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REVOLTING PASSIONS

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Whatever happened to the passions? The *pathe*, *passiones*, or passions of the soul were a major mental category for thinkers from the ancient Greeks to the early moderns, until the "emotions" came into existence in the nineteenth century. The new science of psychology took over many ancient categories wholesale. The senses and the intellect, the memory and the will were all preserved. But the passions and affections—although they persisted, and persist to this day, in some contexts—were never studied by the exponents of evolution and neuroscience. Instead they were displaced by the "emotions", whose place as a psychological category was cemented through its adoption by eminent scientific figures including Charles Darwin and William James.[1]

The predominant scholarly attitude towards the emotions in recent decades has been one of loving restoration. Long maligned by moralists and theologians as irrational and harmful, so the story goes, it has fallen to modern philosophers, neuroscientists and psychologists in recent years to retrieve the emotions from centuries of neglect and abuse and to restore their intellectual lustre. The standard view now is that emotions are cognitive states which constitute intelligent appraisals of the world. They are neither mere feelings, nor obstacles to reason. The cognitive nature of emotions is used to argue not only against a strong dichotomy between reason and emotion, but also in favour of the relevance of our emotions to ethical decisions. Our pro-emotional revisionism has also extended to rereading canonical works in the history of ideas in search of precursors for the modern orthodoxy about the close interconnection between thinking and feeling.

There is a danger that this modern surge of approval for the emotions will obscure our view of the real nature of both secular and religious traditions of thought about these subjects. Looking carefully at the history of our categories can alert us to important differences between a mental typology

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which differentiates between "appetites", "passions", "affections", and "sentiments" and one which invokes a much more homogenous category of "emotions". In pre-modern and early modern texts, to assert an opposition between reason and the passions was not the same as asserting an opposition between reason and our modern-day "emotions". Nor was it the same as the strict separation made between the intellect and the emotions by nineteenth-century psychologists. The most obvious loss in the transition from theories about the long-established "passions" to distinctively modern theories of "emotions" was the sense of pathology that had accumulated in the former but which was excised from the latter. In what follows I investigate each of these issues a little further, focussing especially on the moral, theological, political and aesthetic reasons that have been put forward historically for fearing a revolt of the passions.[2]

I

In one of his *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*, Seneca wrote: "Show me a man who isn't a slave; one is a slave to sex, another to money, another to ambition; all are slaves to hope or fear." True philosophy, Seneca told his young friend the trainee Stoic Lucilius, was a medicine that could heal the mind, by dispelling fear, rooting out empty desires and reining in the passions.[3] Nearly four centuries later, in *The Free Choice of the Will*, St Augustine wrote similarly about the pernicious power of the passions:

> Passion [*libido*] lords it over the mind, dragging it about, poor and needy, in different directions, stripped of its wealth and virtue. . . . And all the while, the cruel tyranny of evil desire holds sway, disrupting the entire soul and life of man by various and conflicting surges of passion; here by fear, there by anxiety; here by anxiety, there by empty and spurious delights; here by torment over the loss of a loved object, there by a burning desire to acquire something not possessed. . . . On every possible side the mind is shrivelled by greed, wasted away by sensuality, a slave to ambition inflated by pride, tortured by envy, deadened by sloth, kept in turmoil by obstinacy, and distressed by its condition of subjection. And so with other countless impulses that surround and plague the rule of passion.[4]

This seems like a textbook assertion of that opposition between reason and emotion that modern scholars have been at such pains to disclaim, expressing as much distrust of our emotional side as did Seneca. But elsewhere Augustine wrote explicitly against the Stoics:

> Even if *apatheia* is merely a state in which one neither trembles from fear nor suffers from sorrow, it is still a state to guard against in this life if we want to live as human beings should, in the sense of living according to

> God's will. . . . And as for those few who, with a vanity which is even more frightful than it is infrequent, pride themselves on being neither raised nor roused nor bent nor bowed by any emotion [*affectus*] whatsoever—well, they have rather lost all humanity than won true peace.[5]

