

Review of the *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, Peter Goldie (ed.)

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Reviewed by Giovanna Colombetti, University of Exeter

This weighty new Handbook is a very welcome addition to the Oxford Handbooks of Philosophy series. There are already some volumes that bring philosophical approaches to emotion together, but this collection is much more comprehensive than any other published so far (and that probably ever will), and has something for all researchers interested in emotion—mainly philosophers, but not necessarily only. The succinct introduction by the editor, Peter Goldie, usefully summarizes each contribution in one paragraph, providing a map of the volume. The Handbook itself is divided into six parts, each containing four to six articles: Part I, ‘What Emotions Are’ (articles by Deigh, Ben-Ze’ev, Cowie, De Sousa); Part II, ‘The History of Emotion’ (Price, Gill, King, Abramson, Hatzimoysis, Charland); Part III, ‘Emotions and Practical Reason’ (Elster, Döring, Helm, Tappolet); Part IV, ‘Emotions and the Self’ (Ratcliffe, Pugmire, Morton, Stocker, Rorty, Hobson); Part V, ‘Emotion, Value and Morality’ (Mulligan, Neu, Prinz, Greenspan, Roberts, D’Arms and Jacobson); and Part VI, ‘Emotion, Art, and Aesthetics’ (Matravers, Feagin, Robinson, Kieran).

For the purposes of this review I have chosen to focus mostly on the contributions in Part I and Part IV—which, I believe, are most likely to attract readers of *JCS* — and a few other articles in sparse order. Looking at the volume as a whole, Part II and Part VI in particular differentiate it from other collections in the philosophy of emotion. Part II is especially useful, with original contributions showing the richness and complexities of past emotion theories, from Plato to Sartre via the Stoics, Aquinas, the Sentimentalists, and nineteenth century French psychopathologists—just to mention some; this section really fills an important gap (even though a lot remains to be done in this area) and a more historically informed approach will hopefully influence future debates and conceptualizations of emotion.

Readers of *JCS* should be warned, however, that the Handbook contains mostly ‘armchair’ philosophical analyses, with little reference to affective-scientific empirical and

theoretical work (this is the case also for Part I and Part IV). One apparent missing link in the collection is the philosophical-scientific approach to emotion; there is no section dedicated to the philosophy of biology (think for example of the contribution that Griffiths, 1997, has made to the philosophy of emotion) and/or the philosophy of neuroscience. The question whether emotions are natural kinds, for instance, is one currently debated among philosophers but also psychologists (e.g. Barrett, 2006), and it would have been useful for interdisciplinary purposes to collect some philosophical discussions of this complex issue. Related questions of whether or not emotions are ‘modules’, of whether it makes sense to look for the ‘neural correlates’ of so-called ‘basic’ and/or ‘discrete’ emotions, and of whether or not the latter notions should be kept, remain largely marginal. This choice, I think, is unfortunate, for it loses one opportunity to show how philosophers can usefully contribute to research in other disciplines. It is ironic that De Sousa’s paper in Part I invites philosophers to embrace and consider scientific results in a volume that ends up minimizing contributions from philosophy of science. Goldie himself in the Introduction remarks that one of the reasons why so many philosophers are now interested in emotion is the increasing attention paid by philosophers of mind to empirical work in cognitive science. Yet there is no detailed philosophical discussion of current affective science in the Handbook. ‘Interdisciplinarity’ consists only in the inclusion of a few papers by psychologists. In Part I Roddy Cowie talks about current research in emotion-oriented computing, and how difficult it is to make computers react appropriately to human emotions, not least because humans appear to be expressing emotions most of the time, and more than one emotion at once (unfortunately, however, the article does not give the details of any specific project in this research area, so the reader is left to wonder exactly how the difficulties mentioned by Cowie arise, and what they tell us about the nature of human affectivity). In Part IV Peter Hobson provides a useful overview of developmental findings of the place of emotion in intersubjectivity, and of his own recent studies on autism that corroborate his claim that certain emotions and modes of affective interactivity are necessary for the development of the notions of self and other. He also uses his findings to question some of Goldie’s (2000) points about how we understand others’ emotions, such as Goldie’s claim that sympathy does not require sharing the other’s affect. This is all very welcome, but also calls for a similar attitude from the philosopher of emotion to engage with the scientist’s work (not just the other way round). Papers that mention and partly rely on empirical work in the rest of the volume are those by Tappolet (who criticizes the notion of ‘motivational modularity’ and discusses works in evolutionary psychology among other things), Prinz (who draws on the experimental literature on specific emotions, such as disgust,

