

Introduction

A World of Emotion

Colin Wayne Leach and Larissa Z. Tiedens

In every human attitude – for example in emotion... – we shall find the whole of human reality, since emotion is the human reality which assumes itself and which, “aroused,” “directs” itself toward the world. [...] There is, in effect, a world of emotion.

Jean-Paul Sartre

In agreement with Sartre (1948), many theorists have argued that emotion is a way in which people imbue the world with meaning (see Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990; Harré, 1986; Osgood, 1971). Although this perspective emphasizes the individual as making the social world meaningful through emotion, it also suggests that individual emotion is necessarily about people’s experience of the world. Thus, many contemporary thinkers argue that understanding emotion is essential to understanding social experience and behavior. For example, in the past fifteen years, the sociology of emotion has grown into a vibrant subfield (for reviews, see Kemper, 1990; Thoits, 1989) with examinations of emotion in the context of social relationships (e.g., Scheff, 1994), social status (e.g., Kemper, 2001), and social movements (e.g., Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001). The anthropology of emotion has also grown in this same period and offers a challenge to individualistic and universalistic approaches to emotion (for reviews, see Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990; Lutz & White, 1986). Political scientists have also become fascinated with the way in which emotions influence political behaviors, including voting, policy support, and party support (e.g., Goodwin et al., 2001; Iyengar et al., 1984; Kinder & Sanders, 1996).

Unlike much of the work in other social sciences, psychologists have tended to study emotions as individual, internal, and private states. Thus, emotions are conceptualized as being caused by (and causing) *individual* processes, such as perception, inference, attribution, or bodily change. This approach locates emotion within the individual as though the human

skin contains and restrains them – separating the emotions from the social world individuals inhabit. Fortunately, this tendency away from the social is neither ubiquitous nor necessary. In fact, concentration on the individual is not what most distinguishes the psychological approach from others. It is concern for the subjective meaning in emotion that best characterizes the psychological approach (for reviews, see Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001). Although the examination of subjective meaning can lean toward an individualistic approach, it can also demand attention to the social basis of the meaning in emotion (see Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990; Harré, 1992; Henriques et al., 1984; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002; Voloshinov, 1986).

Those interested in human perception, judgment, and evaluation have long understood that individuals' meaning-making cannot occur in a vacuum. Indeed, the necessity of a social approach to understanding the process of subjective meaning is apparent in most of social psychology. Many pioneering social psychologists asserted that people are especially keen to give meaning to social events and other people (see Asch, 1952; Bruner, 1994; Cartwright, 1951; Erdelyi, 1974; Heider, 1958; Katz, 1960; Krech & Crutchfield, 1948). The classic social psychological approach also emphasized the importance of the social context – especially as it is represented in the shared reality constructed in groups – to peoples' evaluations of subjective meaning (e.g., Cartwright, 1959; Sherif, 1958; Sherif & Sherif, 1964; for discussions, see Bruner, 1994; Turner, 1991; Turner et al., 1987). In these ways, social psychology has already recognized that states that might initially appear to be individual and internal are rarely, if ever, separate from the social world. Instead, they cannot be disentangled from that social world. A social approach to emotion requires that we conceptualize emotion in the same way; that we stop seeing it as an individual response, and start considering it as a bridge between the individual and the world that blurs the boundaries between individuals and their contexts. From this perspective, emotions are one channel through which the individual knows the social world, and the social world is what allows people to know emotion. This volume seeks to conceptualize emotions and social relationships in this way.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF EMOTION

There are numerous ways that emotions can be social. The term social, after all, has a number of definitions. Some of these have been quite prevalent in the psychological study of emotion. For example, psychologists have long conceptualized emotion as *responsive* to social events and entities. Emotions are typically considered as responses to important events

in our lives, and social events are among the most important. Thus, social situations frequently generate emotional episodes.

Individual emotions have also been conceptualized as *regulated* by the social constraints and affordances provided by norms, morals, and values. In the most conventional version of this approach, individual emotion is constrained by society (e.g., Ekman, 1984; Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth, 1972). In this vision, people have internal, natural, and biological responses that are harnessed by societal practices and demands. In the more radical form of this approach, society defines the nature of emotion. That is, we are socialized into our ideas about specific emotion and into our understanding of how particular situations link up to emotional feelings (Harré, 1986). Emotional experiences then are dictated by our social surroundings in a way that is so thorough, we do not even notice the influence.

