The History of Emotions

CHRISTIAN BAILEY

Michael Laffan and Max Weiss, eds., *Facing Fear: The History of an Emotion in Global Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012)

Luisa Passerini, Alexander Geppert and Liliane Ellena, eds., *New Dangerous Liaisons: Discourses on Europe and Love in the Twentieth Century* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010)

Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

William M. Reddy, William M., *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900–1200* CE (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012)

Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, *Sex before the Sexual Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Mark D. Steinberg and Valeria Sobol, eds., *Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011)

'What exactly is the history of emotions?' This question, often still encountered by historians working in the field, suggests that the history of emotions is difficult to understand yet hard to ignore. Historians active in other areas may have noticed the recent founding (and funding) of emotions research centres by Queen Mary, University of London, the Max Planck Society and the Australian Research Council. Yet the emergence of a critical mass of emotions researchers has not altogether dispelled concerns that emotions are not really accessible to the historian or worthy of sustained and serious consideration. Even a pioneer of the once dubious field of cultural history such as Peter Burke has wondered about the history of emotions' viability while recognising its promise. As he sees it, if historians regard emotions as stable across time (and thus pre-cultural, it seems) then all they can do is chart changing

Purchase College, State University of New York, School of Humanities, 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, NY 10577, U.S.A; christian.bailey@purchase.edu

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attitudes to these constant emotions. This leaves historians writing intellectual history but not the history of emotions. If historians, by contrast, treat emotions as historically variable then they may deliver more innovative work, but they may also end up struggling to find evidence for their conclusions. Taking anxiety as an example, Burke asks pointedly how 'could a historian possibly find evidence to establish' whether people were more anxious in a given historical period than another, rather than simply being affected by different anxieties.[1] The books under review here represent the latest generation of historians' efforts to answer Burke's questions and examine whether and how fundamental changes in the history of emotions can be charted.

As Burke recognises, the history of emotions was not created *ex nihilo* in the early twenty-first century. Instead, trailblazers can be found among historians from the pre-Second World War *Annales* school and more recently from the ranks of American academia. The social historians Peter and Carol Stearns offered one of the most productive methodological approaches in 1985 when they coined the term emotionology to describe the emotional norms formed and regulated in historical societies.[2] (This is arguably the kind of intellectual history that Burke spoke about, although the Stearns, as social historians, were interested in the feedback effect between norms and practices.) It then took over a decade for the next major advances to emerge. In 2001 William Reddy's monumental *Navigation of Feeling* appeared and provided much of the conceptual apparatus used by present-day historians to scrutinise emotions in the historical records.[3] Building on Stearns's insights, Reddy coined the term 'emotional regimes' to conceptualise how the powerful in historical societies have controlled individuals' experience and expression of emotions. But he also developed the concept of 'emotives', an adaptation of speech act theory that explains how individuals can experiment with their emotional utterances not just to describe but also to arouse or cool their feelings. (For instance, saying 'I love you' may intensify your feelings of love but may also alert you that you are not actually feeling what you say you are.[4]) By conceptualising emotives, Reddy was suggesting that naming emotions might actually be a part of the process of feeling emotions. He thereby offered historians a method for mapping individuals' changing experiences, rather than just focusing on how societies have described and valued emotions.

Reddy has thus greatly helped historians to think about the role of emotions for the self, particularly in political societies. But, as another leading historian of the emotions, Barbara Rosenwein, has illustrated, historical actors' emotional experiences are not only shaped by regimes but also by a plurality of communities that possess

[1] Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 111–12.
[2] Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *The American Historical Review* 90, 4 (October 1985), 813–36.
[3] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[4] For more on this, see Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 101–11.

'a common stake, interest, values and goals'.[5] Rosenwein's own work focused on a monastic emotional community in the early Middle Ages. Her theory of emotional communities has, however, been used by those working in the modern era to analyse how members of religious, work-based and even textual communities were not only regulated by emotional norms but also lived out these norms. Since Rosenwein and Reddy a number of historians have sought to further explore the dynamic relationship between norms and actual behaviour. Benno Gammerl has posited the existence of 'emotional styles' as forms of habituated emotional response, while Pascal Eitler and Monique Scheer have suggested that emotions should be analysed not as side-effects of practices but as themselves forms of practical and bodily engagement with the world.[6] As a *Contemporary European History* special issue from November 2014 illustrates, such theories have been rapidly adopted to show, for instance, how protest movements have consciously evoked and operationalised emotions in the minds and bodies of their members and of those living in their surrounding communities.[7]

