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Two Movements in Emotions: Communication and Reflection

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Abstract

In understanding the degree of choice we have in our emotions, we benefit from the Stoics' analysis into first and second movements: appraisals and reappraisals. The Stoics were concerned to avoid the harm that emotions can cause, but their idea of working on goals, rather than on emotions as such, generalizes beyond their concerns. For modern people, the problem of taking responsibility for our emotional life becomes less paradoxical when we consider interpersonal issues.

Keywords

choice, goals, responsibility, Stoics

Responsibility and Emotions

Bob Solomon was known for his eloquent writings in which he showed that the most insightful approach to understanding emotions is by way of cognitive analyses of the kind started by Aristotle (330 BCE/1954). He was also known for his devotion to existentialism, a movement that became influential in the twentieth century when Sartre (e.g., 1943/1958) argued that the centre of human life is choice and responsibility, and that we become the choices we make.

Emotions seem just to happen to us. If choice and responsibility are critical to living in the right kind of way, can we reconcile the apparent opposites of emotions that happen and actions we choose? Sartre's view was that we need not try, because emotions are evasions, species of magical thinking, excuses by which we distract ourselves from responsibility for our lives.

Solomon did not accept the argument of emotions as excuses, and sought to reconcile the apparent opposites. His work on the issue is in *Not Passion's Slave: Emotions and Choice* (2003), a collection of articles published between 1973 and 2001. He starts the preface of this book with a quotation from Sartre that includes this: "For the idea that I have never ceased to develop is that in the end one is always responsible for what is made of one." Then, continues Solomon about his own work, "The idea that we are in some significant sense responsible for our emotions is an idea that I, too, have never ceased to develop" (p. vi). Solomon continued with the problem, for instance in *True to our*

Feelings (e.g., pp. 190–200), published in 2007, the year he died. In his work on the topic, he says he followed Aristotle's and the Stoics' idea that emotions are "judgments, much more akin to thoughts than to physiological or physical commotion" (Solomon, 2003, p. 94). As he makes clear, we cannot choose our emotions in the same kind of way that we can choose to raise our hand. But we can, nonetheless, choose circumstances congenial to certain kinds of emotions, and when an emotion is in progress we can sometimes choose what to do with it. I accept his arguments, and I here seek to extend them. My route is by way of the Stoics' analysis of emotions into first and second movements as discussed by Sorabji (2000), an analysis that Solomon acknowledged (2003, p. 216).

First and Second Movements of Emotions

Emotions typically occur with evaluations of events: appraisals that tell us how urgent the events are in relation to our goals. Behavioral and physiological analyses indicate that emotions are involuntary, with rapid onset, and duration from a fraction of a second to a few seconds (Ekman, 1992).

Sorabji (2000) recounts how the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus thought that emotions typically involve two movements. The first is involuntary in the way that Ekman (1992) describes. The second occurs when the emotion extends over time, when we think about it. Chrysippus considered this second movement to be the real emotion. Only in this part can we talk about choice.

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What evidence is there that emotions include second movements? Frijda, Mesquita, Sonnemans, and van Goozen (1991) had subjects draw graphs to indicate the trajectory of emotion experiences. Recorded in this way, 69% of emotions lasted an hour or more, and 22% lasted more than a day. Oatley and Duncan (1992) confirmed, in a study of 57 undergraduates each asked to record in an emotion diary their next four (or in some cases five) emotions, that most emotions extend in time. Ekman (1992) says of extended emotions that they are repeated brief elicitations, but this does little to explain them.

Here is an emotion from the study of Oatley and Duncan (1992), recorded by a female undergraduate.

In the pub, working. Punter [customer] asks me out. I say "Yes." Then I start to get worried in case he's a psychopath, 'cos I don't know him very well. He also said he would wait for me after work, worried in case he followed me home. (p. 266)

This incident had a brief initial phase, which we may label as happiness with an expression of social cooperation, and a second phase that the subject identified as fear/anxiety.