At first reading, one might suppose that in the first passage Augustine is arguing that our emotions are dangerous, and in the second that they are to be cherished as part of a life of full humanity lived according to God's will. But such a reading, employing the modern English-language category of the "emotions", cannot capture Augustine's intent since he knew no such category (despite the use of the term in modern translations of his work). We cannot expect to find in Augustine (or any other pre-modern author) any attitude towards the "emotions". Augustine was suspicious of those movements of the appetite that he considered misdirected *passiones*, *perturbationes*, *libidines* or even, in Stoic vein, *morbos*; but he took a more positive stance towards higher movements of the will given milder designations such as *motus*, *affectus*, *affectiones* or simply *voluntates*, acts of will.[6]

A similar set of distinctions between appetites, perturbations and passions on the one hand, and higher affections on the other, can be discerned in Aquinas. His adoption of the Aristotelian philosophical categories reinforced a sense of the passivity and, hence, inferiority, of the *passiones*.[7] Aquinas made an important distinction, however, between the passions and other movements of the will:

> The words "love", "desire" and so on are used in two senses. Sometimes they mean passions [*passiones*], with some arousal in the soul. This is what the words are generally taken to mean, and such passions exist solely at the level of sense appetite. But they can be used to denote simple attraction [*affectus*], without passion [*passio*] or perturbation [*concitatio*] of the soul, and such acts are acts of will [*actus voluntatis*]. And in this sense the words apply to angels and to God.[8]

For Aquinas, then, as for Augustine, the realm of the lower passions did not exhaust the affective capacities of the soul. They were complemented by other states which carried a higher spiritual value—namely godly affections without any associated arousal or perturbation of the soul.[9]

The term "passions" has, of course, had a very wide range of meanings both before and after the composition of the *Summa Theologiae*, some more positive than others. When invoked neither as a word of warning nor as a neutral designation for a broad range of movements of the soul, the term "passion" has had important and positive roles in moral and theological discourse. The "passion" of Christ has always been pivotal to Christian teaching, and has been the basis for ideas about the purgative, educative and redemptive role of suffering, whether physical or spiritual, in the Christian life, and about the positive value of ascetic discipline and the mortification of

the flesh. There have also been positive roles envisaged for the calmer and more other-regarding of the passions by moralists and preachers through the centuries and celebrations of the power of religious art and sacred music to command violent but holy passions, as in John Dryden's "Song for St Cecilia's Day" (1687), which exclaims "What passion cannot music raise and quell!"[10]

Nonetheless, the most frequent purpose of moralists, both secular and religious, when it came to discoursing on the passions in medieval and early modern Europe, was to warn and arm against them. A wide range of metaphors was deployed to suggest their malign power. Passions were sins, diseases, natural disasters, wild animals, demons, tyrants, or rebels. When not pictured naturalistically as gales, eruptions, storms, or earthquakes, passions were personified as advocates of vice, or as a rowdy and ungoverned mob clamouring to have their wicked way. The mind seemed to mirror society, comprised of its potentially rebellious lower orders (ungoverned appetites and passions), its well-ordered middling sorts (domestic affections, moral sentiments, sympathy), and its ruling elites (reason and the will). For political theorists, controlling the passions and controlling the people were spoken of in the same breath.[11] In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Edmund Burke argued that the role of government was to satisfy the need "not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection."[12]

Religious writers took a similar view. Isaac Watts's judgement in the 1720s was a typical one when he warned that "Ungoverned passions break all the bonds of human society and peace, and would change the tribes of mankind into brutal herds, or make the world a mere wilderness of savages". Watts wrote that he would not "give up the devout Christian to all wandering fooleries of warm and ungoverned passion". But neither did Watts want to see morality and religion become merely a "matter of speculation or cold reasoning".[13] For him, as for many others in the eighteenth century, a subduing of passion was to be combined with a cultivation of appropriate affections, conceived as a combination of feeling with thinking. Jonathan Edwards wrote in his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746): "Holy affections are not heat without light, but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge".[14]

Francis Hutcheson captured well the eighteenth-century penchant for a rational and yet affectionate moral philosophy. He wrote, in the 1742 third edition of his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, that the "temper which we esteem in the highest degree" was that "universal calm good-will or benevolence, where it is the leading affection of the soul, so as to limit or restrain all other affections, appetites, or passions". When such

calm good-will and benevolent restraint prevailed, Hutcheson wrote, then we could approve, albeit to a lower degree, "every particular kind of affection or passion, which is not inconsistent with these higher and nobler dispositions". Our innate moral sense, he thought, showed this "calm extensive affection to be the highest perfection of our nature; what we may see to be the end or design of such a structure, and consequently what is required of us by the Author of our nature".[15]