When studying emotions historians have also been eager to look for inspiration outside of their field. Indeed, the historian's need to work through the latest neuroscientific and social constructivist cultural theories of emotions in order to clarify their object of study is perhaps one reason why the field seems so new-fangled and theory-heavy. The first work under review, Jan Plamper's *History of Emotions: An Introduction*, is, however, by no means weighed down by theory, even though it ranges across a variety of disparate disciplines. The text rather conveys a clear sense of the author's voice and demonstrates his talent for rendering vivid visual metaphors. Plamper's clarity is all the more admirable given that he does not regard his object of study as an intellectual terrain with an easily recognisable and stable topography. He rather describes his task as 'like tracking photographically each instant of the acceleration of a rocket from its launching pad' (7). The rocket is one of Plamper's many arresting images and it captures the dynamism he observes in the field.

Before tackling the vibrant contemporary scene, Plamper carries out sound historical work, beginning the volume with sections on the conceptual history and the historiography of emotions. But Plamper is not really a historiographer; he is much more interested in the broader history of how emotions have become an object of study in so many disciplines. He actually devotes the majority of his book to developments outside of history, turning (like Reddy before him) to anthropology and the life sciences. These two disciplines exemplify the two predominant ways of approaching emotions: the latter focuses on biology and thus emphasises the

[5] Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 24.

[6] Benno Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges', *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, 16, 2 (2012), 161–75; Pascal Eitler and Monique Scheer, 'Emotionsgeschichte als Körpergeschichte: Eine heuristische Perspektive auf religiöse Konversionen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 35 (2009), 282–313; Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory*, 51, 2 (May 2012), 193–220.

[7] Joachim C. Häberlen and Russell A. Spinney, eds., *Contemporary European History* (Special Issue: Emotions in Protest Movements in Europe since 1917), 23, 4 (November 2014), 489–644.

importance of nature while the former tackles culture and remains alert to the influence of nurture. Plamper is nevertheless able to treat these disciplines as more than ideal types by using his tools as a historian and showing the internal diversity that emerged within the fields across time. Perhaps the most compelling insights in the first half of the book are, however, found in Plamper's discussion of sociology. Summarising Arlie Hochschild's research into emotions and capitalism, Plamper shows not only that emotional expressions such as smiles and laughs are part of carefully staged performances by employees who must please their customers. He also reveals that in order to be convincing, corporate representatives must engage in 'deep acting' and really feel the friendliness they show.[8] This means, for instance, that air stewardesses must engage their empathy for (particularly difficult) customers, imagining, say, that an abusive businessman is really a frightened flyer, as vulnerable and in need of love as one of their children (Plamper, 122). The research presented here not only shows the costs of such emotional labour, it also adds new layers to the influential performativity theories outlined by Erving Goffman, Judith Butler and others.

Partisan observers from the humanities may expect that Plamper's following section on the emotions and the life sciences would feature Paul Ekman as the main hero or, rather, anti-hero of the story. For those unfamiliar with Ekman, he is a fantastically successful psychologist who has had his life and work dramatised in the primetime Fox series *Lie to Me* and has acted as a consultant for the Screening Passengers by Observational Techniques (SPOT) programme designed to spot potential terror suspects in US airports.[9] Ekman has also built the case for the existence of pancultural 'basic emotions' through experiments that show photographs of staged emotional expressions to individuals from a variety of communities across the globe. Plamper does indeed highlight the problems with the research: non-English speakers had to choose from translations of Anglophone terms for emotions and so were saying little about understandings of emotion in their culture; the staged expressions were already matched to supposedly basic emotions, preventing respondents from offering more nuanced interpretations of what they were seeing.[10] But Plamper's most useful iconoclastic work is actually done when he turns to the fMRI scanners that have recently been credited with revealing so much about emotional experience. Here he carefully exposes the brittle nature of much evidence presented by apparently hard and high-tech sciences. As he very clearly explains, all that an fMRI scanner produces is readings of oxygen flow to parts of the brain. Yet, on this basis, popularisers of neuroscience have felt emboldened to pronounce on 'love, free will, the human capacity for empathy, the way in which children acquired language, the feel for

[8] For more, see Arlie R. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, updated edition 2012).