Finally, and perhaps most provocatively, there is the version of sociality with which Sartre was concerned. In this case, emotion is conceptualized as socially *constituted*. In this form of sociality, emotion is seen as being defined by and defining social relationships. This perspective suggests that we cannot know anything about our social relationships without the emotions that we use to navigate ourselves through these relationships. But, similarly, emotion is fully encompassed by those social relationships. This implies that emotion does not exist within the solitary individual because it depends on social configurations to not just trigger it, but also to actually form it. The chapters in this volume speak to all three of these kinds of sociality, including this latter – more novel and perhaps most fundamentally social – approach to emotion.

Emotion as Socially Responsive

There is wide agreement that social events and entities outside the individual play a role in the generation of emotion. Many of us are familiar with the infamous bear debated so hotly by William James and his critics. Exactly what occurs after the presence of the bear (and in what order) might not be agreed on, but there is a consensus that the external figure of the bear sets the emotion process in motion (see Ellsworth, 1994, p. 227). But not all external sources are equal. Although confronting a bear provides an especially dramatic example, most researchers have noted the particular force other humans have to generate emotions. Whether they are parents (Campos & Stenberg, 1981), friends (Clark & Brissette, 2001), or even strangers (Murphy & Zajonc, 1993), other humans seem to have a unique ability to generate affective responses in us.

This book speaks to this theme. Many of the chapters illustrate the way in which other people generate emotional responses in us. Sometimes this is because we feel the emotions of those around us (Anderson & Keltner;

Davis; Hatfield & Rapson). Sometimes this is because we have emotions about the things that other people do or the things that happen to other people (Clark & Finkel; Davis; R. H. Smith; Spears & Leach). Sometimes it is concern for our very relationship to others that generates emotion in us (Fearon; Miller; Rodriguez Mosquera, Fischer, & Manstead).

The groups to which we belong can also elicit emotions (Hatfield & Rapson; Mackie, Silver, & Smith). We can feel emotion about the success and failure of our own group (Branscombe & Miron; Tiedens, Sutton, & Fong) or of other groups (Mackie et al.; Smith & Kessler; Spears & Leach). In addition, groups may make salient cultural concerns (Rodriguez Mosquera et al.) or societal expectations (Citrin, Roberts, & Fredrickson) that shape our emotion.

Emotion as Socially Shared and Regulated

Early discussions of “display rules” (e.g., Ekman, 1984; Ekman & Friesen, 1971) emphasized that the social environment provides information about what emotion should and should not be expressed, by whom, and in what situations. Display rules vary across cultures, groups, and situations, such that individuals likely have very complex knowledge about what emotions are appropriate and when. Although Ekman and his colleagues were particularly concerned with differences in display rules across national cultures, some emotion rules are instantiated in a very local, relationship-specific way and pertain not just to expression, but also to feeling. For example, Hochschild’s (1983) research on flight attendants illustrated the way that local environments provide quite explicit guidelines about the expression and experience of emotion. The training provided to flight attendants does not just teach them safety precautions and food preparation, but also how emotions can and should be used to provide the best possible experience for the customer. Flight attendants’ success on the job is tied to their ability to regulate their emotions in the way dictated by the airlines.

The explicit regulation of emotion expression is one way in which emotion is social and several of the chapters discuss this kind of force. For example, Clark and Finkel suggest that people are well aware of the inappropriateness of expressing too much emotion to acquaintances, R. H. Smith discusses strong prohibitions on the acknowledgment of envy, and Spears and Leach discuss the moral proscriptions against the related feeling of *schadenfreude*. In addition, Tiedens et al. argue that groups occasionally dictate that some group members express one emotion and other group members another emotion. Citrin et al. discuss some of the dictates delivered to women about their emotions, such as the importance of smiling and suppressing expressions of anger.