Here then we have a sketch of what had become a standard view in moral philosophy by the eighteenth century, and one which persisted into the nineteenth. To live according to one's highest nature was to live as a rational animal, with libidinous passions subdued and godly and sympathetic affections cultivated (by reason, by the will, by habit). This twofold moral axiom—subdue passion, cultivate affection—assumed a division between reason and the passions. A governed and rational passion, properly educated and smartly dressed, could be deemed to have won the approval of the will and intellect, and to have gained entry into polite society in the form of sympathy, affection or sentiment. Thinkers who subscribed to some version of this standard view undoubtedly evoked a distinction between reason and the passions, but—and this is the key point—mental states we might today consider "emotions" were to be found on both sides of that divide. Consequently, statements by pre-modern theologians and their early-modern successors about either the terrible tyranny of the passions or the value of moral sentiments and religious affections cannot be taken as evidence of any generalised attitude to the "emotions".

II

It was against the backdrop of this widespread secular and religious consensus that reason ought to govern the passions that David Hume's famous dictum looked so striking: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions".[16] In these few words, Hume signalled not only the humbling of reason, now given a lowly place as just one among the crowd of common passions, but also his rejection of the standard psychological model in which the mind was comprised of the capacities and movements of two great faculties, namely the will and the intellect. For Hume, instead, mental life was reduced to a series of impressions and feelings, strung together like beads on an unobservable necklace. Hume was one of the first writers in the English language to refer to "emotions" in something like the modern psychological sense. In this he may have been inspired by Descartes's recommendation of the term *émotions*. Other early users of the category were also Scottish, including Adam Smith, Lord Kames, and the Edinburgh moral philosopher Thomas Brown. Brown's hugely popular *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1820) did more than any other work to fix the "emotions" in the nineteenth-century mind.[17]

The word "emotion" had previously signified any sort of commotion or disturbance (among the people, of the body, or in the mind). During the eighteenth century it became a more common term, sometimes used simply as a stylistic variant for "passion", "affection" or "feeling", but sometimes in a way that was deliberately contrasted with those older terms. Hume and Smith both used the term "emotions" quite freely and generally unsystematically to designate "movements" or "agitations" of the mind. In this sense, for Hume, an "emotion" could be something "which attends a passion".[18] Among those who made a clear distinction between "passions" and "emotions", Lord Kames stipulated that passions involved desires but that emotions did not, while the dissenting physician and philosopher Thomas Cogan was among those who thought that the term "emotions" should be used to refer to the outward bodily effects of inward passions of the mind.[19] Thomas Brown can be credited with laying the groundwork for a new paradigm, securing the place of the emotions as a modern psychological category, and bringing an end to some decades of terminological dispute.[20] Brown, like Hume before him, set aside the traditional faculty psychology espoused both by the scholastics and by his predecessors in the "Common Sense" school, instead reducing all mental phenomena to a series of states, conceived as basic psychological atoms, and divided into just three categories: sensations, thoughts, and emotions.

Brown's *Lectures* went through twenty editions between 1820 and 1860 and exercised a considerable influence on philosophical and psychological writers on both sides of the Atlantic. Brown's admirers included Thomas Chalmers and John Stuart Mill, and his category of the "emotions" was taken up by the pioneers of neurological and evolutionary approaches to the mind, including Alexander Bain, Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and William James. In 1874 Yale President Noah Porter wrote: "The influence of Brown's terminology and of his methods and conclusions has been potent in the formation and consolidation of the Associational Psychology—represented by J. Mill, J. S. Mill, Alexander Bain, and Herbert Spencer."[21] William James recalled, when delivering his Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, that he had spent his youth "immersed in Dugald Stewart and Thomas Brown", whose works had inspired "juvenile emotions of reverence" that he had not yet outgrown.[22] The "emotions" served the purposes of a self-consciously secularising group of psychological thinkers. Through Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) and William James's "What is an emotion?" (1884) this new category became the property of the fledgling science of psychology. The "emotions" thus had a scientific cachet lacked by the "passions", and none of the latter term's theological and moral connotations. Unlike terms such as "passions", "lusts", "desires" and "affections", the term "emotions" never appeared in an English translation of the Bible.