[9] For more, see www.paulekman.com (last visited 19 Aug. 2015).

[10] For more detailed historically informed critiques of Ekman's methodologies, see Ruth Leys, 'How did Fear Become a Scientific Object and What Kind of Object Is It?', *Representations*, 110, 1 (May 2010), 66–104; Leys, 'The Turn to Affect: A Critique', *Critical Inquiry*, 37 (Spring 2011), 434–72; Leys, *From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

rhythm, and truthfulness' (Plamper, 207). This section shows Plamper at his best: not only can he explain the science cogently but he is also able to uncover how scientific findings become truisms in the wider sphere. This is a story not simply about truth but also about money. He suggests that if you want to understand how scientific popularisers have become prominent you should spend as much time researching an enterprising New York literary agency as you should investigating the scientists' own intellectual labours.

Plamper's book thus illustrates the immense potential for historians of emotion to participate in important debates about universalism vs. cultural relativism and about nature vs. nurture. This is an exciting prospect for practitioners of any discipline within the embattled humanities. Readers who expect a straightforward auditing of the work being done in the historical field may nevertheless be a little surprised at how relatively slender Plamper's concluding section on the history of emotions is. They may even wonder whether historians are really showing the explosive productivity that Plamper claims to see. But the structure of Plamper's work tells us something about the intellectual repositioning that historians of the emotions and historians more generally are doing. In order to win publishing contracts and represent the humanities, historians are increasingly seeking to insert a 'time as a vector' (Plamper, 77) into broader debates about social and cultural context, rather than simply talk among themselves.

So much for the field and its intellectual lineage. What about the empirical works that can show the potential and limitations for the history of emotions? One way in which historians have been able to chart historical change in the field of emotions is to focus on particular feelings such as love, hatred, anger or guilt. Here, Joanna Bourke's 2005 *Fear: A Cultural History* provides an ideal starting point, not least for history of emotions sceptics, as it illustrates the variety of tools and sources available to historians of the emotions. Bourke studies two things – the anxieties of political and intellectual elites who tried to manage American and British societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the more visceral fears that citizens felt across the life stages and at times of existential threat such as war. Drawing on a welter of medical and advice literature, alongside records from the UK's National Archives and the Mass Observation Archive, Bourke is able to move beyond mere discourse about emotions and consider the bodily manifestations of feelings. For instance, she is not only concerned about history of science questions such as whether First World War era shell shock was really PTSD or not. She is rather more interested in the bodily experience of veterans who continued to tremble and collapse long after they had left bombed out trenches.

Bourke focuses very effectively on moments of crisis. Like throwing a stone into water to create ripples, she analyses emergency situations to reveal wider priorities and prejudices in British and American societies. To take one telling example, she recounts the panic-induced stampede that took place in Bethnal Green underground station during a bombing raid in March 1943 in order to reflect on why this kind of event did not take place more often. It turns out that civilians had many more coping strategies than soldiers from the previous war: they could usually move around when

conducting daily business and they were allowed to talk about their fears. Yet, in the Bethnal Green underground station, civilians' fear became unmanageable because it was tinged with guilt. In a world war that had become an increasingly total war, civilians had come to feel a similar guilt to combatants once their government had started bombing German cities. They therefore believed that German bombing was a form of divine retribution. This case study also offers a bleak insight into emotional contagion: fear, like rumours, could rapidly spread and erode social solidarity as a number of letters to the Home Office blaming the treacherous actions of Jews and foreigners starkly revealed.

By prioritising such moments of threat, Bourke offers a captivating series of snapshots in an entertaining and provocative work. She does not, however, provide an altogether thorough auditing of how fearful American and British societies were in the modern era. The reader also does not get a consistently clear sense of regional, class, or religious differences within or across British and American societies, and the geographical focus is sometimes a little blurred. But even if this book cannot therefore conclusively answer the broad 'more or less' question posed by Burke, it does powerfully illustrate that emotions have had a profound impact on history while themselves being changeable through history.

