

Political Emotion

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ABSTRACT

I first review three conceptual issues: (1) individualism vs emergentism; (2) the interpersonal nature of emotion and the "scalability" problem; and (3) entrainment. I then present three areas of work on political emotion: (1) the recovery of the link of emotion and politics in the history of political philosophy; (2) contemporary work in feminist, "continental," and cultural studies approaches; and (3) recent scientific studies of political emotion and on its relation to (American) electoral politics. I will conclude with a case study of the training that produces the *esprit de corps* of military groups, whose ability to perform violent action is essential to political sovereignty as the monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Collective emotion and collective political emotion

With regard to collective emotion, the basic question is that of adopting an emergentist or an individualist perspective. The emergentists posit a collective subject underlying collective emotions, while the individualists claim that collective emotions are simply the alignment or coordination of individual emotions. For the individualists, an aggregate of individuals might have a common target and focus (terms defined below) of their emotional states, but any temptation to posit a collective subject in a strong ontological sense should be resisted. Wilson (2003) provides an important nuance here with his "social manifestation thesis" that maintains ontological individualism while requiring epistemological externalism: "Socially manifest psychological traits are the properties of individuals, but since they occur in certain group environments, they cannot be understood in purely individualist terms" (Wilson, 2003: p. 301).

Writers on collective emotions do not have a common methodology. For instance, Schmid (2009) uses a phenomenological perspective to examine shared grief, while Huebner (2011) has a computationalist / representationalist perspective and uses notions of distributed cognition to argue for the possibility of "genuinely collective emotions". Collective guilt has been the subject of a number of papers, among them Gilbert (2002) and Tollefsen (2006). Gilbert (2002) proposes a "plural subject" legitimating the notion of collective guilt feelings; Huebner (2011) interprets Gilbert's argument as supporting only a coordinative position rather than a truly emergentist one. Tollefsen (2006) writes on the rationality of collective guilt and seeks to link it to collective responsibility and atonement: "Without genuine emotion, so called, 'political apology' and 'political forgiveness' is just politics" (Tollefsen, 2006, p. 238; emphasis in original).

We will define collective political emotion as collective emotion within a political context, such that a political event or issue is the target, but not necessarily the focus, of the emotion. Schmid, 2009,

reviews the standard terminology, codified in Helm (2001), in which the target of an emotion is its eliciting object, while the focus is that about which the emotional person is concerned; I can thus have a charging dog be the target of my fear, while the focus of my fear could be a group of children rather than myself. Thus a group of people could be angry about the inflation they expect to come from a particular government policy, but the foci of those fears might be the individual retirement plans of the angry people. As this example shows, I do not think it necessary here to argue the delicate and complex emergence question, since coordinated emotions will do the work needed here for a notion of collective political emotion.

Emotions as interpersonal processes and the “scalability” problem

A promising first move in a discussion of collective political emotion is to adopt an interpersonal perspective whereby analysis of emotional episodes looks at multiple (at least two) agents / patients. This move seems to require an individualist / coordinative notion of collective emotion, as what is at stake is the emotional episode as it develops between or among multiple subjects rather than fused in an emergent subject. Thus, orthogonal to the individualist / emergentist issue, the interpersonal perspective is often accompanied by a move away from a static perspective (what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for attributing an emotional trait to a subject?) to a processual perspective (when in the modulation of an ongoing emotional flow can we say a new emotion has consolidated itself?).

Here we will take the situated (Griffiths & Scarantino, 2009) and enactive approaches (Colombetti & Thompson, 2007; De Jaegher & Di Paolo, 2007; De Jaegher, Di Paolo, & Gallagher, 2010) to affective cognition as agreeing that emotions are interpersonal processes. If we adopt the enactive standpoint that affective cognition is achieved in interactive processes encompassing brain, body, world (including partners in interpersonal emotional processes), the enactivists would see the partners in an emotional process (the angry aggressor, the cringing victim) as constituted in the situation. However, this constitution is never *de novo* but always structured by social position, so that, for instance, getting angry with a superior, equal, or inferior are all different emotional possibilities (Gross, 2006). With regard to the process aspect, the angry person and the object of the anger come to be and continually change in the ongoing process: the initial flash, the baleful glare, the taunting return glance, the escalation, the counter-move, the placation, the humiliating refusal to meet eyes, and so on (Collins, 2008, provides excellent analyses of such twists and turns from his micro-sociological perspective).

The biggest question for us with regard to the interpersonal process perspective is whether it can be scaled up from a pair of opponents to the group level. If we accept scalability to the group level (whether the resultant emotion be seen as the property of an emergent subject or as merely coordinative among individual subjects), then we must pay attention to three interlocking axes in situations of political emotion: the “transversal” constitution of the opponents relative to each other (e.g., a group of police officers facing off with a group of demonstrators) must be seen in conjunction with the “horizontal” emotional bonds forming “the police” and “the demonstrators” as identity-groups (these horizontal bonds being constantly modulated by the transversal bonds); and finally the “adjunctive” relation of each side to bystanders, which can serve to strengthen or weaken both transversal and horizontal processes (Levine et al., 2005; Reicher et al., 2007; Gorringer et al., 2012; Collins, 2008).