Aside from inhabiting the more sterile semantic field appropriate to a scientific category, what else was different about the "emotions"? It was clear

from the outset that this was a very capacious category. Previous distinctions between appetites, passions, affections and sentiments were gradually forgotten. Members of all of these older categories could now be found masquerading as emotions. Brown himself acknowledged that in creating a new category to replace what had previously been considered as various "active powers of the mind", he had "formed one great comprehensive class of our emotions".[23] Writing several decades later, the Scottish philosophical psychologist Alexander Bain also made clear the huge expanse of psychic territory that was being annexed under the new flag: "Emotion is the name here used to comprehend all that is understood by feelings, states of feeling, pleasures, pains, passions, sentiments, affections."[24]

While passions and affections had been generally defined as movements of the soul (specifically of the will and, in some cases, of the intellect too), the emotions were, from the outset, understood as basic mental feelings independent of any powers or faculties of the soul, which now disappeared. These were also feelings which were very strictly separated from the intellectual states. The new "emotions" paradigm therefore created a starker opposition between intellect and feeling than had existed in earlier systems of thought, and a contrast in which a much wider set of mental states was on the "feeling" side of the divide. Two-volume psychology textbooks of the late nineteenth century reinforced the division between intellect and emotion by allocating them one volume each.[25] Their separability was also evident in psychiatric debates about a condition known as "moral insanity" or "emotional insanity" in which the intellect remained intact but the emotions were disordered.[26] Finally, William James inscribed this same distinction onto the human body by treating cognition as cerebral and emotion as visceral. Emotions for James were nothing more than our awareness of bodily, visceral changes.

While the opposition between reason and the passions had been complex and mitigated, partly by the potentially rational nature of the passions, and especially by the existence of enlightened and reasonable affections, there was no such subtlety here. The intellect and the emotions were, from their nineteenth-century psychological conception onwards, deeply divided. It was this divide, more than the ancient opposition between reason and the passions, that had to be bridged by those scholars who sought, in the later twentieth century, to cross over to the other side to rescue our forgotten feelings. It is also here, in the nineteenth-century creation of the "emotions", that we find one place to mark a caesura, albeit a rather belated one, between the pre-modern and the distinctively modern in the history of thinking about feelings.

III

In 1895 a man with distinctively modern thoughts about his feelings, Oscar Wilde, was imprisoned for committing acts of "gross indecency". His

sentence of two years imprisonment with hard labour, a secular mortification of his criminal flesh, forced him to rethink his sexual desires in a language appropriate to his new institutionalised existence. In July 1896 he petitioned the Home Secretary for early release, writing that he feared it would not be long before he entirely lost his mind. The petition was declined. In it Wilde wrote of himself, with we can only guess what motives, as the victim of a form of moral insanity:

> The petitioner is now keenly conscious of the fact that while the three years preceding his arrest were from the intellectual point of view the most brilliant years of his life . . . still that during that entire time he was suffering from the most horrible form of erotomania, which made him forget his wife and children, his high social position in London and Paris, his European distinction as an artist, the honour of his name and family, his very humanity itself, and left him the helpless prey of the most revolting passions, and of a gang of people who for their own profit ministered to them, and then drove him to his hideous ruin.[27]

This complex passage, in which several moral and medical ways of thinking are combined, gives some clues as to what happened to the passions after the arrival of the emotions. The first thing to note is that they still existed. However, once the scientific psychology of the emotions had emerged, to speak of the "passions" was to adopt a register of emphatic and somewhat archaic moralism. Wilde employed in this petition a view of the passions similar to those of Seneca and Augustine with which we started. He presented himself as the "helpless prey" of these moral predators, which operated in consort with an unscrupulous "gang of people". The passions, the blackmailers, and the rent boys conspired together to undo him. Wilde's description of the passions as "revolting" depicted them simultaneously as disgusting and rebellious. Alongside the established mode of personifying the passions, however, was a distinctively modern and medicalised view: that this gruesome gang of passions amounted to a disease; that Wilde had been "suffering from the most horrible form of erotomania".