In another incident reported by Oatley and Duncan (1992), an emotion diary was supplemented by a semi-structured interview. The subject reported an emotion of anger in an argument with her boyfriend that started about preferences for kinds of music. The initial emotion lasted two and a half hours, but there were recurrences over the next three days, during which, with her boyfriend, she became sarcastic, made cutting remarks, became withdrawn, sulked, and made attempts at reparation. The subject wondered whether the relationship would end. As time went on, her angry emotion became accompanied by guilt because she thought she was pressing her boyfriend too hard. She felt her anger was inconsistent with her view of herself as "a person who would not be irritated by someone with a different opinion." She said: "there was a kernel of something that lowered my estimation of myself on some kind of internal scale" (p. 276). She thought she should step back and calm down, then thought she was partly to blame. Difficulties of understanding such emotions and their repercussions are part of the reason why 90% or more of the emotions remembered at the end of the day have been shared with others (Rimé, 2009). The fact that we confide our emotions indicates that we actively consider them, and seek to understand their possibilities for ourselves and others.

Oatley and Duncan (1992) did not ask subjects (students) specifically to analyze their emotions into first and second movements. We found, nevertheless, that many emotions did include bodily sensations (evidence of first movements), for example from 246 emotion incidents there were reports of 88 instances of feeling tense, 82 occasions of feelings in the stomach, 38 reports of trembling, and so on. As to second movements—reappraisals—30% of the emotions were recorded as changing in type as they progressed. Similar results were found by Oatley and Duncan (1994) in a sample of employed people.

To expound the idea of first and second movements, another Stoic philosopher, Epictetus (100/1998), who was crippled perhaps from birth or perhaps from physical abuse when he was a slave, argued that we should not identify our self with our body.

The bodily changes that occur with emotions cannot be controlled any more than blows from a master can be controlled by a slave. We should identify with something more mental, argued Epictetus, with our purposes and plans, with what is up to us. Thus the young woman who worked in a pub made a more considered decision, and the young woman who had an argument with her boyfriend spent a lot of time on implications of the emotion for herself, and for what to do in her relationship.

As well as extracts from diaries, a different glimpse of emotions and their properties comes from language. Much of psychology is based on the folk theory of English-speaking societies. In English, emotions tend to be adjectives: for instance "I am angry" but, as Pavlenko (2005) points out, in Russian (her first language) emotions are often verbs. Thus, Pavlenko says, although much of her life in the USA is conducted in English, she misses Russian emotion verbs like *serdit'sia*, which means to become actively angry at someone with the presupposition of a close relationship, with the expectation of reconciliation, and without the tone of accusation of English equivalents. Lack of such verbs deprives her, she says, of "important means of relationship-building and emotion management" (p. 78). It may be that in the folk theory embedded in English, emotions are thought of in terms of their first movements, things that happen—he made me angry, I fell in love—whereas in Russian there is a focus on second movements, which are actions in which there is an element of choice.

First and second movements of emotions have also been depicted in fiction: "The Dream of an Hour" (1894/2000), by Kate Chopin, starts like this.

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences ... of the railroad disaster ...

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone.

[... she looks out of her window...]

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!"

It was the powerlessness over such movements, which Chopin depicts, that exercised the Stoic philosophers. Having decided that the first movements of emotions were reactions of the body, they devoted themselves to understanding, and then combating, the

urges of the second movements. Although second movements can be powerful, they are evaluations, species of thought that can be considered. In the story, Mrs. Mallard assents to her second movement, with the word “free.” In such ways, we can take responsibility just as we take responsibility for our other thoughts.

