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In the Mood for Thought: Feeling and Thinking in Philosophy

René Rosfort and Giovanni Stanghellini

THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY IS NOT commonly associated with the expression of emotion. That is to say, while philosophers sometimes take emotion as their subject, they rarely attend to the affective aspects of their own discourse. And yet, while these aspects may seem secondary to analytical content, they are central to how questions are posed and to the reflective scope of a text. This affective character or temperament of thinking could be called the philosophical mood. Some philosophers are melancholy skeptics, others are good-humored pragmatists; some naturalists, others religious; some are attracted to the transcendent, others remain focused on the empirical world; some are inherently suspicious about established political and scientific norms, others are more confident that we are on the right track. These ingrained and often obscurely formed attitudes and beliefs are not only manifest in the issues selected and arguments pursued, but also in the tone, style, and sensibility of inquiry. Although few today would argue for a strict separation of thought and feeling, there is still a tendency to consider the mood of a philosophical text as secondary to the argument itself. In what follows, we shall question this frequent separation of thought from feeling via an examination of the concept of mood. In doing so, we hope to shed some light on the affective dimensions of philosophy.

We start with an extensive consideration of the dual focus on bodily feelings and cognitive emotions that has characterized the philosophy of emotions since the end of the nineteenth century. We argue that, although the philosophy of emotions has gained from the analytical clarity of this focus, such clarity has come at a cost. First, our philosophical vocabulary for describing emotional experience has been narrowed down to two conceptual categories, feelings and emotions, which means that other affective terms, such as passions, sensations, affects, and appetites, only rarely feature in philosophical analyses. Second, there is a resulting bifurcation in our conception of emotional experience as either the expression of mere physiology or the result of sophisticated rational dispositions. This discussion offers the conceptual background

for what follows and explains why our exploration takes us back, first to Descartes in the first half of the seventeenth century, and, in the final section, to Kant at the end of the following century.

In the second section, we look at Descartes's conception of wonder in the light of his metaphysical commitment to disembodied reason. We hope to show how Descartes's treatment of the passions makes his distinction between body and soul more complex than commonly assumed. We argue that his analysis of wonder brings out the inescapable ambivalence of physiology and cognition at the heart of emotional life. The phenomenon of wonder shows that these two basic aspects cannot be separated without distorting our understanding of human emotions. In the third section, we use the treatment of Descartes to support our examination of the phenomenon of mood. Contrary to the analytical categories of feeling and emotion, mood does not lend itself to either a physiological or a rational explanation. We describe the phenomenal character of mood and argue that it does not help us in our quest for the "what" or the "why" of our feelings. Rather, mood is an ambivalent phenomenon that brings out "how" we feel what we feel, and it helps us to appreciate the subjectivity of feeling, that is, the attitude involved in our feeling and thinking about what we feel.

We conclude with a suggestive consideration of the phenomenon of mood as a rarely acknowledged, although highly significant, feature of philosophical writing. Taking a look at Kant's understanding of wonder and transcendence, we argue that the mood of a philosopher has a significant bearing on how she or he examines and answers philosophical questions. Mood, in short, has consequences for intellectual method.

The Quest for Answers

Since the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the philosophy of emotion has undergone a bifurcation. On the one hand, we find advocates for the primacy of bodily feelings who argue that physiological reverberations are what makes an emotion emotional. On the other, there are those who consider cognitive capacities and rational dispositions to be at the heart of emotional life. The first group, commonly called *feeling theories*, includes thinkers such as William James, Antonio Damasio, Jenefer Robinson, and Jesse Prinz.¹ The second group, known as *cognitive theories*, includes figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Anthony Kenny, Robert Gordon, Martha Nussbaum, and not least Robert Solomon.² The view held by the latter has enjoyed an almost undisputed hegemony during most of the twentieth century.

According to this overall picture of our emotional life, affect can be approached by means of two conceptual categories: (intentional) emotions and (bodily) feelings. Emotions refer to the structured and propositional affective states that include a more or less explicit intentional attitude, as in complex emotions such as love, pride, shame, and jealousy. Feelings, on the other hand, cover the prereflective, bodily felt aspect of an affective state, where we perceive something going on in the landscape of our body, often without our being in control of or exercising an influence over these feelings. Central to this category of affective states are clearly embodied feelings that are physically manifested, such as fear, anger, surprise, joy, and aggression. Whereas the category of emotions is primarily concerned with human affectivity, bodily feelings are held to show similar behavioral patterns across various species.

To appreciate the crucial difference between cognitive and feeling theories in their methodological approach to emotional life, we have to understand that they are part of a more general discussion of human nature that has shaped the intellectual climate of the twentieth century. There are two central aspects to this discussion that need to be mentioned. First, there is the advance of science and the consequent decline of religion, and second, as a consequence, a conflict internal to philosophy between causal and rational explanations of human behavior.

Since the publication of Darwin's revolutionary *Origin of Species* in 1859, and especially the subsequent publications of his more "existentially" oriented works, *The Descent of Man* (1871) and *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), science has become of inarguable relevance to philosophical investigations of human nature. At the time of the first scientific revolution in the sixteenth century, the causal, mathematical, and mechanical explanation of human nature was held in check by a predominant philosophical view informed by a religious (Christian) conception of human existence. In opposition to the religious emphasis on divine providence and unfathomable divine justice, the emerging scientific approach steadily strengthened its claim that the best way to understand and improve human behavior lay in the recognition that God, whether or not he exists and cares for the individual human being, does not intervene into worldly affairs and is therefore best kept out of investigations of human nature and society.³ After Darwin's decisive blow to entrenched religious narratives, the philosophical arguments for retaining religious considerations in the approach to human nature quickly collapsed, and the naturalistic attitude which has since characterized philosophy—in particular the Anglophone tradition—won almost universal support.⁴ This development would have a significant bearing on the bifurcation in the philosophy of emotion.