Single authored monographs on fear are still relatively rare, even a decade after Bourke's appeared. Still, a number of significant edited volumes have emerged recently, including Michael Laffan and Max Weiss's *Facing Fear: The History of an Emotion in Global Perspective*. This book ranges widely across time and space, taking the reader from the Thirty Years War to eighteenth century Peru and modern Delhi. Michael Laffan's concluding chapter on 'Dutch Islamophobias Past and Present' nevertheless suggests that a major impetus for the volume is the fear of terrorism that Westerners have felt and that political leaders have mobilised after 9/11. Whereas Bourke's volume shows fear to be a problem that societies have had to manage, this collection of essays often depicts fear as a resource that can be mined. As Melani McAlister's fascinating chapter on 'Evangelical Internationalism, Islam, and the Politics of Fear' illustrates, fears that Christians abroad face ever greater threats of persecution and violence from apparently pre-modern and anti-liberal faiths has united and politically mobilised Christians across denominational lines in the US and internationally. Yet, any recognition that fear could be politically useful is nothing new, we are told. During the Enlightenment, intellectuals such as Baron d'Holbach suggested that terror should be aroused to motivate good actions in citizens who could not be won over by appeals to reason alone. This case study, outlined by Ronald Schechter, provides ballast for one of the volume's overarching arguments: that Western or Western-influenced societies have not simply followed a post-Enlightenment trajectory away from superstition and fear and towards knowledge and confidence. As Max Weiss's Introduction suggests, any such triumphalist self-description of the West encourages misleading contrasts to be drawn with supposedly fearful and superstitious non-Western societies. The ironic consequence of such narratives is that Westerners are then much more prone to fear this badly drawn and ultimately unrecognisable Other.

That fears can bring about unintended and thus ironic consequences in history is the other most important insight in this volume. Using Zgymunt Bauman's concept of 'liquid fear', a number of contributors show that once fear has been set in motion, it tends to leak or spill into unexpected areas, thereby creating new dangers that can be more threatening than the original situation or event itself.[11] A captivating chapter by Ravi Sundaram on 'Danger, Media and the Urban Experience in Delhi' investigates the story of a 'monkeyman' who supposedly attacked inhabitants of East Delhi in mid-2001. The result of frenzied media reporting and offers of cash rewards was a wave of vigilante violence and a spate of self-induced injuries incurred by residents who jumped off roofs in states of panic. Sundaram's broader point is that fear can travel along media channels and across a fractured, postmodern city in ways never expected by modern planners who imagined modern urban environments to be rational and productive spaces.

As the cross-section of chapters highlighted here might suggest, Laffan and Weiss's book is an eclectic offering. There is a rationale for advancing an argument using the kind of *bricolage* approach adopted: the editors' anti-universalist and non-linear argument about fear in history is effectively made by deploying a wide variety of geographically and chronologically dispersed case studies. Yet, rather like Bourke's monograph, this collection of essays is richly suggestive rather than tightly stitched together. The next two books under review have a somewhat different goal. Focusing on love, they seek to make more specific claims about the emotional tenor of a society (or number of societies) during a given period. In the case of William Reddy's *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900–1200 CE*, the author attempts to unearth the roots of a peculiarly Western understanding of romantic love by comparing classic medieval European courtly love texts with contemporary equivalents outside of Europe. Steven Szreter and Kate Fisher's *Sex before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918–1963* is a more conventional single country study which challenges the prevailing wisdom that couples' sex lives before the sexual revolution were unsatisfying and a source of shame. Szreter and Fisher suggest, by contrast, that the prevailing social silence about sex before the 1960s actually allowed couples to develop their own secret codes and private practices, thus increasing intimacy between them.

To start with Reddy's *The Making of Romantic Love*, this is a work of breathtaking ambition, not least for a historian who has established his reputation working on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France. Its review in a journal focused on contemporary Europe may seem strange, given its pre-modern subject matter. But as with Reddy's previous work, this text is directed at a number of questions of contemporary relevance, including whether the dating strategies and sexual practices of Westerners are unique and a result of the courtly love tradition. That Europe or the West developed a unique culture of romantic love which, once exported, went on to revolutionise the practices of 'traditional' societies across the globe has become a truism, in spite of not having been studied in comparative historical perspective.

[11] Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Fear* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).

Reddy's text offers this kind of comparative analysis and actually does conclude that the West has developed a unique understanding of the relationship between love and sexual desire. It should be said that Reddy is by no means triumphalist in how he presents this conclusion though. He rather finds that romantic love depends on a tension and contrast between desire and love that has not only put women under greater pressure than men but also, to some extent, denied sexual intimacy any emotional nobility.

