emotions are, among other things, social signals (although, as I have been arguing, not universal social signals). If an emotion is the standard response of a particular group in certain instances, the question should not be whether it betrays real feeling but rather why one norm obtains over another.

#### ***Trace changes over time***

Studies that focus on one emotional community during a given period have much to recommend them: they provide the “thick description” that makes a culture intelligible.<sup>74</sup> But historians also need to trace changes over time, either because an emotional community itself changes or because a new and different one comes to the fore. Norbert Elias traced change globally by hypothesizing the formation of internal restraints on the emotions (the super-ego) in the course of the sixteenth century.<sup>75</sup> For Elias, the Middle Ages was a period of impulsivity; after it came a period of restraint driven by state formation, greater social and economic interdependencies, and the internalization of inhibitions. This is not an approach that takes seriously the various emotional norms of the many different groups and periods in history.

Peter Stearns comes closer to doing this for the modern era. He is interested in what he calls “emotionology”—the emotional standards that were

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<sup>73</sup> Paul Freedman, “Peasant Anger in the Late Middle Ages,” in Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger’s Past*, chap. 8.

<sup>74</sup> E.g. Stephen D. White, “The Politics of Anger,” in Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger’s Past*, chap. 6, who discusses the emotional culture of the lay nobility in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

<sup>75</sup> For the formation of the super-ego, see, e.g. Elias, *Civilizing Process*, p. 399.

communicated to the middle class by writers of advice manuals and the like. Stearns treats social and economic change as the driver of emotional transformation. The needs of a newly industrialized society created the emotionology of the Victorian era, while the birth of a consumer society and the development of a service sector introduced new emotional standards in the 1920s.<sup>76</sup>

Also treating the modern era, William Reddy makes “emotional regimes,” “emotional suffering,” and “emotional refuges” the agents of change.<sup>77</sup> According to Reddy, “emotional regimes,” which normally coincide with political regimes, prescribe the dominant norms of emotional life. Emotional suffering occurs when people are forced (usually by the prevailing regime) to feel in very restricted ways. Emotional refuges provide relief from suffering by offering “safe release from prevailing emotional norms.” The harsh emotional regime established by the court of the *ancien régime* caused so much emotional suffering that people created “emotional refuges,” bastions of experimental emotional expression and behavior dubbed “sentimentalism” by modern historians. Thus, while tears were frowned upon at Versailles, they were given full reign in the theaters and salons beyond the reach of the court. Reddy suggests that the first stage of the French Revolution was ushered in when the norms of the refuges overwhelmed those of the *ancien régime*. The second turning point took place as sentimentalism itself induced emotional suffering; the reaction against this suffering brought in the Directory and its aftermath.

The notion of an emotional regime closely tracks that of an emotional community—as long as that community dominates the norms and texts of a large part of society. As a concept, “emotional regime” probably works best for the modern period, with its state apparatuses of censorship, political and military monopolies, and economic control, but it can apply to the medieval pe-

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<sup>76</sup> This is a common thread in his many books. See, for example, Peter N. Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

<sup>77</sup> The terms are given formal, terse definitions in Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p. 129.

riod as long as the modes of domination are understood to be less monolithic. Similarly, emotional refuges might be said to correspond to marginal emotional communities. Consider, for example, seventeenth-century England: the emotions connected with despair seem to have predominated in this culture, not only among Baptists and Puritans, for whom it was evidence of religious virtue, but also for important figures like Oxford scholar Robert Burton, who confessed, "I write of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy."<sup>78</sup> At the same time, however, other, more marginal groups had very different emotional values and norms. Among them were the Levellers, political activists during the Puritan Revolution. Although they had many ties to the Puritans and Baptists, they did not privilege despair. Their "mournful cries" were those of the "oppressed man," not the sinner.<sup>79</sup> They called for freedom and justice and thought that it was possible to achieve happiness in this life. Another marginal emotional community of this period may be seen in men like John Evelyn, Thomas Hobbes, and Samuel Pepys, all of whom knew each other. They highly valued the emotion of curiosity, defined by Hobbes as "*Desire* to know why and how, ... such as in no living creature but *man*: so that man is distinguished, not only by his reason, but also by this singular passion from other *animals*; ...which is a lust of the mind that, by a perseverance of delight in the continual and indefatigable generation of knowledge, exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure."<sup>80</sup>

Postulating emotional suffering as the agent of historical change requires us to make moral judgments about specific emotional communities. *Some* members of the absolutist court may have suffered before the Revolution, but others—the king himself, for example—were clearly delighted by its norms and values.<sup>81</sup> Those who despaired in seventeenth-century England certainly

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<sup>78</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling, Rhonda L. Blair, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 1:6.

<sup>79</sup> E.g. John Lilburne, *The Oppressed Man's Importunate and Mournful Cries to be Brought to the Bar of Justice*, 18 April 1648 (2d ed.) <Early English Books Online>

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* 1.6, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 37, italics in original.

<sup>81</sup> I argue this point at greater length in Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, pp. 21–23.

suffered, but they also highly valued their melancholy as (variously) evidence of genius or the beginning of religious conversion.<sup>82</sup>

Let me suggest an alternative paradigm for explaining turning points in the history of the emotions. Dominant emotional communities may themselves change, or they may lose purchase and become marginal. Meanwhile, some formerly marginal communities may come to the fore, whether because they gain political hegemony, because their activities garner prestige, or for some other reason. The norms of the emotional community of Pepys and Evelyn came to predominate in the eighteenth century Enlightenment not because of its political hegemony but because scientific studies gained enormous prestige in the wake of Isaac Newton's accomplishments. Similarly, I would argue, the apparently fearless Russian soldiers of the first half of the nineteenth century were part of an emotional community that changed radically with the growing importance of the field of psychiatry in general and of military psychiatry in particular, in the early twentieth century,

### **The ultimate goal**

Just as issues of gender are now fully integrated into intellectual, political, and social history, so the study of emotions should not (in the end) form a separate strand of history but rather inform every historical inquiry. Thus, for example, a history of Germany between the two world wars should include a discussion of not only the economy, the relations between men and women, the ideologies of communism, fascism, and liberalism, and so on, but also the emotions that were privileged—and denigrated—during that period by various dominant and marginal groups.<sup>83</sup> In the end, the problems and methods of the history of emotions should become the property of history in general.

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<sup>82</sup> For genius, see Noel L. Brann, *The Debate over the Origin of Genius during the Italian Renaissance: The Theories of Supernatural Frenzy and Natural Melancholy in Accord and in Conflict on the Threshold of the Scientific Revolution* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); for despair's religious value, see Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.8.3, ed. John T. McNeill and trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:369–70.

<sup>83</sup> Consider Offenstadt, *Faire la paix*, pp. 192–206, which includes emotions in a study of medieval peace-making.



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