

The Zvi Yavetz School of Historical Studies
The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities Tel Aviv University



THE DEPARTMENT OF EAST-ASIAN STUDIES
Asia on Its Own Terms program
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Emotions across Boundaries

International Seminar and Workshop in the Philosophy and History of Emotions

January 9 2018

Organizer:

Roy Tzohar (Tel Aviv University)

All lectures will be given in English and are open to the public. Participation in the afternoon workshop session requires pre-registration by email to roytzo@post.tau.ac.il

Program

Morning Session

10:00-12:00 Webb School of Languages Building 01, Tal Aviv University

10:00- 10:10: Greetings

Keynote Address

10:10 – 12:00

Dan Zahavi (The Center for Subjectivity Research, University of Copenhagen)

Extended Minds and Shared Emotions

Abstract: In my talk, I will investigate the relationship between emotional sharing and the extended mind hypothesis. I will explore the suggestion that shared emotions are socially extended emotions that involve a specific type of constitutive integration between the participating individuals' emotional experiences. In doing so, I will critically assess a couple of recent proposals by Krueger and Schmid that both draw inspiration from classical phenomenology, and propose my own alternative account.

Respondent: **Ram – Prasad Chakravarthi** (Lancaster University)

Chair : **Roy Tzohar** (Tel Aviv University)

12:00 Lunch on campus for participants

Afternoon Session: Workshop

16:00 – 19:00 Gilman Building, Entin Faculty of Humanities, seminar room 449

Maria Heim (Amherst College); **Ram – Prasad Chakravarthi** (Lancaster University)

Introduction: Ecological phenomenology:

'Ecological phenomenology' takes subjectivity to be contextualized by its environment broadly conceived. (i) As a methodology, it tracks how what gets described and analyzed is dependent upon the purposes of the texts: hermeneutic contexts that situate phenomenology include genres, agendas and discursive strategies. (ii) As a working principle, it attends to the particularities of various fields of experience without seeking to determine metaphysical commitments about the nature of the category being studied. (iii) As a philosophy of experience, it treats the particular category of experience at hand – emotions, bodiliness, etc. – as context-dependent, its salience and identity shifting with the affective and other influences that percolate between it and its 'environment'. In an ecological phenomenology of emotion, we resist essentialist definitions, and explore the ways in which theory, taxonomy, and focus of attention are presented in our reading of the texts, so that we may explore what we may name, and what we may learn from these phenomena. The approach helps us undo some of the implicit and explicit assumptions – e.g., inner/outer, mental/physical, and other distinctions – from contemporary Western thought.

Maria Heim (Amherst College)

The Attractions of Disgust

I am particularly interested in what particular emotions are said to *do* within the fields of experience that constitute them. My case study considers the treatments of disgust in Buddhaghosa's corpse meditations and Bharata's aesthetic theory. I am interested in the phenomenology of disgust in both systems, as well as the refinement of it, aesthetically for Bharata and contemplatively for Buddhaghosa.
Anger, gender and the social ecology of the individual

Ram – Prasad Chakravarthi (Lancaster University)

Anger, gender and the social ecology of the individual

I am trying to delineate ways in which the 'individuality' of persons is represented through narratives of their emotional engagement with their fictive circumstances. By 'individuality' I mean the complex interplay between the concrete specificity of life-events and character on the one hand, and generic identities (like those based on gender, class, local culture) on the other. I suggest that the hermeneutic of 'emotion' is an effective way of exploring personhood in classical Indian texts. Here, I will juxtapose a depiction of Draupadī's anger in the *Mahābhārata* with that of Kaṇṇaki's in the *Cilappatikāram* to ask how a moral psychology of gender emerges in the depiction of a woman's anger within her social milieu.

Roger T. Ames (Peking University)

Human Feelings as a Cosmic Moral Force in the Confucian Canons

I will select passages from two of the Four Books that have been the core of Confucian teachings for the past millennium, the Mencius and the Zhongyong, to argue for the perceived cosmic moral force of human feelings in this tradition. The Confucians in challenging the Mohist assertion that cosmic order is divinely imposed, are not simply advancing the claim that human beings have an active role to play in the production of cosmic order. The Confucians insist that, in this aspiration to live inspired lives, human beings contribute in an intense way to the refulgent spirituality of the cosmos. Moreover, this spirituality is not unilateral or singular in purpose as is implied by the Mohist notion of "the intentions of 'Heaven'" (tianshi 天志), but is multivalent, pluralistic, and inclusive. The myriad things obey no single unifying principle, but achieve their harmony and their diversity through sourcing the interpenetrating differences that obtain among them to make a difference for each of them. Stated more simply, according to this text, the Confucian vision of the moral life is enhanced and all things in the world flourish when powerful human feelings are orchestrated into a productive, optimal harmony.

Yigal Bronner (Hebrew University)

Ornaments of Emotion in Dandin's Mirror

Indologists have become so habituated to understanding the poetic expression of emotions solely through the lens of Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta's doctrine of *rasa*, that they find alternative emotive templates, primarily through ornaments, totally incomprehensible. In this short presentation I will look at Dandin's unique treatment of one such ornament, *ākṣepa* ("dismissal"). I will argue that Dandin turns this relatively simple device of negating another statement into an in-depth analysis of a particularly emotional situation, when the man is about to leave for a long journey and the woman is determined to prevent his departure. If time allows, we will also address the larger question of his much misunderstood attempt to explain *rasa* itself as an ornament.

Sharon Weisser (Tel Aviv University)

The Stoics on Emotions

The Stoics have offered the first systematic treatment of emotions in Greek philosophy. As counter-intuitive as may seem their claim that the wise man is free from emotions, it is however fully in line with their physical, epistemological and ethical tenets. Since they understood emotions as a specific kind of judgment, the Stoics would certainly not agree with the claim that human emotions are not amenable to precise analysis nor with the view that the nature of emotions cannot be accurately determined. I am interested in understanding what motivated the Stoics in articulating their theory of emotions and in how, despite the fact that they can be labelled cognitivists and intellectualists, they found a way to account for the subjective aspect, the experienced quality and contextual factors of emotions.

Eviatar Shulman (Hebrew University)

Ambiguous Buddhist Emotions in the Jātakas

Narrative episodes in the Suttas, the early "Discourses" attributed to the Buddha, relate situations that are often deeply challenging and complex, yet characters remain flat and betray uniform emotions. In contrast, the *Jātakas*, the tales of the Buddha's previous lives, exhibit rich reflection on specifically Buddhist emotions, in which the normative behavior that is patterned by Buddhist ideology - the one that is expressed by the *Suttas* - appears as not much more than an easy way out; here the moral dilemmas receive more volume. In this talk we will examine a number examples of this sort from the *Jātakas*, and especially ones that relate broadly to the idea of renunciation.

Roy Tzohar (Tel Aviv University)

You Are Never Alone: Buddhist Mahāyāna Reflections on Private/Shared Experiences

I am interested in looking at the Buddhist conception of loneliness/seclusion as understood in the context of asceticism. While being alone is understood normatively as constitutive of the ascetic condition, its representation in Buddhist narrative and poetical literature seems to suggest that the ascetic life was always conceived in the context of a collective or a community. Indeed, if we follow these accounts, it appears that the ascetic was hardly ever alone. In my talk I open by unpacking some of the philosophical presuppositions that underlie this conception of being alone, focusing on the Buddhist Mahāyāna doctrinal discourse, and then ask whether and which of the distinctions between internal/external and shared/private experiences apply at all as viable categories through which to refer to emotions in this context.

Round Table Discussion

18:20 – 19:00

19:30 Dinner off campus for Participants