Because of its broad geographical spread, *The Making of Romantic Love* cuts sharply across established boundaries in the discipline. It also opens itself up to the usual criticisms that can be levelled at comparative histories, although Reddy is careful and diligent enough to work through many of these. For instance, he does not treat the European or Asian societies under study as hermetically sealed but remains alert to connections between them. And although the author relies primarily on courtly love stories of one sort or another, he also considers sacred sculptures, histories and theological tracts when building up a picture of how love was practised and policed in European, Bengali/Orissan and Japanese societies. The work thus goes some significant way towards answering possible charges that such a wide-ranging comparison must rely on a very narrow selection of texts. A rather more intractable problem that Reddy faces is whether what appear to be equivalent texts actually played comparable roles in each society under review. This problem, in turn, begs the question of whether major players in his story such as courtiers, priests (or other holy men) and chroniclers played similar roles in their respective cultures. While Reddy does not quite tackle this question head-on, he certainly does succeed in sketching a finely detailed social, cultural and even political history around the intimate sphere that he investigates. This is quite a feat and one delivered with enough good style that the reader only occasionally feels the effort that has gone into the endeavour.

The intellectual payoff for the author's prodigious intellectual labour is that he can convincingly challenge contemporary (and seemingly scientifically validated) wisdom about sexuality in the West. Rather than conceding that sexual desire is a biological urge whose expression will burst through any culturally constructed straitjacket placed around it, Reddy persuasively suggests that it functions like any other desire. By contrasting European courtly love with the pious sensuality of south Asian spiritual traditions and the more radical dualism of Japanese Buddhism, Reddy can show that when it comes to love, individuals have made culturally validated decisions about what they desire and how they seek to fulfil their desires just as they have in other areas of their life. This remains true even if chroniclers of romantic love have celebrated its apparently irrational and almost involuntary quality. As Reddy explains, if there is any pan-cultural aspect to romantic love, it is not a biological sexual desire but a 'longing for association' that is not at all divorced from many other socially mediated longings and desires (Reddy, 16).

Interestingly, Reddy does not apply the concepts of 'emotional regimes' and 'emotives' in any sustained way, although most readers will probably be able to spot unnamed emotives and emotional regimes at work in the text. Such conceptual devices may actually have helped to sharpen the comparison between Reddy's three

internally complex case studies. But even without the aid of these tools, Reddy has delivered a work that contains many riches for historians of emotions and equals *The Navigation of Feeling* in terms of its ambitious architecture and far-reaching conclusions.

As Reddy's text powerfully illustrates, love has become a compelling topic for historians because it often involves couples seemingly acting against social logics and contrary to their own best interests yet in a conventional, almost scripted, fashion.[12] Historians are therefore presented with a puzzle in romantic love, but they are also offered materials and tools to solve it. Alongside reading conventional written sources such as love letters, diaries and poems, they can investigate bodily practices such as dancing, kissing and so on. Another value of histories of love is that historians must seek out still neglected women's writings and private sources that do not usually feature in events-driven political histories. Many of the possibilities for such histories of love have been demonstrated in recent works such as Claire Langhamer's excellent *The English in Love*, which uses Mass Observation archives alongside periodical literature to present a nuanced account of changing love relationships in twentieth-century Britain.[13] But Szreter and Fisher's text is particularly useful to review here because it offers another way of garnering evidence about changing experiences and valuations of love – that of oral history. By interviewing eighty-nine individuals (sometimes as couples) from working and middle-class backgrounds, the authors go beyond the master narratives constructed by relationship experts and cultural avant-gardes and investigate the attitudes and practices of the 'silent majority' (Szreter and Fisher, 45).

Szreter and Fisher thus use a very different method to that employed by Bourke: rather than focusing on moments of crisis, they are interested in tracking general (and subtly changing) attitudes across a generation. For this purpose, the oral history techniques they use are wonderfully effective. The lengthy interviews they conduct allow Szreter and Fisher to tease out details that might initially be suppressed or forgotten by interviewees who are remembering details at a distance of fifty years or more. In order to maintain a coherent story, interviewees have to revisit inconsistencies or evasions when they are pointed out. This allows the interviewees to travel the distance between 'then' and 'now' and avoid either lapsing into simple nostalgia or tailoring their stories to present-day judgements. For instance, in one passage a woman struggles to tell an honest yet respectable account of how an affair led to her second marriage:

> And then I met (pause) round . . . this pub just down there. This fellow kept sayin' ' 'Ello, sweet'art'; I mean, I didn't know he were married, so, we started goin' out even tho' I were married. Hmm. Anyway, my ex-husband (pause). Y'know, I'm, I'm scrappin' that part . . .