New concepts of "emotion" lacked the sense both of pathology and of suffering that had been so strongly embodied in the language of "passion" and its many cognate terms in theology, philosophy and medicine. In the "passions", passivity, pathology and suffering had all combined. It is thus no surprise that they had long been a medical as well as a moral category. Both "passion" and "affection" were used as terms for disease in the early modern period, as in phrases such as "hysteric passion" or "febrile affection". Passions were conceived as both causes and symptoms of organic disease, and as diseases themselves. In Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia* (1794–6), for instance, a wide range of passions, including grief and anger, were treated as examples of "Diseases of Volition" and as varieties of temporary insanity.[28] From the point of view of the history of medicine, the passions were not

replaced by "emotions" but by the whole panoply of manias and phobias which were brought into being by the techniques and theories of modern psychiatry. One answer, then, to the question of what happened to the passions is that they were incarcerated en masse in Victorian lunatic asylums and prisons.

While inside Reading Gaol, as well as writing of his revolting passions, Oscar Wilde reflected on philosophy, art and emotion. In the spiritual autobiography which would ultimately be published as *De Profundis* he wrote that, while he had previously thought that the true self should be realised through pleasure he now believed that it could only be through pain, and that sorrow, "being the supreme emotion of which man is capable, is at once the type and test of all great art". He attributed to Wordsworth the idea that the true aim of the poet was "to contemplate the spectacle of life with appropriate emotions". In fact this was a dictum of Walter Pater's, which Wilde now adapted to his circumstances. Imprisoned, he felt "dead to all emotions except those of anguish and despair", and was prey now not to the passions of erotomania but to "the first and most prominent emotion produced by modern prison life—the emotion of terror".[29]

This ethos of "appropriate emotions" found a more definitive and analytic expression in the *Principia Ethica* (1903) of G. E. Moore. Like Wilde, Moore could still employ the old language of the "passions" when in moralistic mode. In order to illustrate his view of the nature of the good, for example, Moore started by explaining the nature of evil, taking as his two instances "cruelty and lasciviousness". "That these are great intrinsic evils we may, I think, easily assure ourselves," he wrote, "by imagining the state of a man, whose mind is solely occupied by either of these passions, in their worst form". Moore went on to explain that right action often involved the "suppression of some evil impulse", which accounted for the plausibility of the view that "virtue *consists* in the control of passion by reason".[30] However his was an ethos of emotion rather than of either reason or passion. The whole moral register was different. While phrases such as "evil passions" or "criminal passions" had previously been commonplace, and even occurred in the writings of Wilde and Moore, no-one wrote about "evil emotions". Moore's ethical ideas show how both the "Moral Sense" and the Platonic ethical traditions could find a central place for emotions. It was, then, not just the passions but also the moral sentiments and aesthetic affections that could be rethought under the guise of "emotions", conceived either as an innate moral compass or as the very goal of life.

Thomas Brown was a pioneer in thinking not only about "emotions" in general but about the "moral emotions" in particular. Following in the Humean tradition of asserting the supremacy of feeling over reason in the moral realm, Brown suggested a modification of the moral sense tradition in terms of "moral emotions". Moral approval was, for Brown, a matter of feeling, not of reasoning. "To say that an action excites in us this feeling", he

wrote, "and to say, that it appears to us right, or virtuous, or conformable to duty, are to say precisely the same thing". It was a brute fact about our minds that "in certain circumstances, we are susceptible of moral emotions". The universality and objectivity of morality was justified, on this model, as on Hutcheson's, by the identical constitution of all human minds, which revealed the intentions of the Deity.[31]

A secularised version of this same idea was to be found in Charles Darwin's moral thought. In one of his early private notebooks, Darwin had already invoked common descent as an idea that could shed a whole new light on the moral economy: "Our descent, then, is the origin of our evil passions!! The Devil under form of Baboon is our grandfather!"[32] In the *Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin turned his attention to those higher instincts of sympathy and love which comprised the "moral sense". Darwin's naturalised and inherited moral sense, like Brown's divinely devised moral emotions, guaranteed universal moral standards. But the Darwinian moral sense had its origins not in the mind of God but in the contingencies of the natural and social history of our species, which could have been quite different:

> If, for instance, to take an extreme case, men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering.[33]

For G. E. Moore too, it was emotion rather than reason that had the key role in directing the moral life. Following on from his thought that cruelty and lasciviousness were evil passions which were bad in themselves, Moore suggested that an idea of particular evils to be avoided was usually accompanied by a "strong moral emotion" directing us away from evils and towards moral duties.[34]