The naturalistic atmosphere entailed by the Darwinian revolution also made life difficult for philosophy as a discipline. The rational core of philosophical investigations and the philosophical faith in the powers of logical analysis were suddenly challenged by the rationally blind forces of causality at work in evolution. An evolutionary perspective accorded explanatory significance to the animal aspect of human behavior at the cost of diminishing rationality. Nowhere do the limits of rationality become more visible than in the emotional aspects of human behavior. In fact, in their effort to establish psychology as a scientific discipline at the turn of the century, both William James and Freud argued for the importance of a biological, that is, arational, understanding of emotional experience. In what is generally considered the founding text of feeling theories, James makes this insistence on the visceral character of emotional experience almost palpable:

What kind of an emotion of fear would be left, if the feelings neither of quickened heart-beats nor of shallow breathing, neither of trembling lips nor of weakened limbs, neither of goose-flesh nor of visceral stirrings, were present, it is quite impossible to think. Can one fancy the state of rage and picture no ebullition of it in the chest, no flushing of the face, no dilatation of the nostrils, no clenching of the teeth, no impulse to vigorous action, but in their stead limp muscles, calm breathing, and a placid face? The present writer, for one, certainly cannot.⁵

James directed attention to the obvious embodied character of emotional experience and argued that what is important in human emotions is not their rational structures, but the cross-species visceral feelings that bypass, or at least radically transform, our rational dispositions. To understand what emotions are, we must therefore focus on their causal underpinning and not on the intentional or rational structures that also seem to characterize human emotions. This view was not received well among philosophers, for the obvious reason that it seems to push the subject of emotions out of philosophy and into the more empirically oriented sciences such as experimental psychology or psychoanalysis, and more recently the cognitive sciences, evolutionary psychology, and neuroscience. As a consequence, partly to defend the validity of philosophical investigations of emotions, partly due to genuine problems with the physiological account, philosophers rejected feeling theories early in the twentieth century. Subsequently, the philosophy of emotions was almost entirely dominated by cognitive theories until the beginning of the 1990s, where the staggering cultural impact of neuroscience reintroduced feeling theories into philosophy.

The long tradition of cognitive theories of emotion redirects attention from the bodily character of feelings to the intentional or rational

structures of emotional experience. Human emotions are significantly different from emotions observed in other animals because human emotions are always characterized, if not explicitly by rational, then at least by basic intentional structures. Human emotions are conscious in a way that the emotions of other animals are not. This is not to say that the cognitive approach rejects the naturalistic stance of evolutionary theory. It merely argues that the explanatory burden of a philosophy of emotion has to be on the cognitive aspect of emotional experience. What really matters is not so much how we feel an emotion, but how our emotions make us think about, or reflectively evaluate, the world, other people, and ourselves. The late Robert C. Solomon, one of the undisputed champions of the cognitive approach, brings out this insistence with a forceful eloquence comparable to that of James above: "The feelings no more constitute or define the emotion than an army of fleas constitute a homeless dog. They are always there, take shape of the emotion, but just as easily move from one emotion to the other (love to hate, fear to anger, jealousy to resentment). Feeling is the ornamentation of emotion, not its essence."⁶ The focus on the reflective aspect of our emotional experience conveys a strongly normative, even explicitly ethical, twist to the cognitive account. While feeling theories tend to emphasize the passive, involuntary aspect of emotions (the sensation of the emotion), cognitive theories are principally concerned with how to make sense of our emotions in order to allow the person to act appropriately when in an emotional state. Once again, Solomon is not shy about this normative aspect of his own theory:

I once summed up Sartre's philosophy and existentialism in general with the simple statement, No Excuses! And that is how I would like you to think about the emotions, too. Not that they don't have their causes. Not that they aren't often dictated or circumscribed by circumstances. Not that there are not sometimes passions over which we really do have little control. But instead of shrugging off responsibility, thinking "I am not responsible for my emotions," I want to urge you to ask, whenever you can, "why am I doing this? What am I getting out of this?" And you may well find that by taking responsibility you will no longer feel like the victim of your own emotions.⁷

This insistence on the rational structure of emotional experience, together with its normative aim draws a picture of our emotional life which is significantly different from that of feeling theories.

The difference between the two theories is ultimately anchored in opposing conceptions of human nature. Feeling theories, fascinated by the discoveries of science, are convinced that our emotions are principally the expression of the inescapable, arational, and anonymous (neuro)

biological nature that we share with other animals. If we want to understand what humans really are, we have to dismantle our unwarranted belief in our own cognitive superiority and focus our investigation on what the raw material of our emotional life can tell us about ourselves, namely, that we are not all that different from our less articulate mammalian cousins. Cognitive theories, on the other hand, insist that our rational capacities make our emotional life radically different from that of other animals. Our emotions may challenge our rational dispositions, but to be human is to be rational, so we must single out and cultivate the intentional and rational structures in the uncouth texture of emotional life. Our inarticulate bodily feelings are therefore to be considered as secondary in our endeavor to make sense of and, ultimately, control our emotions.

Naturally, the present situation in the philosophy of emotions is more complex than the brief outline that we have presented here.⁸ Nevertheless, it is hard to dispute that the categories of emotion and feeling, and the corresponding conceptions of human nature implicit in feeling theories, are still dominating the debate.

Thomas Dixon has recently investigated the historical development shaping this bifurcation by tracing how the category of emotion was formed out of the realm of such variegated notions as passions, appetites, affections, and sensations in Anglophone psychological thought. He claims that the scientific, antitheological “spring cleaning” of an earlier psychological vocabulary, resulting in the creation of a secular category of emotion during the nineteenth century, is an important factor in sustaining the untenable distinction between reason and emotions: “In the absence of categories such as ‘affections’ and ‘sentiments’ that bridged the gap between thinking and feeling, secular psychologies of emotion were left with a simple and sharp dichotomy between cognition and emotion.”⁹ According to Dixon, this is not simply a transformation of an outdated psychological vocabulary into a new and more scientifically accurate one. Rather, the narrowing down of the psychological vocabulary about our affective states to the exclusive categories of emotion and feeling is the expression of the shift in worldview that we have sketched above. The antitheological attitude that dominated the scientific endeavors in the second half of the nineteenth century dispensed, in the name of scientific progress, with the rich material of the long tradition of theories of emotions. In other words, a long and complex history of thinking about affective states was lost from view.

