

A Short History of Psychological Perspectives on Emotion

The third chapter of the Oxford Handbook of Affective Computing is written by Rainer Reisenzein, a Professor at the Institute for Psychology, University of Greifswald in Germany.

Reisenzein describes a short historical story which starts in last third of the 19th century. Questions concerning emotion have been asked since at least ancient times. Contemporary understandings of emotions challenge the assertion that emotion is a distraction from rational decision-making.

Historically, psychology aimed to solve problems with regard to the science of consciousness. Behaviorism spanned from 1915 to 1960, but was replaced with cognitivism. In the 1990's interdisciplinary understandings borrowed ideas from cognitive psychology, and influence "many other disciplines ranging from biology to neurophysiology to computer science, linguistics, and literary studies. Some already see the emergence of a new interdisciplinary research field, analogous to cognitive science: affective science... (pg. 22)."

Theories of emotion are diverse assortments of abstraction with many open questions such as (1) the causes of emotion, (2) the effects of emotion, (3) the nature of emotion, (4) the evolution of emotion, and (5) the neuroscience of emotion (pg. 21). Some of these abstractions include the examination of the causality and relationship between emotion and physiology, the appraisal - or evaluations - of emotion (e.g. OCC Model), the discreteness of emotions, the discreteness of emotional mechanisms, and the nonautomatic and automatic triggering of emotions. Contemporary findings assert that emotion is cognitively caused, and that the emotion system can be either topographically or otherwise classified and understood.

Furthermore, emotions appear to have a variety of effects. Emotional systems are capable of directing attention, providing information, and inspiring motivation suggesting that systems of actions or events excluding affect "may well be overall less adaptive than actions that are also informed by emotions. (pg. 28)"

Other topics:

Psychology

The James-Lange Theory (pg. 22)

The Cannon Bard Theory (pg. 32)

The Arnold-Lazarus Theory (pg. 24)

The theory of Ortony, Clore and Collins (pg. 33)

McDougall's Theory of Discrete Basic Emotions (pg.30)

OCC Model of Emotion (pg. 26)
Bodily Feeling Theory (pg. 28)
Mental Feeling Theory (pg.29)
Cognition Feeling Theory (pg.29)
Discrete Emotion Theory (pg. 31)
Limbic Systems Theory (pg. 32)