Second movements have a rationality to them (de Sousa, 2004), but it is local to the particular goal in relation to which the emotion is evoked. A study by Nundy and Oatley (see Oatley, 2002) illustrates this. We asked subjects to read the short story “Sarah Cole” by Russell Banks, in which a man who thinks himself very handsome has an affair with a woman whom he thinks homely. The man ends the affair in a cruel way. As they read the story, some people became angry and some people became sad. Although the ending of the affair is clear, the story ends ambiguously; we asked readers three interpretative questions about it. We classified their responses into categories known in cognitive science as forward chaining (reasoning forward from a premise towards conclusions) and backward chaining (starting with a conclusion and then giving reasons for it). We found that people made angry by the story were significantly more likely to reason about the questions by forward chaining, and those made sad were more likely to use backward chaining. We see here the directional effects of emotions. Anger propels one to think forward from the current event (from the wrong that was done) towards what is to do about it. Sadness prompts one to think backwards (from the loss) to analyze how it came about. Of course the emotion did not tell subjects what to think: that was up to them.

The way one thinks is not automatic, it has to do with who we are. An emotion presses in a certain direction with considerations that are local to its goals, to which it imparts urgency along with disattention to wider implications. We can say that the function of the first movement is, as Oatley and Johnson-Laird (1987) have put it, to communicate to the self and others, and to set the system into a state of action readiness (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989). Second movements prompt thought and action, first of all in a directed and local way, but then perhaps towards what we might do about them in wider contexts when—as the young woman who argued with her boyfriend put it—they raise questions about their consistency with our view of ourselves. Emotions can and do direct us. That is an essential part of their function. As Frijda (e.g., 2010) puts it, they give control precedence to some kinds of actions rather than others. Because emotions derive from our goals, they are usually close to who we are, as in the existentialist idea of authenticity. But might it be possible, perhaps, to cultivate our emotions towards considerations that are less local, so that we are emotionally prompted towards actions with which we can identify?

Between a first and a second movement of emotion there is a shift from the function of brief automatic attention and readiness to that of consideration. It is for this phase that the question of responsibility becomes most critical.

A Reservation

Although the Stoics’ analyses are useful, recent philosophical work offers serious reservations. Sometimes, for instance, one may experience an emotion only after thinking about a situation,

and after deciding to do something about it: for instance, when something unfair has happened to somebody one knows. In such cases it is as if the second movement comes first, and this would go against Chrysippus’s analysis. Yet more serious is the possibility that, as argued by Adams (1985) and Smith (2003), we can properly regard ourselves as responsible in certain kinds of events in which we are implicated without conscious choice. Neither Adams nor Smith discusses the following experiment because it is too recent, but it puts the issue starkly. Kawakami, Dunn, Karmali, and Davidio (2009) found that although people predicted that they would be upset and angry if they were to see a racist incident, when they did encounter a white man making a racist comment about a black man, not only were most people not particularly upset but they often chose, as a partner in a future task, the man who made the racist comment. This occurred without conscious decision about the root issues, yet we would properly regard people who react in this way to be responsible for their own racism. One would approach a person who showed these traits differently from someone who did not. We may conclude that the Stoics made a good start on the matter, but that responsibility is not limited to conscious choice.

The Stoic Influence: Bad Thoughts and Deadly Sins

The Stoics were less concerned with what to believe than with how to live. The key was pragmatic, to manage their emotions. We can think of the Stoics as among the first emotion psychologists, who strove to apply their insights to themselves. They wanted to liberate themselves from suffering and from acting irrationally under the influence of emotions. They thought that even second movements of emotions could be too powerful to resist. They saw that once one is angry, deciding to stop being angry can be impossible. Therefore, one needs to work at an earlier phase of the process, with the goals in terms of which events are appraised to produce emotions.

The Stoics’ name for goals was desires. To free oneself from destructive emotions, one must free oneself from desires. Here, too, there is a problem, because desires have a seeming rightness about them: we may want a lot of money because it feels that we deserve it, we may want power over another because we know we are right, we may want sexual gratification because we do. But, the Stoics argued, we can be free of destructive emotions such as envy, anger, and disappointment, only if we free ourselves of such desires as greed, power-seeking, and lust.