Not all social knowledge of emotion expression is delivered in an explicit fashion, however. Research concerned with society and social relationships as regulators of emotion have pointed to the implicit and unconscious ways peoples' emotions become socialized. From this perspective, social forces direct our attention and concern toward some kinds of events and away from others. The chapter by Rodriguez Mosquera et al. does a particularly good job of explaining this way in which emotions are social. They describe how in honor cultures people are particularly concerned with family reputation and as such pay more attention to insults, sexual behavior, and the ability to provide protection for others than people from non-honor cultures. These things become particularly emotional. Importantly, people are unaware of the regulation that the cultural context is providing. For the individual, emotions are experienced as natural and automatic. Yet, this implicit form of influence is particularly powerful precisely because people do not experience it as influence (see Bourdieu, 1984).

Both implicit and explicit information about what people ought to feel are aspects of the moral code that defines and unites groups and societies. For example, Averill (1983) has shown that there is great agreement among European Americans that feelings of anger are most appropriate when one is wronged or insulted. As such, anger in the absence of injustice can make one appear immature or even pathological to those who share this cultural theory of justice-based anger. Several of the contributions to this volume also emphasize the ways in which peoples' notions of broad values, such as justice and morality, are involved in the production of emotion (Branscombe & Miron; Citrin et al.; Hatfield & Rapson; Kaiser & Major; Rodriguez Mosquera et al.; H. J. Smith & Kessler; R. H. Smith; Spears & Leach). For example, R. H. Smith provides many examples of the ways in which social actors can attempt to cloak their untoward envy in an effort to portray their hostility toward successful others as moral and just.

Sharing an emotion with others may also alter the experience itself (see Manstead & Fischer, 2001; Parkinson, 1995). For example, in their chapter, Clark and Finkel argue that the expression of emotions can either repel people from one another or promote a strong bond, all depending on the nature of the initial relationship. In addition, several contributors to this volume emphasize the ways in which sharing an emotion within a collective provides the feeling with a certain social reality. Indeed shared emotion within a group may indicate a shared understanding of the world. This sharedness can serve to coordinate (and regulate) social interaction within the group (e.g., Anderson & Keltner; Fearon; Hatfield & Rapson; Miller) or collective action against another group (e.g., Mackie et al.; Smith and Kessler). For example, in their contribution to this volume, Smith and Kessler review research suggesting that disadvantaged group members are more likely to engage in collective action designed to benefit their group as a whole if

they appraise their group as enduring *collective* injustice. These group-level appraisals appear to promote feelings of anger and resentment about the group's shared mistreatment (see also Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000).

Viewing emotion as socially shared and regulated by social pre- or prescriptions begins to suggest that felt and expressed emotion also *provide* social meaning. That is, people are likely to make a number of social inferences based on the presence or absence of particular emotions in their social settings. Such effects are unlikely to be restricted to inferences about individuals. Indeed, emotions may be the basis of judgments regarding our relationships and the groups to which we belong. Suggestions of this link are provided in many chapters, including those by Tropp and Pettigrew; Mackie et al.; Fearon, Clark, and Finkel; Citrin et al.; and Anderson and Keltner. From this perspective, emotion becomes the bond associating or disassociating people and thus provides a basis for the maintenance and change of social relationships. This way of considering emotion as social moves toward locating emotions *between* people rather than *within* an individual person. This begins to suggest that emotion is not constrained by the skin of the human body, but instead provides a link between that which is inside and that which is outside.

Emotion as Socially Constituted

Sartre (1948) argued that “consciousness does not limit itself to projecting affective signification upon the world around it. It *lives* the new world which it has just established” (p. 75, italics in original). From his point of view, emotion *constitutes* the human world. This means that emotion is not simply a phenomenological or physiological response to the social world, but rather the form that human existence takes (in a world that does not exist free of our existence within it). Sartre's radical claim is that emotion is more than our attempt to make meaningful a preexisting world. In his view, by making meaning through emotion, we actually make the world itself. Thus, the world is constituted – comes into existence – through our emotion. This is how Sartre can claim that our emotion is not simply a reaction to the world, but rather that emotion “is a transformation of the world” (p. 58). According to Sartre, ours is a world of emotion because our emotion makes us and the world a unified whole. In this way, emotion is what is *between* us and the world. This suggests that emotion is always, at the same time, inside us and outside us.