Moore's *Principia Ethica* became known as the "Bloomsbury Bible" not for its more or less conventional ideas about the capacity of moral emotions to reinforce our sense of duty, however, but for its gospel of hedonistic aestheticism. In the final chapter of the book, Moore set out his vision of the good life and of those things that were good in themselves. The latter were said to be the emotions felt in response to beauty and to human friendship. These were not merely put forward as the favoured mental states of refined late-Victorian students, artists and intellectuals but were grandly asserted to constitute "*all* the greatest, and *by far* the greatest, goods we can imagine." The appreciation of beauty was the highest good of all. Such appreciation, Moore stipulated, should not be

> merely a bare cognition of what is beautiful in the object, but also some kind of feeling or emotion. It is not sufficient that a man should merely see the beautiful qualities in a picture and know that they are beautiful, in order that we may give his state of mind the highest praise.

In short, in order to deserve the highest praise, "he should have an appropriate emotion towards the beautiful qualities which he cognises."[35] For G. E. Moore, in one of the defining transitional texts between Victorianism and Modernism, the proper end of life was neither rationality nor good character, neither the knowledge nor the love of God, neither the greatest happiness of the greatest number nor the general good of society. The goal of life was the experience of appropriate aesthetic emotions.

IV

While we might assume that it does nothing to the physical structure of a piece of matter to categorise it as a salt rather than a metal, nor to the physiology, or even the mental experience, of an animal, if we categorise it as a mammal rather than a fish, we cannot make such an assumption about our psychological categories. In this case, the nature of the thing studied (our mental life) is changed by the theoretical instruments used to investigate and explain it.[36] It surely makes a difference, for instance, to our experience and understanding of ourselves, whether we think of our anger as being produced by our inner demons or by our inner baboon; of our love as the movement of a soul or the firing of neurons; of our conscience as an inherited emotion or the voice of God; of our frustration and despair as signs of sin and the Fall or of suppressed and unconscious desires. Theories of passions and emotions take their place within larger histories of psychological models and languages, which in turn reflect their social and institutional contexts. The death of the passions in the nineteenth century coincided with aggressive secularisation; with widespread state incarceration of criminals and lunatics; and with the granting of the vote to increasing numbers of the working classes. We might accordingly try to answer the psychological question of what happened to the passions in social and institutional terms: they died with God; they were locked up; they got the vote. And in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the personification of feeling states continues but in new terms. Instead of thinking about our passions as unruly subjects to be governed or as dangerous enemies to be driven out, we treat our emotions as corporate employees to be managed and psychotherapeutic patients to be counselled and understood. The histories of our social lives, our language, and our self-understanding proceed together.

Current psychological theories of emotions may be new, but they are not entirely detached from their histories. Recent work in the philosophy of emotion has shown signs of rediscovering some ancient ideas. Contemporary philosophers of emotion tend to divide into two broad camps: the cognitivists, who favour the view that emotions are a form of appraisal or judgement, and the non-cognitivists, who take their lead from neuroscientific accounts of emotion. Among cognitivists, Robert Solomon and Martha Nussbaum have been influential in promoting the neo-Stoic idea that emotions are

judgements rather than mere feelings or epiphenomena of bodily processes. While the ancient Stoics taught that all passions were mistaken judgements (the relevant mistake generally being the valuing of external goods such as health and prosperity), the neo-Stoics have promoted the idea that emotions are judgements while denying that they are necessarily mistaken ones. In the field of neuroscience, Antonio Damasio and Joseph LeDoux have proposed new ways of thinking about the emotions as hard-wired appraisal mechanisms in the brain. This line of research has also resulted in the suggestion that there are two distinct emotional pathways in the brain, one for basic emotions or "affect programmes" and another more cognitive and complex route for secondary emotions. It seems that neuroscience, as well as the history of ideas, can suggest ways we might create subdivisions within Thomas Brown's over-inclusive category of the "emotions".[37]

The main casualty in the creation of secular, scientific, and sterilised psychologies of the emotions has been that strong sense of cognitive, moral and even medical pathology which was prominent in both Stoic and Christian traditions of thought about the passions. Psychoanalytic theories have had more success than other strands of secular psychology in describing the disordered and chaotic state of the human mind. But even then, that disordered condition of the mind which used to be thought of as universal tends now to be recognised only in those in need of psychiatric or psychotherapeutic treatment rather than in everyone; in patients rather than in passions. But even here the wisdom of the Stoics has not been entirely forgotten. Martha Nussbaum looks at the world today with the weary but penetrating gaze of a modern Stoic. What do we see, she asks, when we look around ourselves at our friends and colleagues?