So is there anything worth desiring? The Stoic answer is that only character is important, in its rationality and virtue. In his reflections, Marcus Aurelius (170/1964), a Stoic who was the Roman Emperor from 161 to 180, reminds himself that most other things, for instance the desire to control events which would make him see other people as interfering, the desire to do good because someone would be grateful, the desire to be important so that he would see others as insolent, are empty. Emotions of irritation, solicitude, and affront that derive from them are evaluations due (as we would now say) to goading of genes towards status. If one recognizes them for what they are, they are ephemeral in comparison with matters that are worthy and permanent.

The Stoics were radicals. Except for the calm emotions of friendship, they wanted to extirpate all the others. To perform this inner surgery, they argued that all desires other than for rationality and virtue should be rejected as worthless.

As described by Sorabji (2000), the Stoic idea that rationality and virtue were divine was taken up by early Christian thinkers like Origen and Evagrius. In Christian thinking, the bad emotions such as anger, envy, and so on, which the Stoics sought to extirpate by their therapies of desire (Nussbaum, 1994), became sins. Because of the idea of temptation attached to them, sins implied choice. Sorabji explains how, with a slightly different analysis than that of Chrysippus, Evagrius nominated as first movements eight bad (i.e., mistaken) thoughts or evaluations: thoughts of gluttony, fornication, avarice, distress, anger, depression, vanity, and pride. Evagrius said that we cannot help having such thoughts. To illustrate, he describes a monk devoted to poverty who thinks of some wealthy ladies from whom he might be able to raise some money to help the poor. If he were to succeed he would gain gratitude, and perhaps a promotion. If he were to act on the temptation of this second movement, he would succumb to sins of avarice and pride.

As we all know, there are not eight deadly sins but seven, a number which, with its Babylonian provenance, has much more rightness to it. These sins are gluttony, lust, avarice, envy, anger, sloth, and pride. All are either desires that have an emotional quality, or frank emotions.

A Modern Solution: Appraisal and Reappraisal

As well as their valuable distinction between first and second movements, the conclusion that can be carried forward from the Stoics and early Christians is that if one wants to create the possibility of choice in our emotions it is best done by choosing among the desires from which emotions derive. Modern people are still concerned with how to live. The Stoics thought that to live a good life, one needs to give up desires, except the desire for virtue, and thus to extirpate all emotions. Sorabji (2000) calls this "the unacceptable face of Stoicism" (p. 169). There is also, in Stoic solutions, something of the disorder of depression. Stoics thought that if matters come to a really bad pass, one should commit suicide. We now tend to think that suicide is self-indulgent if one has living first-degree relatives. In this section I offer five considerations that, while holding to the Stoics' insights of first and second movements and their concentration on desires, take the discussion into the modern age.

Consideration 1: Free Will

Perhaps we have no choice in our goals and actions. The ancient debate about free will is far from settled. A recent and enlightening discussion of the issues as they affect emotions is by Fridja (in press).

It could be that everything we do is determined, distally by our genes and environments, and proximally by neural mechanisms. It could be that the appearance of being able to make choices is an illusion. In philosophy, this kind of line is taken by

Dennett (1991). In neuropsychology, a piece of research that is often quoted is by Libet (1985) who found that neural processes involved in moving (for instance) a finger begin well before the conscious decision to move.

According to this kind of thinking, not just conscious choice but every other aspect of consciousness may have no more causal significance to mechanisms that produce behavior than does the sound of the engine in making a car move forward. I have argued against this position (Oatley, 2007) in the following way. Much of the paradox about whether we as agents can actually make choices derives from analyses of mechanisms within the individual mind. At its limit the question of free will then becomes: "Could the individual behave outside the mechanisms of causality?" The very oddness of the question indicates that this is not what choice is about. Any realistic sense of free will is not about acting outside causality. It is about acting for our own reasons, and in relation to situations in which we find ourselves. We want to act for reasons we can articulate. If you are my friend, and I say, "Let's meet in an hour's time," the reason each of us turns up is that we make a commitment out of our affection or something comparable. Without being able to act for reasons that we can explain to ourselves and each other, there would be no social life because we would not be able to coordinate with each other or with ourselves.