Clearly, viewing emotion as socially constituted and constituting is a profoundly social approach. By conceptualizing emotion as existing between the person and the world (which includes other individuals, groups, and social mores), it causes the opposition between the psychological and the social to implode. Although this approach to human experience has been discussed in philosophy (e.g., Cassirer, 1944), social theory

(e.g., Bourdieu, 1984; Hall, 1977), and psychology (Cartwright, 1951; Henriques et al., 1984; Voloshinov, 1986), it has been complicated for emotion researchers to instantiate.

We believe that the chapters in this volume begin to instantiate the perspective that emotion and the social world are mutually constitutive. For example, Anderson and Keltner discuss data that show emotional convergence among college roommates. In this study, it seems as though the emotion that the roommates come to share is at once an expression of the importance of the relationship and what that relationship itself is. Anderson and Keltner discuss this shared emotion as akin to a relational schema, where what it is to be in the relationship is to have the emotion. In general, what we see as most novel about this volume is that, when taken together, these chapters point to the quite radical notion Sartre suggested. Because chapter after chapter weaves together emotional experiences and expressions with social relationships, the emotional is seen as very social and the social as very emotional. In these chapters, emotions are not simply internal events that respond to the outside world. Instead emotions constitute the social context. As such, this volume examines emotion that shapes and is shaped by social life.

OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS

One reason that the study of the social nature of emotions is difficult is because the social world is so varied. There are hundreds of types of relationships and as many emotions. This volume is organized to address three levels, of sociality: interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup. The first form refers to the links between specific individuals, the second to categories that define multiple individuals as an entity, and the final to the relations between groups. Emotions are found in each of these levels, and the dynamics involved in these types of relationship are part of what it is to experience emotion. By examining emotion at all three levels, the volume as a whole shows how emotions are social and the social is emotional, regardless of the type of social relationship considered.

Interpersonal

Much of daily life is filled with interactions with other individuals, and often we encounter the same individuals over and over. These interactions and the relationships that grow out of them can come to be the most memorable and meaningful aspects of people's lives (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Not surprisingly, they are a fertile context for the examination of the social life of emotions. Because social interaction and relationships are so important, emotions respond to them. Given the pull and importance of other people to us, their presence creates a regulating

force. We also see in these chapters that many relationships are not understandable without the emotions that define them. An emotion captures and describes an interpersonal dynamic in a way that no other description can, and in that sense constitutes the relationship (see Heider, 1958).

The first section has some chapters focused on specific emotions – empathy, envy, embarrassment, and shame. In each case, the authors are concerned with the ways in which these emotions arise in particular kinds of social settings, the ways in which there are explicit and implicit rules about whether the emotion can and should be felt and expressed, and how the emotion itself forms a particular kind of dynamic between relationship partners. Davis argues that empathy is the transformation of another’s experience into a response within the self that then shapes the interpersonal relationship. Here, we see that a blurred distinction between self and others generates an emotion that instantiates this perception of oneness. Davis argues that the emotional connection in empathy benefits interpersonal relationships and thus those in them.

The interrelation between self and other takes a more sinister form in the case of envy, as discussed by R. H. Smith. He argues that envy is based in a dual focus on a superior other and an inferior self. This dual focus suggests that the feeling of envy cannot exist without experiencing the self *relative* to another. This relational conceptualization of envy serves to integrate into a coherent whole (other-focused) feelings of hostility with (self-focused) feelings of self-loathing and shame.

The chapters by Fearon and Miller agree with the earlier ones by seeing interpersonal emotion as constituting a particular social relation. However, they emphasize the degree to which shame and embarrassment come out of a more generic human concern for social belonging that functions to maintain social relationships. In his chapter, Fearon conceptualizes shame as a reaction to a “social bond” under threat. As such, shame moves those who experience it to attempt to repair the damage done to their bond with others. Miller, on the other hand, emphasizes the functional nature of embarrassment by arguing that it is adaptive communication aimed at preventing others’ devaluation or rejection.

In the final chapter of the first section, Clark and Finkel discuss the implications of expressing or suppressing emotion and argue that the effects depend on the type of relationship one has with the other to whom one might express the emotion. In this way, they discuss how people’s emotions respond to the emotions of others and are regulated by others. Clark and Finkel also suggest that people’s emotions appear to constitute social relationships. Using two different typologies of relationships (communal versus exchange and attachment style), Clark and Finkel show that emotion is part of what varies with and defines relational style. The amount and type of emotion expression both depend on and promote a style of

interaction, suggesting that critical to understanding these forms of relating is understanding the emotions that constitute them.