[12] For more on the concept of 'emotional scripts', see Shinobu Kitayama and Hazel Rose Markus eds., *Emotion and Culture: Empirical Studies of Mutual Influence* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1994).

[13] Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

So you left your first husband, because . . . ? Well, I can't remember whether he left – he must, oh, I know, uh, it's the part I'm tryin' not to tell ya (laughs). (Szreter and Fisher, 5–6).

Such insights illustrate the value of the qualitative methods employed by the interviewers. Having usually met interviewees in their houses and established trust through repeated and lengthy interactions, the interviewers are able to encourage often quite elderly individuals to provide rich (and sometimes graphic) details from a previously unseen private life.

These interviewing methods do, though, invite questions about representativeness. It is not entirely clear to what extent the authors tried to ask all of their respondents the same set of questions. Conversations appear to have proceeded in a more individually tailored fashion. This enables the authors to provide a thick description of the sexual relationships they investigate, but it leaves the reader wondering if the excerpts quoted are strictly representative or simply the most quote worthy. Nevertheless, it should also be mentioned that the authors provide voluminous and valuable demographic data about their interviewees in three appendices, enabling readers to chart respondents' professions and fertility behaviour among other things. Most importantly the text brilliantly nuances and challenges conventional wisdom about how the 1960s heralded the end of the sexual dark ages. The interviews do confirm that widespread concerns about respectability inhibited sexual behaviour and particularly exposed women to moral censure before the 1960s. But they also suggest that the lack of communication about sex in public allowed couples to develop their own approaches to love making without necessarily worrying about whether they were 'doing it right'. Furthermore, Szreter's and Fisher's text powerfully shows how enmeshed feelings of love have been with all kinds of other social valuations. As suggested in Reddy's text, sexual desire seems less a hormonal need and more a feeling activated by all kinds of culturally specific judgements about cleanliness, prosperity, health and partners conforming to gender roles.

With the exception of Reddy's comparative history, the texts reviewed up to now have been set in Europe but have not necessarily problematised how emotions such as love have informed European identity. *New Dangerous Liaisons* explicitly addresses questions of how shared or divergent emotional styles have informed notions of Europe. Co-editor Luisa Passerini (her colleagues are Alexander Geppert and Liliana Ellena) was not only one of the first historians of this generation to devote herself to a serious historical study of love, she also linked ideas about love with ideas about Europe in her *Europe in Love, Love in Europe*, published over fifteen years ago.[14] In the present collection, Passerini and her co-editors interrogate the shifting relationship between love and changing conceptions of the European community from a global perspective. They seek to shed new light on how ideas about love have reinforced or undermined the boundaries around Europe and have been used to justify a European civilising mission.

[14] Luisa Passerini, *Europe in Love, Love in Europe: Imagination and Politics in Britain between the Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

A number of the authors tackle these questions from the particularly interesting vantage point of southern Europe, illustrating that authoritarian leaders in early twentieth-century southern Europe were rather anxious about the European credentials of their societies. Focusing on three very different individuals, Giménez Caballero, Ramiro de Maeztu and Salvador de Madariaga, Jo Labanyi reveals that a wide spectrum of intellectuals reinterpreted the Don Juan story to suggest how southern European decadence could be arrested through a change in sexual habits. One solution involved using fascistic violence to achieve a sexual conquest of colonial peoples; another involved men returning to religious discipline and sexual continence. Madariga's answer, which set him apart from many of his intellectual counterparts, was to advocate a more consensual and egalitarian racial mixing. In this regard, Spanish elites proposed very different approaches to love than Nazi leaders, although the former also thought in terms of racial hierarchies and the eugenic consequences of racial mixing. The question of southern European decadence was a particularly pressing issue also for Italian fascists, who were eager to play imperial catch-up, as Lilliana Ellena reveals in her chapter. Those fascists who were involved in the occupation of Eritrea were especially worried that their own southerners were insufficiently European to survive postings in African colonies without 'going native'.