Human life is social life. It is in this sense that we can choose our actions, and also to some extent be responsible for our emotions. In this sense we also need to be able to act for reasons that derive not purely from individual interests. Fridja (in press) makes a comparable point: we do not want to know what neural processes were involved during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 when some Hutu women risked death by sheltering Tutsi children. We want to know what it was in the women's character that enabled them to resist the emotional compulsions of fear and sectarian hatred, and what it was in their situation (Doris, 2002) that enabled them to act in the way that they did.

Our system of social coordination is based on interpersonal emotions. As well as being a physiological perturbation (first movement), and being a thought (second movement), a social emotion, as Aubé (2009) puts it, is a commitment. As a commitment, it needs to be fulfilled; otherwise social life would not occur. This sense of social commitment is the primary way in which we are responsible. If Ahmed says to Beatrice, "I love you and want to marry you," he takes responsibility for his love and his future actions in relation to Beatrice. What he wants and feels has characteristics of the speech act (Searle, 1969) of promising. A promise requires that one's actions could be chosen to be otherwise. If Charlotte is angry with her infant son Dmitri who has taken his friend's toy truck, her anger too, as Averill (1982) has pointed out, has characteristics of a speech act, a promise to see it through to some outcome, perhaps of Dmitri recognizing that he was unkind. Even if Charlotte's anger were a product of her genes and upbringing in relation to how Dmitri has behaved (also a product of genes and upbringing), she can still be responsible for her anger, and for seeing it through.

The existentialist position, to which I subscribe, is something like this: it is far more important to act as if we have responsibility in our lives than to worry about whether we can ever choose

anything. Although some of the urges that we experience are compelling—where emotions seem rather closely programmed by our genes—we humans can also think. One of the outcomes of such thinking is to uncouple genes and action to some extent, to create a world of human purposes rather than merely to take part in a world specified by genes whose only purpose is to reproduce themselves (de Sousa, 2007; Stanovich, 2004). Although, as compared with most thoughts, many emotions derive rather closely from our genes, they are also, to some extent, up to us. The emotions that derive from our genes can be urgent, but one's task is to distinguish the important from the merely urgent, and to give one's assent to those second movements that are also important in a wider context. To make use of the energy of emotions in this way is one of the attributes of emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Consideration 2: Responsibility and the Law

We can think of the criminal law as a crucible of intuitions about responsibility for actions, including those taken in the press of emotions. The assignment of responsibility in modern Western societies by the application of criminal law involves an extensive and expensive apparatus: prosecution and defense attorneys, the courts, the prison system. Consider the law in relation to killing, in which different degrees of responsibility are attributed to people who act under the influence of different emotions. A person who kills in a fit of jealous rage is considered less responsible than someone who kills in a plan of angry revenge. Derived from the apparatus of societal justice, stories, films, and television dramas incessantly work and rework issues that are heard in courts—of emotion, action, and responsibility. In terms of the current discussion, a killing in the first throes of jealousy is arguably the result of a first movement of emotion. A plan of vengeance makes clear that a person has assented to a second movement.

Both the societal apparatus of the criminal justice system and the fictional retelling of its workings are matters of considerable fascination. Western society expends great effort to attribute personal responsibility for actions that affect others adversely. Although, as Finkel and Parrott (2006) have shown, the law and understandings of emotions are not as close as they might be, the workings of criminal justice systems are reflections of our intuitions about what a reasonable member of society can be held responsible for. We are, in part, products of our societies. When, in certain harm-producing actions, we do not take the responsibility that we should, members of a jury will attribute responsibility to us.

Consideration 3: Choosing Among Desires and Emotions

In the time of the Stoics, life was more raw and cruel than it is today, so it is understandable that people who had a vision of goodness might think the best solution was ascetic withdrawal. A similar solution has been taken by anchorites, monks, and nuns of various religions. For most of us, however, asceticism

seems not the right way to live, and modernity has made it easier to entertain at least some desires. During the last hundred years in the West, life has become more tractable because of technologies of housing, transport, health, and communication. As compared with former times, desires for such things as health, safety, and education for one's family are no longer matters of such pressing anxiety, an emotion from which the Stoics sought release.