> Do we see calm rational people, whose beliefs about value are for the most part well based and sound? No. We see people rushing frenetically about after money, after fame, after gastronomic luxuries, after passionate love—people convinced by the culture itself, by the stories on which they are brought up, that such things have far more value than in fact they have. Everywhere we see victims of false social advertising: people convinced in their hearts that they cannot possibly live without their hoards of money, their imported delicacies, their social standing, their lovers—although these beliefs result from teaching and may have little relation to the real truth about worth. Do we, then, see a healthy rational society, whose shared beliefs can be trusted as material for a true account of the good life? No. We see a sick society, a society whose sick teachings about love and sex turn half of its members into possessions, both deified and hated, the other half into sadistic keepers, tormented by anxiety; a society that slaughters thousands, using ever more ingeniously devastating engines of war, in order to escape its gnawing fear of vulnerability. We see a society, above all, whose every enterprise is poisoned by the fear

> of death, a fear that will not let its members taste any stable human joy, but turns them into the grovelling slaves of corrupt religious teachers.[38]

Unfeeling apathy may be no more desirable a goal than the chaotic world of anxieties and desires conjured up by Nussbaum, but at the same time as rethinking our recent affection for the emotions we might also question our antipathy to *apatheia*. The task of the apprentice Stoic today—a latter-day Lucilius—would be to articulate and live out an ideal of calm philosophical detachment in the midst of computerised consumerised chaos, but without losing all humanity. Should we be offering the requisite mental training for such a task? Or is there no reason left to resist our revolting passions?

NOTES

1 Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: Murray, 1872); William James, "What Is an Emotion?", *Mind*, Vol. 9 (1884), pp. 188–205. The ideas that form the background to the present article are developed and documented in two previous publications: Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); idem "Patients and Passions: Languages of Medicine and Emotion, 1789–1850", in Fay Bound Alberti (ed), *Medicine, Emotion and Disease, 1700–1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 22–52.

2 Several of these historical and philosophical issues arose in our discussions at the Symposium on "Faith, Rationality and the Passions" in Cambridge in January 2010, and were especially brought into focus by Stephen Mulhall.

3 Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic* selected and translated with an introduction by Robin Campbell, (London: Penguin, 1969), Letter xlvii, p. 95; see also Letters xl and lxxxviii. On the therapeutics of the passions in ancient philosophy, see Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. M. Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*, new edition (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).

4 Augustine, *The Free Choice of the Will*, trans. R. Russell, in *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. LIX (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1968), pp. 93–94.

5 Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. G. Walsh and G. Monahan, in *The Fathers of the Church*, Vols XIII-XV (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1952), XIV.9.

6 Dixon, *Passions to Emotions*, chap. 2, esp. pp. 39–48.

7 *Ibid*. For alternative and more detailed readings of Aquinas on the passions of the soul see also Robert C. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 22–48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Diana Fritz Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009); Nicholas E. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

8 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Dominican Fathers (London: Blackfriars, 1964–81), Ia.82, 5, ad 1.

9 In both Augustine and Aquinas the key Latin terms are not used in an entirely consistent way, and the distinction between passions and affections that I am suggesting is not worked out by them systematically. However there is considerable textual support for the basic interpretation suggested here: see Dixon, *Passions to Emotions*, pp. 39–48.

10 I am grateful to Douglas Hedley and David Martin for pointing out some of these more positive roles for the passions.

11 Dixon, "Patients and Passions"; Roy Porter, *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane* (London: Phoenix, 1996), pp. 39–59. A recent edited collection looks at a wide range of roles for the passions (and emotions) in the history of political thought: Rebecca Kingston and

Leonard Ferry (eds), *Bringing the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

12 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution, and Other Essays* (London: Dent, 1910), p. 57.

13 Isaac Watts, *The Doctrine of the Passions Explained and Improved* (Coventry: Luckman, n.d.), p. v; *Discourses of the Love of God, and its Influence on all the Passions* (London: Oswald and Buckland, 1746), p. xi. Both works were first published in 1729.