Since antiquity, theories of emotions had been concerned with rich and complex affective textures including passions (e.g. good, evil, appropriate, disruptive), stratified appetites (e.g. vegetative, sensitive,

rational), an array of bodily sensations (e.g. pain, pleasure, discomfort, satisfaction), affections (e.g. intellectual, vital, spiritual, animal), moral sentiments (e.g. compassion, sympathy, duty), temperaments, and moods (e.g. melancholic, phlegmatic, sanguine, sad, euphoric).¹⁰ Contrary to the conceptions consolidated in the twentieth century that view emotional life as governed by either rational structures or the fluctuations of bodily feelings, emotions as we find them in these earlier theories are far more ambivalent—and obviously much more difficult to handle conceptually. Notions such as passions, sensations, affections, temperament, and moods are complex semantic mixtures that include reason as well as sensibility, the voluntary as well as the involuntary, activity as well as passivity. That is to say, they are principally used to describe the experiential fact that our thinking is always affectively qualified. The gist of Dixon's argument is that the disappearance of the traditional Christian conception of the soul as the affective battlefield between intellect and will lead to the creation of the present dichotomy of rational thinking without feeling versus thoughtless bodily feeling. Dixon therefore asks us to take the history of emotions seriously so that standards built on antitheological and other prejudices will not end up hampering our understanding of human affectivity. An appreciation of the historical aspect of emotions ensures a critical awareness of the implicit ontological and epistemological presuppositions of the vocabulary with which we understand and explain our emotions today.

We agree with the broad strokes of Dixon's historical argument. The scientific discrediting of a religious conception of human nature was indeed a major factor in the replacement of a fine-grained emotional vocabulary with the narrow, and consequently conflicting, categories of bodily feeling and cognitive emotions. We do think, however, that Dixon's tacit partiality towards a cognitive picture of human affectivity tends to downplay the significance of the physiological aspect of emotional life—a theme that was brewing in the philosophical texts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that was finally made explicit through the Darwinian revolution. The first scientific revolution, in the sixteenth century, made philosophers aware of the importance of the arational physiology of our emotions, while still being able to retain (god-given) rationality as the principal feature of human nature. This tension of arational bodily feelings and rational thinking resulted in an ambivalence in the philosophical texts in the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century that was eventually dissolved with the post-Darwinian emphasis on bodily feelings and the subsequent dismissal of such feelings in the predominant cognitive accounts of twentieth-century philosophy.

There is no doubt that the investigative focus of both feeling theories and cognitive theories have contributed enormously to our understanding of human emotions. We have come to a better understanding of the causal underpinning and rational aspects of emotional experience and behavior. Yet the clarity of such answers is provided at a cost. By aiming at either biological or rational explanations, we overlook the affective character already at work in our scientific or philosophical attitude. Or to put it differently, making emotions the object of our investigation, we risk missing out on the affective texture involved in our own questioning, that is, the peculiar mood of our explanatory endeavor. The disappearance of the rich emotional vocabulary of the pre-Darwinian tradition is, as Dixon argues, responsible for the gap between thinking and feeling in contemporary emotional theories. Without thorough attention to more ambivalent phenomena such as sensations, affections, passions, and moods, we end up with an account of emotional life that is insensitive to the ineradicable affective entwinement of both arational and rational factors at work in philosophical reflection.

One way to test the strength of Dixon's argument is to look at how feeling and thinking are related in perhaps the most famous among the founding fathers of modern philosophy. René Descartes is known to embody several features of the present day ideal of what it takes to be a good scientist: he was a staunch rationalist, a gifted mathematician, and not least a zealous advocate for disinterested research. And yet, in spite of Descartes's sharp distinction between mind and body, we will argue that his theory of the passions shows that the union of body and soul is far more complex than is often assumed. In short, the Cartesian tradition—paradoxically—offers fruitful resources for rethinking the modern language of emotion and exploring the connections between thought and feeling.

Descartes's Ambivalence: Incurious Wonder and Intellectual Joy

Disembodied and abstract thinking are what we normally associate with Descartes's reconfiguration of philosophy. According to a familiar narrative, the modern period of Western thought was born with the strict separation of mind and body. Rationality was finally stripped of the encroaching perturbations of a sinful bodily matter that was portrayed in a gloomy light in medieval Western thought, and it thus provided the methodological groundwork for the scientific revolutions that went on to shape the world we know today. The passionless cogito, that is, the

"I think," stripped of worldly colors, smells, shapes, and sensations, is the only objectively secure foundation upon which I can come to know that I exist, or as the famous dictum from the *Discourse on Method* puts it, I think, therefore I am.

There is, however, another, more fleshy and passionate side to the Cartesian cogito that has been, and still is, too often forgotten in the eager denunciations of Descartes's ontological separation of mind and body. There is no doubt that Descartes operates with a strict distinction between disembodied mind and deanimated body. However, the relation of mind and body is not a static hegemony of the mind over the body, as many readers of Descartes presume, but a dynamic unity.¹¹ The ontological fissure between mind and body is due to the irreducible strength of these two fundamental parts of the human self which cannot be reduced to one another.¹² The human self is complex because of this fragmentation, and in order to understand myself as a human self I must understand "my body, or rather my whole self [*meum corpus sive potius me totum*],"¹³ as he writes in the sixth and final meditation of his most famous work, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Some lines earlier in the same paragraph, he explains the inextricable character of this unity:

There is nothing that this nature teaches me more explicitly than that I have a body that is ill-disposed when I feel pain, that needs food and drink when I suffer hunger or thirst, and the like. Therefore, I should not doubt that there is some truth in this.

By means of these sensations of pain, hunger, thirst and so on, nature also teaches me that I am present in my body not merely in the way a sailor is present in a ship, but that I am most tightly joined and, so to speak, commingled with it, so much so that I and the body constitute one single thing.¹⁴

Recent years have seen growing interest in this integral and dynamic unity of mind and body, largely based on one of Descartes's lesser known works from the final years of his brief life, *The Passions of the Soul*.¹⁵ We are indebted to Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia for this intriguing book. During their extensive correspondence in the years 1643–49, Elisabeth, who was an ingenious philosopher in her own right, questioned Descartes about several aspects of his philosophy.¹⁶ Most famously, she asked how the soul and body could affect one another, given Descartes's dualist commitments.¹⁷ Descartes at first provided vague and unsatisfying replies to Elisabeth's inquiries, but her sharp arguments and perseverance inspired him to turn his attention to the complex unity of soul and body. And in November 1645 Descartes decided to write a treatise on the passions of the soul, intended originally for her eyes only.¹⁸ Several requests from his private friends finally convinced Descartes to publish the work in 1649.