Another illuminating aspect to the volume is its consideration of political love in the form of love for a leader who is often only known through modern media. Alexander Geppert shines a light on this issue, focusing on the strong attraction that a number of female correspondents expressed for Adolf Hitler. Geppert's chapter therefore adds a valuable new dimension to old debates about consent vs. coercion in Nazi Germany. As the author suggests, women's projection of love feelings for Hitler may have been a response to a state that intruded into their private and romantic lives in the name of eugenics. Women who were convinced that the Führer cared about their love lives accordingly started to imagine a love life with the Führer as the ultimate form of national service.

The final book under review, *Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe*, edited by Mark Steinberg and Valeria Sobol, follows a similarly European agenda. Focusing on Russia and Eastern Europe since the Enlightenment, an interdisciplinary body of scholars assess whether the societies in this region belonged to a European mainstream in their emotional styles and emotional regimes. Andrei Zorin's chapter argues that late eighteenth century Russian noblemen certainly felt themselves under pan-European pressures to embody Romantic ideals about a 'unity of personality' (Steinberg and Sobol, 59). This was a typical strain on a new generation of noble bureaucrats in Europe, who lived discrete public and private lives yet felt obliged to conform to literary models of authentic and unitary selves. In a chapter that reflects on the emotional valence of nationalism in Imperial Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Ronald Grigor Suny similarly sets the experience of peoples on Europe's Eastern border in a wider continental perspective. Basing his reflections on Ernest Gellner's and Benedict Anderson's works, Suny illustrates the tensions inherent in European nationalism. Born out of a rationalistic European Enlightenment tradition, nationalism nevertheless carried emotional appeal primarily because nations possessed

non-universal characteristics and demanded a commitment that went beyond or against individual self-interest. As Suny suggests, the result of such contradictions could even be genocide, as occurred when the Young Turks sought to weld together a modernising and ethnic agenda in the Ottoman Empire after the revolution of 1908.

The effect of Western or European ideas and 'affective dispositions' on Europe's eastern borderlands is thus shown to have been ambiguous: as often destructive as emancipatory (Steinberg and Sobol, 102). But the starkness of the change in Eastern European emotional regimes prompted by communism is still made clear, not only in chapters focusing on the horrors of Stalinism but also in subtle contributions that focus on the Khrushchev and post-communist eras. Polly Jones concentrates on a novel turned film written during the thaw of the 1950s and 1960s to suggest that even during a period of comparative calm, intellectuals were put under great pressure to align their public and private selves. In order to re-legitimise the Soviet project after its Stalinist excesses, intellectuals were asked to perform a (paradoxically) rather similar task to Hochschild's air stewardesses: they not only had to display the right kind of 'civic emotions' in their works but also show their 'sincerity' when so doing (Steinberg and Sobol, 152). They would thereby dramatise the continued progress of a communist society that could cast off the brutality it had showed during an earlier era of struggle. This chapter, like many others in the volume, illustrates the emotional costs incurred during transitional periods and shows how a focus on emotions can introduce an element of syncopation between the periodisations and chronologies of political history and cultural history.

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The collection of works reviewed here suggests that a focus on the history of emotions can offer productive ways of rethinking histories of Europe and the West, particularly from the perspective of individuals and their subjectivities. As the edited volumes show, research into emotions can problematise notions of Western unity or uniqueness and draw out the multiple entanglements between Europeans and those they have encountered in the wider world. Such research should not only be of interest to historians but can also enrich wider intellectual debates about whether, and to what extent, emotions are biological impulses or cultural techniques.

The most valuable service that a history of emotions approach can provide is nevertheless best shown in the sustained analysis provided by the monographs discussed here. As Bourke's and Reddy's texts illustrate, historians can powerfully demonstrate that emotions have been a source of concern to political regimes and even a generator of policy. The importance of focusing on emotions is perhaps easiest to see during times of crisis, as when war breaks out or when protest movements arouse and put to use strong emotions, or when authoritarian regimes provoke acute emotional suffering in their subjects. Still, the history of emotions can be much more than the history of catastrophes and their emotional consequences, as

Szreter and Fisher's work illustrates. Their nuanced account tackles Peter Burke's big questions, drawing out noticeable changes in how love was felt, practised and valued across a generation of Britons from varying class backgrounds. The authors show that changing emotional dispositions can be observed, so long as the historian is alert to how deeply nested such dispositions are within wider attitudes to health, hygiene, morals and gender relations among many other things. Such an approach can be adopted even by those who cannot rely on oral history to ask fundamental questions about European political communities – questions that are as important for understanding peaceful periods as they are for investigating eras of war or revolution.