14 Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, J. Smith (ed), (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 266. First published 1746.

15 Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, third edition, introduction by Paul McReynolds, (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1969), p. xvi. First published London, 1742.

16 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, L. Selby-Bigge and P. Nidditch (eds), (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), p. 415. First published 1739–40. See also Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, pp. 104–109.

17 Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, pp. 109–127; idem (ed.), *Thomas Brown: Selected Philosophical Writings* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2010).

18 Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 419.

19 On Kames, see Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 4–6, 49–50. Cogan, who received his MD from Leyden for a dissertation on the passions, wrote three books on the subject, which were widely cited in the first half of the nineteenth century: Thomas Cogan, *An Ethical Treatise on the Passions* (Bath: Hazard and Binns, 1807); *A Philosophical Treatise on the Passions* (Bath: S. Hazard, 1802); *Theological Disquisitions; or an Enquiry into those Principles of Religion, which are Most Influential in Directing and Regulating the Passions and Affections of the Mind* (Bath: Hazard and Binns, 1812).

20 Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, pp. 130–131.

21 Noah Porter, "Philosophy in Great Britain and America: A Supplementary Sketch", in Friedrich Ueberweg (ed.), *History of Philosophy from Thales to the Present Time*, Vol. II. *History of Modern Philosophy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874), pp. 349–460, quotation at p. 410.

22 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature. Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901–1902* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), p. 2.

23 Thomas Brown, *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (Edinburgh: Tait, 1828), Lecture 73, p. 485.

24 Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will* (London: Parker, 1859), p. 3.

25 Alexander Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect* (London: Parker, 1855) and *The Emotions and the Will* (London: Parker, 1859); James McCosh, *Psychology: The Cognitive Powers* (London: Macmillan, 1886) and *Psychology: The Motive Powers* (London: Macmillan, 1887); James Mark Baldwin, *Handbook of Psychology I: The Senses and the Intellect; II: Feeling and Will* (London: Macmillan, 1891); James Sully, *The Human Mind: A Textbook of Psychology* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892).

26 Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine (eds), *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535–1860: A History Presented in Selected English Texts* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 836–842; Vieda Skultans, *Madness and Morals: Ideas on Insanity in the Nineteenth Century* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), chapter 6; idem, *English Madness: Ideas on Insanity 1580–1890* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 65–68.

27 Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis, (eds), *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), p. 656. See also Ellis Hanson, "Wilde's Exquisite Pain", in J. Bristow (ed), *Wilde Writings: Contextual Conditions* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2003), pp. 101–123; Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2008), pp. 333–343.

28 Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* (London: Johnson, 1794–6),, 2 vols, Vol. 1, Section XXXIV.

29 Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, Volume 2. De Profundis: "Epistola in Carcere Et Vinculis"*. Edited with an introduction and notes by Ian Small, (Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2005), pp. 105, 109, 316, 324; the last two quotations are from letters to Robbie Ross and to a daily newspaper, respectively.

30 G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* Revised edition. Edited and with an Introduction by Thomas Baldwin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 257–258, 267. First published 1903.

31 Thomas Brown, *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (Edinburgh: Tait, 1828), Lecture 74, pp. 493–494.

32 Paul H. Barrett *et al.* (eds), *Charles Darwin's Notebooks, 1836–1844: Geology, Transmutation of Species, Metaphysical Enquiries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 549–550.

33 Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, second edition, revised and augmented, (London: John Murray, 1882), pp. 98–99. First published 1871. See also Dixon, *Invention of Altruism*, pp. 129–180.

34 Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 266–267.

35 *Ibid*., p. 238.

36 This idea was suggested by comments made at the Cambridge Symposium by Peter Goldie, about the reflexivity of psychological categories. See also Roger Smith, "The History of Psychological Categories", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, Vol. 36 (2005), pp. 55–94; idem, *Being Human: Historical Knowledge and the Creation of Human Nature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Muhammad Ali Khalidi, "Interactive Kinds", *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science Advance Access*, published 9 November 2009, doi: 10.1093/bjps/axp042.

37 Two particularly helpful collections of recent work in the philosophy of emotions are Anthony Hatzimoysis (ed), *Philosophy and the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Peter Goldie (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

38 Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, p. 103.