The great variety of human passions is what makes us understand that our thinking about the world and ourselves is always embodied. Descartes's account of emotional life is thoroughly physiological, which is why he characterizes almost all human emotions, feelings, and sensations as "animal spirits" and understands them as aspects of our passivity, hence the name "passions." The passions of the soul are something that we endure through "the machine of our bodies" (*PS* art. 7:21), that is, the involuntary bodily movement connected with our thinking and acting as embodied selves through the mysterious little pineal gland,¹⁹ and as such they reveal the receptive or passive side of the cogito. The passions are thus embodied thoughts and defined as "perceptions or sensations or excitations of the soul which are referred to it in particular and which are caused, maintained, and strengthened by some movement of the spirits" (*PS* art. 27:34). To differentiate the variety of human passions, Descartes orders them according to their formal objects, that is, according to the various ways things in the world harm, profit, or are generally important to the embodied self, and he individuates six primitive passions: wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness, of which the great variety of human passions are either species or combinations (*PS* art. 69:56). Of the six primitive passions, wonder (*l'admiration*) is the most basic, and the most interesting for the purpose of this essay, in that it exemplifies the persistent ambivalence of rational and bodily feelings at the center of our emotional life.

At the time of Descartes, wonder was a time-hallowed and highly ambivalent passion. Aristotle famously credited wonder (*thauma*) with the birth of philosophy, but a more ambivalent attitude towards wonder can be traced through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, where the exploratory powers of wonder were tarnished by the Christian suspicion of vain and profane curiosity.²⁰ Descartes inherited this ambivalence, although more for scientific reasons than religious ones. Like many natural philosophers of his time, he was rather uneasy with the wonder-struck curiosity provoked by the staggering scientific, geographic, and cultural discoveries of his time.²¹ To be flabbergasted at the mysterious wonders of the world is a symptom of ignorance, Descartes thought, and as such it "prolongs the sickness of the blindly curious—that is, those who investigate rarities only to wonder at them and not to understand them" (*PS* art. 78:61). The merely curious enjoy the passion of wonder for the sake of the pleasure entailed by surprise and astonishment; this pleasure perverts, and sometimes even eradicates, the use of reason if we revel in passive enjoyment too long (*PS* art. 76:59–60). Despite the risks of stupefying curiosity, however, wonder remains the most important passion in our emotional life. Wonder is not only the first among

the passions, but also the most peculiar one. It is the sole passion that does not involve motion of the blood or the heart, but that stirs only the activity of the brain, which is the seat of scientific knowledge (*PS* art. 71:57). As such it can be properly characterized as an intellectual passion, since the sensible motions that it causes takes place in the brain and not among the fluctuations of the somatic landscape of the body.

Here, though, as Jean-Marie Beyssade has pointed out, it is important not to forget the physiological conditions for Descartes's examination of the passions. Even though wonder does not involve the motion of grosser animal spirits, it still has a purely physiological cause, and as such it should be considered as a difference in degree and not in kind with respect to the sensible causes that we find in the body machines of other animals.²² In other words, wonder is always interlaced with the ebbs and flows of our bodily landscape, although it is also the origin of intellectual activity. In stark opposition to the revival of stoicism in the seventeenth century, with its explicit aim of eliminating the passions and its ideal of the insensible sage, Descartes holds that a conception of a passionless human life is both nonsensical and damaging.²³ The common conception of the Cartesian cogito as a disembodied and glittering exercise of cold rationality may reflect a plausible, perhaps even obvious, reading of Descartes's famous metaphysical works such as *Meditations* and *The Principles of Philosophy*, but it becomes untenable in the light of his correspondence with Elisabeth and his last major work on the passions. Feelings motivate, orient, and sustain our rational thinking about the world, other people, and ourselves, and it is not possible to separate thinking and feeling in an actual human life.

Wonder is the origin of philosophical and scientific knowledge. Without the initial physical commotion of the subtle mechanisms of the brain caused by perceptions of the world around us, the grosser animal spirits of our body would not allow us to concern ourselves with matters other than the immediate satisfaction of our bodily needs. The habits of the body are strong and continuously fuelled by the mechanical inertia which characterizes the physical world. Our capacity for wonder makes us sensitive to that which is "new, or very different from what we knew in the past or what we supposed it was going to be" (*PS* art. 753:52), and as such it is able to excite a mind numbed by the humdrum of everyday life. Wonder thus has the capacity to keep our thoughts from running tired in the dull, one could say mechanical, working of human life, and in this way it can help us maintain the acuteness of our intellectual engagement. To retain the passion of wonder through the burden of everyday obligations and mindless habits is not easy, although Descartes rather briskly asserts that "it is only the dull and stupid people who do

not have any constitutional inclination toward Wonder" (*PS* art. 77:61). So wonder is the presupposition for acquiring knowledge in the first place. We have seen, however, that wonder is ambivalent, since it must be developed with the aim of cultivating inner excitations of the soul such as intellectual joy, love, and generosity. If wonder remains a superficial fascination with new objects or, say, strangely formed people, it can very easily degenerate into stultified curiosity. Healthy wonder whets our intellectual appetite for acquiring firm scientific knowledge about the causal underpinnings of what we experience, whereas pleasure derived from asinine curiosity is a mere expression of, literally, a superficial stimulation of our mindless bodily spirits.

Descartes's treatment of the passions therefore supports Dixon's argument about our contemporary impoverished emotional vocabulary, and makes us aware of the complex affective aspect of intellectual activity—an issue that is often overlooked in philosophical discussions of emotions today. It is not possible to draw a sharp distinction between bodily feelings and cognitive emotions. Our rationality is as affective as our more explicitly bodily feelings, and the body always plays a significant role in our exercise of our rational capacity. The bodily mechanisms involved in wonder help direct and maintain our attention to an object, just as intellectual joy causes a physiological agitation in the brain that is needed to secure our inquisitive concentration amidst the perceptible confusion of our embodied nature (*PS* art. 70:56–57; art. 120:82). The general picture of affectivity depicted by Descartes is characterized by an ambivalence most evident in the two aspects of wonder. Contrary to the passive pleasure entailed by the unruly passions of curiosity and stupor, the intellectual emotions, such as joy, generosity, and love, involve an excitation of the will that allows us to find intellectual pleasure and even joy in pursuing a better understanding of that which may at first produce pain, surprise, boredom, sadness, or sorrow.