to assess the place of emotion in morality) and Robinson (who interweaves aesthetic theories of music with a variety of psychological and neuroscientific works to argue that music can arouse non-intentional moods without the intervention of a cognitive appraisal). Note however that these papers mainly take empirical research for granted, and primarily use it to support theoretical claims with philosophical import; what is also needed, I think, are philosophical approaches that question and/or clarify some of the conceptual apparatus used by affective scientists, and that can engage critically and knowledgeably with their methodology.

Another area that is underrepresented in this Handbook is phenomenology. Goldie (p. 1) seems appreciative of this tradition: ‘Philosophy of Mind in the Anglo-Saxon tradition was for a long time (and in some way still is) preoccupied with the mind–body problem, ... and had little truck with the work of the phenomenologists, much of which included insightful discussions of the emotions’; yet again this appreciation is not really reflected in the choice of readings for the volume. Phenomenology here fares just a little bit better than philosophy of science, with Hatzimoysis’ focused and clear overview of some of Heidegger’s and Sartre’s most relevant points on affective phenomena, and Ratcliffe’s original elaboration of Heidegger’s notion of the ‘depth’ of moods.

Otherwise however most papers do belong to the Anglo-Saxon analytical tradition. Although they are not much concerned with the mind–body problem—which, incidentally, I think is a pity given the still very controversial status of the place of the body in emotion — many of them endorse the related distinction between ‘intentional’ and ‘feeling’ theories of emotion. (This distinction largely overlaps with the one often drawn by psychologists of emotion between ‘cognitive’ and ‘Jamesian’ theories. Roughly, according to the former emotions contain and/or are caused by a cognitive evaluation of some event in the world, and according to the latter emotions necessarily involve feelings of bodily changes). In spite of various recent attempts to overcome this dichotomy (for Goldie, 2000, feelings have their own form of intentionality which is not reducible to the one of propositional attitudes such as beliefs and desires; for Ratcliffe, 2008, and Slaby, 2008, even bodily feelings can be part of the structure of intentionality), Deigh and Ben Ze’ev (and seemingly De Sousa too), for example, still take the phenomenal aspect of emotion to consist in ‘mere feelings’ enclosed within themselves, dislocated from any meaningful action and interaction with the world. Contrast this view with the phenomenological approach, according to which all conscious states (feelings are no exceptions) are intentional or world-oriented—in the narrow sense of oriented towards specific objects, or in the broad sense of being ‘open’ toward otherness (for

a clear introduction, see Thompson and Zahavi, 2007). In this approach, even bodily feelings can be intentional. Indeed, as Husserl and many others have emphasized, the body as experienced by the subject (known as 'the lived body') is part of the subject's awareness of the world. Bodily self-awareness is not just, and not even typically, the perception of one's own body via e.g. proprioception; it importantly includes a 'non-reflective' (or 'pre-reflective') awareness of one's own body as that through which one experiences the world. From this standpoint, it becomes possible for bodily feelings in affective experience to be not just perceptions of physiological changes detached from the world, but bodily ways of appraising a situation as e.g. dangerous, enthusing, maddening, and so on.

Even though the dichotomy between feeling and intentional theories of emotion is not likely to go away easily, a sincere interest in phenomenology should lead to a more informed engagement with this tradition. Instead, phenomenology is still all too often taken to be merely synonymous with some kind of more or less disciplined introspection, with all the negative connotations that this term carries with it. De Sousa's paper is representative of this attitude. He offers two arguments against phenomenology, 'interpreted as the doctrine that skilled introspection can give reliable access to the character and meaning of one's own mental states or dispositions' (p. 98). The first argument appeals to established empirical findings which show that we are often mistaken about e.g. what we think will make us happy, and how we will behave in a specific situation. The second argument embraces content externalism and states that because meaning depends on factors outside the subject's knowledge, it cannot be fully disclosed by introspection. Hence, 'what emotions feel like cannot give us full access to their nature' (p. 100). These arguments mischaracterize the phenomenological enterprise. It suffices here to point out that Husserl's *epoché* is meant to consist in a change of attitude from a naïve realistic belief in the natural world, to a careful attending to how the world (including oneself) is experienced, or better 'given' to the subject in experience. This careful attending is not meant to disclose 'the full nature of mental events' where that would include unconscious processes that are beyond experience. Phenomenologists are interested in attending to the phenomena themselves, for what they are; the 'meaning' they are interested in is the one experienced by the subject.