Intragroup

A sense of “we” is a basic component of human sociality (Turner et al., 1987). The chapters in the second section, which focuses on emotions in intragroup contexts, are all concerned with the role of emotions in forming a “we” and the way in which collectives shape the emotions of those who are part of them.

The first two chapters in this section delve into the processes by which people, when associated with one another, come to share emotions. Hatfield and Rapson outline the unconscious and immediate responses individuals have to one another that frequently result in their coming to experience the same emotions. They argue that this phenomenon is not culturally and historically bound, but that instead the likelihood of transferring emotion from one person to the next may be human nature. Furthermore, they suggest that, when this emotional contagion occurs in relationships and groups, it can become the basis of group definition and collective action. They provide historical examples of instances in which groups of people came to share emotions with the result of extreme and spiraling mass emotions. These examples are suggestive of how emotions that emerge through social interaction affect large-scale social phenomena – impacting the people who are present, but also guiding relations within and between groups into the future.

Whereas Hatfield and Rapson illustrate some of the disastrous consequences of socially shared emotion, Anderson and Keltner, in the next chapter, take a functionalist approach. They show that emotional convergence strengthens relationships. Indeed, they imply that, without modulating emotions to converge with others, relationships might not form or at least would be less close and strong than those in which matching occurs. They also suggest that the degree to which people emotionally converge to others will depend on their power in the relationship, which illustrates how the need and desire for a relationship can affect emotional processes within relationships. These two chapters, when taken together, underscore the likelihood for emotional similarity within collectives, and show how these shared emotions play an important role in forming the collectives’ social realities. Thus, collective emotions are generated through social interaction and, once they have appeared, they define the collective and direct their social behavior.

The role of emotions in defining social relationships does not only occur through social negotiations in which collectives end up with the same emotion. In their chapter, Tiedens, Sutton, and Fong argue that many groups are characterized by emotion variation and differentiation. They suggest

instances in which groups characterized by differences in emotion can be conceptualized as just as groupy as those with the same emotion and argue that some tightly intertwined groups may in fact intentionally promote emotion variation. Like the previous two chapters, Tiedens et al. imply that the emotion composition of the group plays a primary role in determining what the group is and who counts as a group member, as well as whether the group will be successful at achieving its goals. In their approach, emotional variation (and convergence) is neither necessarily functional nor dysfunctional. Instead, the emotional composition of a group facilitates some positive outcomes but inhibits others. Thus, emotions impact and form the future of the group, but whether that is good or bad depends on the goals that are most important to the group.

Whereas the first three chapters in this section consider face-to-face groups, the final two in the intragroup section are concerned with social categories and societal groups. Rodriguez Mosquera et al. discuss emotion and culture, and Citrin et al. discuss emotion and gender. Both chapters go far beyond documenting differences between social groups in their emotional responses. The authors of these chapters are concerned with how membership in a particular social group directs members' attention, concerns, and interpretations toward and away from particular social cues.

What counts as emotional and what emotions are expected and experienced are shaped by forces that group members are unaware of, yet these emotions come to characterize the nature of the group. As such, particular emotions are accepted by group members (and outsiders) as natural biological correlates of group membership. Rodriguez Mosquera et al. and Citrin et al. are concerned with the often masked or unobserved social processes and practices involved in sealing these associations. In addition, these two chapters emphasize the reciprocal nature of social groups and emotions, in which each constitutes the other. These arguments are made in terms of how cultures can encourage or discourage concerns with honor, as well as how gender expectations encourage and discourage attention to appearance and the body. Though honor and the (gendered) body may not seem as though they necessarily implicate emotions, the authors demonstrate that emotions are tightly intertwined with both. In these chapters, we see that emotion emerges in response to subtle messages provided by the social environment. These messages are not explicitly about emotions per se, but about how to be a good group member and a good person. In this way, they form emotional responses, as well as meta-emotions about succeeding and failing to live up to cultural ideals. As such, the authors of both chapters also argue that emotions are centrally involved in socialization practices. Thus, emotion, culture, and gender become mutually constitutive – emotions are shaped by social context, and so, too, do they come to define the social meaning of the cultural context. These chapters corroborate previous