The Mood of Feelings and Emotions

By reaching back to Descartes's conception of affectivity, we get a less fractured, albeit more puzzling, picture of emotional life. But what kind of emotion is Descartes's wonder if we approach it from the perspective of either feeling theory or cognitive theory? It is not a mere bodily feeling, nor can it be adequately explained by means of intentional or rational structures. Rather, it seems to be an ambivalent blend of both. Wonder can, and surely often does, have an object. I normally wonder about something specific. And yet, Descartes argues, what is crucial to

wonder is not so much the object of our wonder, but how we wonder. Moreover, bodily feelings are central to Descartes's understanding. They are not merely ornaments of the emotion, as Solomon characterized feelings, but an essential part of the experience of wonder (that is, our bodily agitation enables our perceptual focus and secures our mental concentration). Finally, wonder is the affective presupposition for our other emotions, because it qualifies our general attitude to what is going on around us (thus, wonder may lead to both asinine curiosity and scientific discovery). Or as Luce Irigaray puts in her short, but brilliant analysis: "Wonder [*L'admiration*] is the motivating force behind mobility in all its dimensions. From its most vegetative to its most sublime functions, the living being has need of wonder to move."²⁴ It should be clear, then, that the significance which Descartes ascribes to feelings of wonder cannot be probed by either the category of feeling or that of emotion. The reason for this, we believe, is that wonder is more akin to what is normally characterized as a mood.

Contrary to feelings and emotions, moods do not carry with them explicitly causal and cognitive connotations. Rather, they seem to imply both, in that they are both highly sensitive to the ebbs and flows of our bodily landscape and yet also intensely personal. This ambivalence severely complicates our attempts to find either a physiological or an intentional correlate to the experience of mood. It is, perhaps, because of this ambivalence that—with a few recent exceptions—systematic treatments of moods have figured only rarely in Anglophone philosophy of emotion where, as we noticed above, the emphasis in the twentieth century has primarily been on conceptual analysis and language. Nevertheless, the brief explanation of mood that we present in this section draws upon recent important work in that tradition by philosophers such as Richard Wollheim, Quentin Smith, Peter Goldie, and Matthew Ratcliffe.²⁵ Our main source of inspiration, though, comes from continental philosophy, especially the phenomenological and hermeneutical tradition, where analyses of moods have figured more regularly, if not prominently. From within this tradition, we draw principally on Kierkegaard, Scheler, Heidegger, Otto Bollnow, Ricoeur, Stephan Strasser, Hubertus Tellenbach, and Thomas Fuchs.²⁶

Despite the general absence of systematic treatments of mood in Anglophone philosophy, one of the most poignant and vivid descriptions of the experiential and behavioral character of mood can be found in a twentieth-century classic from that tradition, namely, Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* from 1949:

[S]omewhat as this morning's weather in a given locality made the same sort of difference to every section of that neighbourhood, so a person's mood during a given period colours all or most of his actions and reactions during that period. His work and his play, his talk and his grimaces, his appetite and his daydreams, all reflect his touchiness, his joviality or his depression. Any one of them may serve as a barometer for all the others . . . Somewhat as the entire ship is cruising south-east, rolling, or vibrating, so the entire person is nervous, serene or gloomy. His own corresponding inclination will be to describe the whole world as menacing, congenial, or grey.²⁷

This description of mood clearly brings out its global and diffuse character. Moods, as Ryle observes, somehow involve the whole person, are unfocused, unmotivated, and tend to last longer than other kinds of emotional experience. In this sense, moods bring out features of emotional experience that are markedly different from those examined by cognitive and feeling theories.

When I feel anger, love, or jealousy, the myriad feelings involved in these emotional experiences are characterized by intense bodily reactions and normally have a more or less circumscribed object. For instance, the bout of anger I feel when a person cuts in front of me in the supermarket queue leaves no doubt either about the object of my anger (the rude intruder) or the clearly involuntary physical expression of my bruised feelings (quicken heartbeats, muscles and sinews quivering with tension). The intentional and physical features of my anger readily admit of both a rational explanation (my feeling of anger is embedded in an intentionally structured emotion triggered *because of* the insulting gesture) and a physiological explanation (my angry feelings are the work of prereflective, subpersonal physiological reactions). The circumscribed character and relatively brief endurance of such object-directed emotions allow us to single out features, be they (neuro)physical or intentional, which enable more or less convincing explanations of what we are feeling or why we are feeling what we feel.

The experience of moods seems to elude such explanatory endeavors. Moods are hazy, impalpable, and often ineffable phenomena with no apparent intentional object or clear experiential structure. As a result, they seem less amenable to analysis or rational explanation. Where most emotions and feelings tend to focus our attention on what is going on around us, moods are more like a background atmosphere. A mood normally does not single out any specific feature of our experience; rather, it seems to suffuse our experience as a whole with a certain affective hue or tinge, and thus to qualify the way we experience the world, other people, and ourselves. Moods are feelings in the most sensuous meaning of the word. They are more like a tonality, a coloring, a flavor,

a weight, a taste, an emptiness, an I-know-not-what, a simmering bodily sensation, a certain air, a disposition, a way of being in the world. In short, a mood is what makes a thought sad or happy. It is what makes the phrase “I love you” either heartfelt or shallow. Moods can be personal as well as interpersonal. A good mood is contagious, as well as a tense mood. Unlike most of our emotions, moods normally do not direct a person towards anything in particular, but that does not mean that they do not carry informative value. On the contrary, they are perhaps the most densely informative phenomena of our emotional life. Moods do not inform us about the “what” of our feelings or the “why” of our emotions, but they disclose “how” something is felt, which, in turn, tends to problematize and transform into open questions the “what” and “why” of our other feelings and emotions.

In other words, moods are deeply ambivalent phenomena. We think that this informative overload disclosed by moods is one of the reasons why philosophy of emotion tends to refrain from questions about mood and moody questions. Literature, poetry, and not least psychopathology, on the other hand, are all concerned with deciphering the overload of information disclosed by the ambivalence of our moods. A good novel or a good piece of poetry can be about almost nothing, and yet make us understand what seems to be everything. Similarly, descriptive psychopathology knows that our attempts at understanding the “what” and “why” of mood disorders lies in the accuracy of our description of the “how.” In this sense, mood is suitable for bringing out an aspect of our emotional life that is neglected by feeling and cognitive theories, namely, the subjectivity of our emotions; how we feel about what we feel and how our emotions affect our thinking about what we feel. Our feelings about feeling and thinking inform us, as Ricoeur argues, that “affectivity is the non-transparent aspect of the Cogito. We are right in saying ‘of the Cogito.’ Affectivity is still a mode of thought in its widest sense. To feel is still to think [*sentir est encore penser*], though feeling no longer represents objectivity, but rather reveals existence [*révéléateur d’existence*]. Affectivity uncovers my bodily existence as the other pole of all the dense and heavy existence of the world. We can express it otherwise by saying that through feeling the personal body [*le corps propre*] belongs to the subjectivity of the Cogito.”²⁸ Mind and body are inescapably linked in our mood. Through the atmospheric character of moods, body is disclosed as thinking body and thinking as bodily thinking. Not an either-or, but a both-and.