The consequence of De Sousa's interpretation is that he ends up inserting a sharp wedge between phenomenology and science: because science has shown that we do not have privileged access to our mental states, we should look at science and not phenomenology to understand what emotions are. Yet as some readers of *JCS* will know already, and as De Sousa himself briefly acknowledges in a footnote (in which he also admits that his

interpretation of phenomenology is ‘narrowly focused’, see p. 98), there are at present various attempts to integrate phenomenological methods with empirical data generated by the cognitive sciences. Although not all phenomenologists approve of this partnership (see discussion in Zahavi, 2004), the relevant point is that ‘skilled introspection’ need not be at odds with the scientific enterprise, but can complement and illuminate it (as well as *vice-versa*, but this is another part of the story; see Gallagher and Zahavi, 2008, for an introduction to the project of naturalizing phenomenology).

As for Part IV (‘Emotions and the Self’), note that with the exception of Hobson’s paper mentioned earlier, this section does not address questions such as whether and how affectivity makes up the self, and/or whether some sense of self is always implied by affective experience; nor does it address existing scientific hypotheses that posit a constitutive link between minimal or core selfhood, affectivity, and the body (see e.g. Panksepp, 1998, and Damasio, 1999). However once one comes to terms with the fact that this section is about emotions and the self in the broad sense of how emotions fit together with other aspects of a person’s mental life, then one can enjoy some interesting and novel contributions. I have already mentioned Ratcliffe, who emphasizes that affective phenomena can be more or less ‘deep’ depending on the degree of specificity of their intentional objects; thus sadness for the loss of one’s favourite pet is shallower than sadness about one’s inability to engage meaningfully with other people, which is shallower than sadness about the status of human rights in many countries (the examples are mine). Pugmire offers a skilful and elegant discussion of what language does to feelings. Feelings can be ineffable; yet, once put into words, they can change in various ways. Sometimes language distorts experience and distances one from it (describing and representing turn *my* feelings into objects), but other times — think of poetry — it augments and completes it. Stocker’s and Morton’s papers are both about the relationship of emotion to knowledge, and should be read back-to-back. Stocker elaborates on his previous suggestion that there are ‘intellectual emotions’, such as intellectual interest and intellectual courage; he argues that they are instrumentally valuable (although perhaps not necessary) for good intellectual work, and thus need to be recognized and encouraged. Morton goes further, and argues that what he calls ‘epistemic emotions’ (such as epistemic curiosity and epistemic worry) are *essential* to the acquisition and maintenance of knowledge. Finally, aside from Hobson’s paper mentioned above, Part IV includes a paper by Rorty on the creative and even virtuous character of ambivalence. Her paper is not ‘strictly speaking’ about emotion (I do not think she mentions the word anywhere in the paper), yet ambivalence is clearly closely related to affectivity — we often have ‘mixed

feelings', and our attitude towards ambivalence is not neutral either, as we may feel uncomfortable or even guilty about our own ambivalence.

In sum, even though I would have liked to see more phenomenology in this Handbook, and more attention to current affective-scientific research and what philosophy can contribute to it, still it cannot be denied that this volume will be an irreplaceable research tool for any emotion researcher for quite some time. It shows clearly that emotion enters the philosophical inquiry in many different ways, and it does the emotion researcher a big favour by bringing together so many papers representative of these different ways. I myself will consult it often, and use it especially as an entry door into those topics with which I am less familiar. There is little unity in the philosophy of emotion, not just in the sense that existing accounts vary widely from one another (which is to be expected) and that philosophers from different traditions seem to have quite different emotions (!), but in the sense that there are few definite and agreed upon questions and approaches that constitute a common target for discussion and analysis. The major strength of this Handbook, I think, is that in putting all this material together it will contribute to a clearer overall picture, and thus to the emergence of a more unified field — one, however, that will doubtlessly always include many different styles, perspectives and accounts, consistent with the multi-faceted nature of its subject.

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