Also in the modern period, some emotions, for instance the emotion of love, both of a sexual kind and of the kind that occurs between parents and children, are seen as valuable inheritances of our biology, celebrated as among the highest human goods. Also, we do not want to give up all anger. To fail to be compassionately angry on behalf of victims of genocide would be to fail in our responsibilities. There may be problems not of too much emotion, but too little; thus in the experiment by Kawakami et al. (2009), discussed above, in which people predicted they would feel angry if they witnessed a racist incident but did not, we could say they did not become angry enough. The considered judgment of many moderns is that the radical solution of the Stoics, to forego all desires except for the attainment of virtue, is inappropriate, even if it were attainable. There comes, then, the possibility of accepting some desires and some emotions. This brings us to questions of emotion regulation and of therapy.

Consideration 4: Emotion Regulation

The idea of emotion regulation has become widely influential (see, for example, Gross, 2007). Here, consider just one study by Gross and his colleagues (Butler et al., 2003) who examined how interpersonal relationships are affected by trying to suppress emotions as compared with reappraising them. Subjects were pairs of women who did not know each other, who viewed a 16-minute film about the aftermath of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombs, which had been found to cause strong negative emotions and political reactions. The women were then asked to talk with each other, in their pairs, about the film. In one group (suppression) one member of each pair was asked to suppress her emotions so that the other did not know she was feeling any emotions. In a second group (reappraisal) one member was asked to reappraise the experience by keeping calm and thinking of her current situation. In a third group (control) the women were given no instructions. During the conversation, the blood pressure of the suppressors and those with whom they spoke was significantly higher than that of the reappraisers or their partners, or that of the control women. Moreover, suppressors achieved less rapport with their partners than those in the other groups. In a replication, those who were partners of suppressors reported that they would be less likely to take part in a friendship with the suppressor than did women in the control group. Suppression had ill effects, but working on goals (attending to the situation) could be done in a more piecemeal way than the ancient Stoics supposed.

If we put this kind of result together with the Stoics' idea of first and second movements, we can also clarify the question of what is meant by regulation of emotion. Modern cognitive

analyses of emotions hold that emotions are informative about events of significance to the person experiencing them. Happiness tells us we are doing well. Fear warns us of danger, and so on. Clore and Huntsinger (2007) write of emotion as information, and in the theory with which I am associated (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987), the idea is that emotions are communications to the self and others. If this is true, it makes no sense to talk about regulating a signal that informs us of something significant. We might as well talk of turning off the light when we are trying to read.

Nevertheless, the idea of regulation is important. The study of Butler et al. (2003) suggests that trying to regulate the emotion itself is deleterious. We do better when, as the Stoics suggested, we operate at the level of goals. Those subjects in Butler et al.'s experiment who were given the goal attending to their current situation gave precedence to communicating with their partners.

Consideration 5: Therapy of Desire

The first movement of response to an emotional episode is informative. Something has occurred that affects one of our goals. The emotion system commands our attention, and sets our readiness. But the initial signal does not always say what has happened, or how it is to be understood. It is more like an alarm going off in a house. It commands attention. It might be a burglar, or maybe the cat has set off a motion sensor, or maybe it is not the burglar alarm but the fire alarm. The second movement, or reappraisal, can include trying to understand the implications of an emotion, as seems to have occurred for the reappraisers and controls in Butler et al.'s (2003) study, as occurred with the subjects in Rimé's (2009) studies, and as occurred with the undergraduate who had an argument with her boyfriend (mentioned earlier in this article).