We argued earlier that the bifurcation of feeling theories and cognitive theories can be understood within the larger context of two different conceptions of human nature that view either biology or rationality as

the key to explaining how humans think, feel, and behave. They are, in other words, theories which explain emotions from the perspective of certain ontological conceptions of human nature. Emotional experience is used as an integral part of an answer to the question of what it is to be human, and not as something that problematizes our attempts to answer such a fundamental question. But that is exactly what moods (as well as sensations, affections, affects, passions, and other more hazy emotional phenomena) do. "Mood [*Stemming*]," Kierkegaard writes, "is like the Niger River in Africa; no one knows its source, no one knows its outlet—only its reach is known."²⁹ Rather than providing answers, they complicate them by introducing ambivalence, hesitation, and atmospheric uncertainty into our inquiry. Once again, Irigaray brings out this atmospheric aspect of Cartesian wonder with exemplary clarity. Wonder, she writes, is:

A birth into transcendence, that of the other, still sensible [*sensible*], still physical and carnal, and already spiritual. Is it the place of incidence and junction of body and spirit, which has been covered over again and again, hardened through repetitions that hamper growth and flourishing? This would be possible only when we are faithful to the perpetual newness of the self, the other, the world. Faithful to becoming, to its virginity, its power of impulsion, without letting go the support of bodily inscription. Wonder would be the passion of the encounter between the most material and the most metaphysical, of their possible conception and fecundation one by the other. A third dimension. An intermediary.³⁰

The affective resonance of our moods influences the way we experience the world by molding our attitude to what we experience. It is the affective texture through which we receive the world and the affective medium by means of which we engage with the world. In other words, our mood has a fundamental bearing on how we perceive, think, feel, and act. This is what Irigaray wants to make us notice in Cartesian wonder, namely, that how we wonder affects the way we understand and engage with the world, other people, and ourselves.

Moody Philosophy and the Loss of Ambivalence

To explore the mood ingrained in philosophical writing is a daunting enterprise. If we are right that moods express the attitude underlying a person's experience of and engagement with the world, other people, and herself, then an appreciation of the mood of a philosophical text will tell us something of the inquiring attitude or exploratory character of that text. What we say on these concluding pages should be consid-

ered merely as a suggestion to think more seriously about the mood of philosophical works, and not as an attempt at an exhaustive treatment.

At the center of Raphael's famous fresco of the School of Athens (1510–11), we find depicted the two greatest philosophers of antiquity. The aging Plato, holding vertically in his left hand his vertiginous philosophical cosmology, the *Timaeus*, points with his right index finger towards the sky, while the mature Aristotle, holding his ethical masterpiece, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, horizontally in his left hand, calmly extends the palm of his right hand over the earth. Raphael here clearly tries to capture figuratively the atmosphere or mood at work in the two philosophies. While the later Plato revelled in unequivocal dualisms between the sensible and insensible and in a Pythagorean mysticism, Aristotle, even in his most daunting metaphysical speculations, kept in touch with the perceptible world of tragedy, common sense ethics, and reasonable politics. When reading the later dialogues of Plato alongside the works of Aristotle, one finds that Raphael has, in fact, succeeded quite well in capturing the moods of the two thinkers. Similarly, if one reads Spinoza's geometrically and stringently structured *Ethics* (1677) together with Hume's eloquent *Treatise* (1739–40), one cannot but notice the pronounced difference in atmosphere. Spinoza's radical rationalism, with its logical denunciations of the passions, saturates the structure and expression of almost every sentence, and Hume's no less radical empiricist skepticism towards our rational capacities allows his passions, sentiments, and taste to animate the text. It is, however, the mood of another great philosopher that is of interest to us here. While Spinoza's rationalism and Hume's empiricism convey a dominant atmosphere of, in the first case, sober metaphysical gravity and, in the second, a more cheerfully embodied elegance, the atmosphere that characterizes the philosophy of Kant is more ambivalent.

Kant is without doubt one of the most influential philosophers in the Western tradition. His influence, though, is not limited to philosophy. Like Descartes before him and Darwin after, Kant marks a watershed in how we think about physical nature, human existence, art, ethics, and religion. From this perspective, then, his work seems an obvious candidate for an examination of the mood of philosophy. In another sense, however, he may seem an awkward choice. In contrast to the rich treatment of emotions in the work of philosophers such as Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, and Hume, Kant's writings suffer from a remarkable absence of any systematic treatment of emotional life, and are characterized by an even more suspicious stance towards emotions than is normally found among philosophers. Nevertheless, the mood of Kant's philosophy is particularly interesting, since his work combines

the confidence and stringency of the dawning scientific attitude of his time with a philosophical humility and a deep-rooted sense of wonder. Like his favorite thinker, Rousseau, he considers the rational enterprise of philosophy with an entrenched yet ambivalent blend of enlightenment, enthusiasm, and Romantic skepticism. In fact, his equivocal, almost paradoxical, insistence on both empiricism and idealism makes his philosophy an expression of the complex philosophical mood of a time characterized by an unresolved tension of scientific and religious attitudes.

Towards the end of the terse analytical part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (first edition 1781; second edition 1787), after having meticulously traced the scope and limits of the possibility of objectively warranted experience, Kant eloquently describes the reflective passage from objective solidity to the obscure terrain of unrestrained thinking:

We have now not only traveled through the land of pure understanding [*das Land des reinen Verstandes*], and carefully inspected each part of it, but we have also surveyed it, and determined the place for each thing in it. This land, however, is an island, and enclosed in unalterable boundaries by nature itself. It is the land of truth (a charming name), surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean, the true seat of illusion [*Sitze des Scheins*], where many a fog bank and rapidly melting iceberg pretend to be new lands and, ceaselessly deceiving with empty hopes the voyager looking around for new discoveries, entwine him in adventures from which he can never escape and yet also never bring to an end.³¹

What is of interest here is the complexity of Kant's vivid picture of the mind. On the one hand, we have the stringent philosopher of objectively warranted experience. We can—and should—measure, categorize, and determine the intrinsic capacities and sensible bounds of reason. Only by explicating the scope and limit of the possibility of sensible knowledge can we avoid the foggy illusions of superstition and sentimental delusions. On the other hand, though, we are bound to leave the safe shores of objective knowledge and set out on the turbulent quest for an unwarranted, insensible knowledge. Human reason cannot and will not remain enclosed by its own limits. We have an ineradicable inclination to go beyond our own reasonable capacities.³² This sensitivity to our human inclination to go beyond the sensible use of reason is not simply a curious but insignificant feature of Kant's philosophy, but what animates the heart of his philosophical attitude. The most famous expression of this attitude appears towards the end of his ethical masterpiece, the *Critique of Practical Reason* from 1788: "Two things fill the mind [*Gemüth*] with ever new and increasing admiration [*Bewunderung*] and reverence [*Ehrfurcht*], the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the*

starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not need to search for them and merely conjecture them as though they were veiled in obscurity or in the transcendent region [*im Überschwenglichen*] beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence [*dem Bewußtsein meiner Existenz*].”³³ Kant immediately adds that “though admiration and respect can indeed excite inquiry, they cannot supply the want of it.”³⁴ Contrary to the full-blooded Romantics who were beginning to advance the claim that “Feeling is everything/Names are but sound and smoke,”³⁵ Kant retained the need for rational arguments and insisted that our feelings (of, for instance, wonder, admiration, and reverence) should be allayed with cold drops of scientific temperance. As he writes, “There is something splendid about innocence [*Unschuld*]; but what is bad about it, in turn, is that it cannot protect itself very well and is easily seduced. Because of this, even wisdom [*Weisheit*]*—*which otherwise consists more in conduct than in knowledge—still needs science [*Wissenschaft*], not in order to learn from it but in order to provide access and durability for its precepts.”³⁶

This blend of untainted wonder and scientific rigor, of reverence and skepticism, of feeling and rationality animates the mood of Kant’s work, that is, his way of doing philosophy. Although this ambivalent mood is articulated with a particular honesty by Kant, we would argue that it is also to be found in the texture of most great philosophical texts. We have already seen it at work in Descartes’s passion of wonder, and a similar analysis of the works of, say, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard would reveal other expressions of the ambivalence of rational thinking and bodily feeling. These philosophers have worked patiently at making sense of this ambivalence, that is, at analyzing, understanding, and explaining the mixture of thinking and feeling that characterizes the experience of being human. And yet, this mood is only rarely conveyed in philosophical textbooks. When we read about the philosophy of, say, Descartes or Kant, we are mostly presented with the results of their work, that is, the “what” and the “why” of their thinking—sometimes garnished with short quotations from central passages. The only way to capture the affective nuances that inspire and animate a philosopher’s thinking—the mood, the attitude, the “how” of his or her way of thinking—remains the patient reading of the work itself.

The ambivalence of mood that we find in the works of the great philosophers seems to have been resolved in contemporary academic philosophy. Today, one rarely comes across a moody philosophical text. This does not necessarily mean that philosophy has become more resolute with regard to big questions about the world or human nature, or better at producing unequivocal answers to the practical question about how we

should live our life. Rather, in the latter decades of the twentieth century serious philosophers simply refrained from dealing with such grand questions, and instead concentrated their work on more technical aspects of epistemology, ontology, logic, and ethics. This present condition of philosophy is a consequence of the development that we explained in the beginning of this essay. While science and religion fought furious battle over the nature of world and human beings, academic philosophy chose the path of less emotionally charged questions and answers.³⁷ As a result of this development, philosophy has become less moody, but also less exciting for those who are not trained to find pleasure in the rational analysis of academic philosophy.

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NOTES

We are grateful to Rita Felski and Susan D. Fraiman for their invitation to contribute to this special edition and for their careful comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

1 William James, "What is an Emotion?" *Mind* 9, no. 34 (1884): 188–205; Antonio Damasio *Descartes' Error. Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994) and *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain* (London: William Heineman, 2010); Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Music, Literature and Art* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 2005); Jesse Prinz, *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotion* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004).

2 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions* (Paris: Hermann, 1939); Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge, 1963); Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976) and *True To Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007); Robert M. Gordon, *The Structure of Emotions: Investigation in Cognitive Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987); Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001).

3 For an accessible and yet detailed historical account of this complex encounter of science and religion since the dawn of the scientific revolution, see the renowned classic on the topic, John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991).

4 For a careful discussion of the impact of Darwin's theory on philosophy, see Philip Kitcher, *The Advancement of Science: Science without Legend, Objectivity without Illusions* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 11–57.

5 James, "What is an Emotion?" 193–94.

6 Solomon, *The Passions*, 159. Solomon's work is inspired by Nietzsche, Sartre, and the existentialist tradition. He wrote this—his first of many—seminal work on emotions as a harsh critique of the feeling theory. But in the last years up to his death in 2007, he came to moderate the critique and ended up considering bodily feelings as a significant part of emotional experience. Although he still insisted on the primary importance of the cognitive, evaluative stance, he changed his view on bodily feelings and conceded that emotions do not necessarily involve an explicit articulation or propositional attitude, but could also be manifested as bodily "kinesthetic" judgments.

7 Solomon, *True To Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 200.

8 Among the philosophical critiques of the dichotomy of emotions and feelings, the following influential works should be mentioned: Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987) and *Emotional Truth* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011); Michael Stocker (with Elizabeth Hegeman), *Valuing Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996); David Pugmire, *Rediscovering Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1998); Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000); Matthew Ratcliffe, *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008).

9 Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 16.

10 Although his book begins with a lucid summary of emotions in the works of Augustine and Aquinas, Dixon's account deals mainly with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglophone writers. For a more detailed historical account of emotion theories in ancient and medieval philosophy, see Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004); for a cogent historical analysis of emotion theories in seventeenth-century philosophy, see Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997).

11 Lisa Shapiro, "Descartes' Passions of the Soul and the Union of Mind and Body," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 85, no. 3 (2003): 211–48; Deborah Brown and Calvin Normore "Traces of the Body: Cartesian Passions," in *Passion and Virtue in Descartes*, ed. Byron Williston and André Gombay (New York: Humanity Books 2003), 83–106.