The principle of reappraisal is the basis of cognitive behavioral therapy (e.g., Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979) in which, among other activities, one is asked to keep a diary of each emotion that occurs and the thought that accompanies it. Then one is asked to write down an alternative thought. It need not be plausible; it must just be an alternative. Alongside the experience of creating thoughts that are alternatives to the ones that seem so compelling, therapists can suggest alternative actions, which clients can then choose to do. For instance, in a study of 33 married women with diagnoses of agoraphobia, Oatley and Hodgson (1987) administered a program of therapy that included encouraging the women to make choices to go outside their homes alone into a graded set of situations they had feared. Before therapy, the subjects recorded in activity diaries that they spent a mean of 13 minutes per day alone outside the home. At follow-up, 12 months after the beginning of therapy, the women recorded 53 minutes per day alone outside the home. By this time seven of the women had started paid jobs. Overall they were able to engage in freer lives by choosing actions that were previously prohibited by their anxiety. Psychoanalytic therapy—which parallels Stoicism in its concern to relieve people of the torment of emotional compulsions that derive from situations other than the current one—has adopted the Stoics' prescription of working with goals (desires) and moving towards reappraisals. Meta-analyses have shown

that this and other kinds of therapy have been successful for mood disorders (e.g., Cuijpers, van Stratton, Andersson, & van Oppen, 2008), and that cognitive behavioral therapy is effective for anxiety disorders (e.g., Colvin, Ouimet, Seeds, & Dozois, 2008). These therapies aim to allow people to enter areas of choice among their desires and emotions where previously there had been only compulsion.

Towards Interpersonal Solutions

The challenge that Bob Solomon set himself, to show that an understanding of emotions is informative for how to live, remains perhaps the most important task faced by philosophers and psychologists of emotions. The problem is how we can exercise choice in our emotions, when they seem just to happen, and also how we can take responsibility even for those aspects of our emotional life that are not directly a matter of conscious choice.

Like modern philosophers and psychologists, the Stoics seem to have been largely concerned with the individual. Their specimen case was the person contemplating his or her own emotions in relation to the preservation of virtue. But as we move out from the individual into the interpersonal world, where most emotional life goes on, Stoic solutions can be seen as limited, even solipsistic. Emotions within the mind are appraisals of what has happened, but emotions as they give structure to the relationships that develop between minds (Oatley, 2009) are commitments (Aubé, 2009) to others that have a future.

Armstrong (2006) has argued that a great societal change started some 2,600 years ago, when sages began to enjoin people to act out of consideration for others. She says Confucius was the first to enunciate the principle "Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you." It is a principle of compassion, feeling on behalf of others, a societal and ethical equivalent, perhaps, of the epistemological idea that at the age of about four, children acquire a theory of mind (Astington, 1993), by which they can understand what others think and feel. In the West, Konstan (2001, p. 121) quotes Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenized Jew who was influenced by Stoicism, as arguing in the early years of the First Century CE that the emotion "most closely related and akin to the rational soul" is pity, that is to say compassion. Konstan says this was the first statement that prioritizes compassion to appear in Greek or Latin writing. He also cites Lactantius, a Christian, as arguing that not all emotions are to be extirpated as the Stoics proposed, but that "they are planted in us by nature and have a purpose (*rationem*)."¹ Their value depends on how they are used: "if for good, then they are virtues (*virtutates*), if for bad, vices" (p. 121). One of the world's most respected modern spiritual leaders, the Dalai Lama, has recently held conversations with one of the most prominent researchers on emotions, Paul Ekman (Dalai Lama & Ekman, 2008). The Dalai Lama proposes that the two most important principles for guiding our emotions are compassion and the acknowledgment of human interdependence.

Our lives are not confined within our skulls. They are lives with other people, lives in which events occur, in which we experience ourselves choosing and feeling in relation to such other people and to such events. When we enquire into processes of choice in human life, we are not talking of choosing outside the mechanisms of

causality, or of foregoing the energy and directedness of emotions. Conscious choice, moreover, is not the whole of responsibility, and this becomes clear as we think about our emotional life in relation with others. Perhaps, with each emotion, we can only influence its promptings a little. The issue is how to cultivate one's goals and emotions according to our responsibility for others. This is a conclusion that Bob Solomon would have approved.

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