12 Descartes's patient investigations in natural philosophy enabled him to appreciate the amazing complexity of the human body, so the ontological separation of the mind and body was not, as is often assumed, the result of a cognitive bias and a subsequent denigration of the body. On the contrary, Descartes was fascinated with the autonomous powers of the body, which mechanical integrity was often adamant to cognitive intervention. As he writes in the first meditation: "For it was my view that the power of self-motion, and likewise of sensing or of thinking, in no way belonged to the body. Indeed I used rather to marvel [*mirabar*] that such faculties were to be found in certain bodies." René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 65.

13 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 99.

14 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 99.

15 The most elaborate reading of this work available in English is Deborah J. Brown, *Descartes and the Passionate Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006); for other helpful accounts see also Lilli Alanen, *Descartes' Concept of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2003), 165–207, Vincent Aucante, *La philosophie médicale de Descartes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), 30–39, 229–46, 352–95, and the essays in Williston and Gombay, eds., *Passion and Virtue in Descartes*.

16 Shapiro has recently translated and carefully commented on all fifty-eight letters, see Shapiro, ed., *The Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007). In addition to the letters themselves, Shapiro has provided the edition with an extensive introduction which combines a valuable reconstruction of Elisabeth's life and philosophy with details about how Elisabeth came to change Descartes's view on the union of the soul and the body; see also Lilli Alanen, "Descartes and Elisabeth: A Philosophical Dialogue?" in *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy*, ed. Lilli Alanen and Charlotte Witt (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers), 193–218, and Shapiro, "Princess Elisabeth and Descartes: The Union of Soul and Body and the Practice of Philosophy," *British Journal of the History of Philosophy* 7, no. 3 (1999): 503–20.

- 17 Elisabeth's letter to Descartes of May 16 1643, Shapiro, *The Correspondence*, 62.
- 18 Descartes's letter to Elisabeth of November 3 1645; Shapiro, *The Correspondence*, 125. "I composed it only to be read by a princess whose mind is so far above the ordinary that she effortlessly understands what seems to be most difficult to our scholars," Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen H. Voss (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1989), preface, 16 (hereafter cited as *PS*). The work is structured into 212 brief articles, so in what follows we shall indicate first the number of the article in question, and then the page number of the edition that we use here.
- 19 "The last and most proximate cause of the passions of the soul is nothing other than the agitation with which the [animal] spirits move the little gland in the middle of the brain" (*PS* art. 51:50).
- 20 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I. 2 982b 11–14 in Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), 2:1554; see also, Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d. in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989), 860. Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 109–34, 305–06.
- 21 Brown, *Descartes and the Passionate Mind*, 142–144; Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, 311.
- 22 Jean-Marie Beyssade, "On Sensory-Motor Mechanisms in Descartes: Wonder versus Reflex," in *Passion and Virtue in Descartes*, 137.
- 23 The concluding article of the book on the passions is entitled "That all the good and evil of this life depend on them [the passions] alone" (*PS* art. 212). In this last article of the work, he concludes that we need to regulate, manage, and master our passions by means of wisdom in such a way that "the evils they cause can be easily borne, and we even derive Joy from them all"; for his rejection of Stoicism and the neo-stoic ideals of his time, see in particular his letter to Elisabeth from 18 May 1645, where he distances himself from "those cruel philosophers who want their sage to be insensible." Shapiro, *The Correspondence*, 87.
- 24 Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993), 73.
- 25 Richard Wollheim, *On the Emotions* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1999); Quentin Smith, *The Felt Meanings of the World: A Metaphysics of Feeling* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue Univ. Press, 1986); Goldie, *The Emotions*; Ratcliffe, *The Feeling of Being*.
- 26 Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, trans. Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson (1844; Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981) and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (1846; Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992); Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (1916; Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973); Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh, rev. by D. J. Schmidt (1927; New York: SUNY Press, 2010) and *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (1929–30; Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995); Otto Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1941); Paul Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, trans. Erazim V. Kohák (1950; Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1966) and *Fallible Man: Philosophy of the Will*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (1960; New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1987); Stephan Strasser, *Phenomenology of Feeling: An Essay on the Phenomena of the Heart*, trans. Robert E. Wood (1956; Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1977); Hubertus Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre: Medien menschlichen Elementarkontaktes* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1968); Thomas Fuchs, *Leib, Raum, Person. Entwurf einer phänomenologischen Anthropologie* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2000).

- 27 Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), 99–100. Ryle’s seminal book is interestingly an argument against a Cartesian conception of the mind, which he famously characterized as “[t]he representation of a person as a ghost mysteriously ensconced in a machine” (18). Ryle here refers to the Cartesian legacy of disembodied, rational thinking as the defining character of human nature. As we have tried to show in the previous section, although this conception of the human mind is indeed predominant in Descartes’s metaphysical writings, there is a more complex understanding of the mind at work in his later writings.
- 28 Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, 86.
- 29 Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 237. In 1846, when Kierkegaard wrote this, the source of the Niger River was not yet known. It was later discovered, in 1879, to be near the Sierra Leone frontier.
- 30 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 82; translation slightly modified.
- 31 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 354.
- 32 Throughout his philosophical career, Kant insisted on this complex character of immanence and transcendence constitutive of the human mind. Here, in the *Prolegomena* from 1783: “That the human mind would someday entirely give up metaphysical investigations is just as little to be expected, as that we would someday gladly stop all breathing so as never to take in impure air. There will therefore be metaphysics in the world at every time, and what is more, in every human being, and especially the reflective ones.” Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that will be able to come forward as Science*, in *Immanuel Kant, Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, ed. Henry Allison and Peter Heath, trans Gary Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 367.
- 33 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 269.
- 34 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 270.
- 35 “Gefühl ist alles/Name ist Schall und Rauch.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, ed. Erich Trunz (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2005), 110 (Part I, vv. 3455–56).
- 36 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 59.
- 37 As the philosopher of science Philip Kitcher laments: “Recent philosophy, especially, but not only, in the English-speaking world has found little time for large questions about the meaning and values of human lives. . . . We are a long way from William James’ forthright declaration, ‘The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one’.” *Living with Darwin: Evolution, Design, and the Future of Faith* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 164. The quotation from William James is from his work from 1907, *Pragmatism* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1981), 27. The philosopher Thomas Nagel has diagnosed this tendency as the inability of contemporary, secular philosophy to satisfy the “profoundly religious temperament,” that is, the “yearning for cosmic reconciliation,” that animated most philosophers in the past—and animates most people today. Thomas Nagel, *Secular Philosophy and the Religious Temperament: Essays 2002–2008* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), 3–17.