Finally, we should note that there is a continuum of conscious awareness and control in collective or at least interpersonal emotion, so we cannot assume the partners are always on equal footing. Consider the continuum from lack of self-control in infant emotional contagion to the one-sided control in various forms of emotional manipulation—from the rocking, petting, cooing and face-making of caretakers trying to re-direct the emotional reactions of infants (Stern, 1985), to the complex negotiations of director and audience in the interspersing of fear and comic relief triggers in horror movies (Hanich, 2010); from the elaborate staging of nationalistic spectacles (Berghaus, 1996) to jealousy, anger, and guilt-trip “strategies” in domestic scenes (Solomon, 2008).

Entrainment

Let us consider the model of collective political emotions as provoked via processes of entrainment—groups share emotions by getting on the same wavelength. (Again, depending on one's position on the individualist vs emergentist issue, the resultant emotion can be considered as the coordination of individual emotional experiences or as the property of an emergent group subject). Two popular though reasonably rigorous books call attention to collective joy produced by the entrained movement of groups (McNeill, 1995; Ehrenreich, 2006). Neither McNeill nor Ehrenreich adduce much scientific backing, but this is understandable for reasons of date and genre. In focusing on entrainment we are looking to the temporal and interactive—the rhythmic—dimensions of our biological and social being (Kelso, 1995; Fuchs & Jirsa, 2008). The philosophical literature on entrainment is developing. A recent study (Tollefsen & Dale, 2012) shows how philosophical accounts of joint agency have been top-down: using adult human models, they have shown complex intentional alignment. The authors call attention to research demonstrating the alignment of low-level behaviors such as body postures and conversational rhythms, so that they aim for a “process-based, dynamic account of joint action that integrates both low-level and high-level states” (Tollefsen & Dale, 2012, p. 385; they refer to Shockley et al., 2009, among many other fascinating studies of low-level alignment).

An important angle here is the evolutionary origins of our entrainment capacities. One of the most interesting researchers of music and bio-cultural evolution, John Bispham, writes: “music is a culturally constructed phenomenon built upon universal biologically determined foundations” (Bispham, 2004). The evolutionary pressures that have shaped the fundamentally rhythmic and social aspects of our being lead Cross (2003) to claim that “infants appear to be primed for music”; in support of this, he cites important studies on rhythmic mother-infant interactions which are crucial for “primary intersubjectivity,” “emotional regulation” and “emotional bonding” (Cross, 2003; citing Trevarthen, 1999; Dissanayake 2000). In the same vein, Bispham classifies Dissanayake 2000 as looking for “the adaptive strength of rhythm and entrainment in the course of human evolution with reference to mother-infant interaction” (Bispham, 2006, p. 125).

These early building blocks of musicality must come together to form our uniquely human rhythmic capacities. What distinguishes human music from bird song is that our music is dialogue, group activity, involving changes in response to changes by others (Bispham, 2003). Thus a key capacity for investigation is entrainment, or group movement with the same pulse, which plays a major role in Bispham's analysis; entrainment is based on “internal oscillatory mechanisms [which] are attuned to external cues allowing us to build expectations for the timing of future events ... and to interact efficiently with the environment” (Bispham, 2006, p. 128). Since there are internal oscillatory mechanisms in a variety of domains of human behavior and cognition, Bispham claims that “entrainment in music constitutes an evolutionary exaptation of more generally functional mechanisms for future-directed attending to temporally structured events” (Bispham, 2006, p. 128). Bispham pushes the analysis as far as to entertain the notion that “interpersonal entrainment is the key rhythmic feature in [all] human interactions,” both musical and non-musical.

Regarding musical pulse, we have to remember that for almost all of human history, music has been danceable, which sets up its capacity for group bonding (Dissanayake, 2000; McNeill, 1995; Ehrenreich, 2006). How does danceability come about? Bispham points first to “internal periodic oscillatory mechanisms overlapping with motor-coordination”. The key for us is his conclusion that this provides “a mechanism to affect and regulate levels of physiological arousal” (Bispham, 2006, p. 129). In other words, music allows groups to get on the same emotional wavelength: “MRB [musical rhythmic behavior] is primarily rooted in providing a temporal framework, collective emotionality, a feeling of shared experience, and cohesiveness to group activities and ritualistic ceremonies”; indeed, “musical pulse is functional in regulating emotions and motivational states by means of affecting states of action-readiness” (Bispham, 2006, p. 131). It is important to stress that in an evolutionary perspective music regulates group affect rather than being merely individually expressive: music is

“functional in regulating emotions and in communicating strategies for the regulation of emotion rather than as raw emotional expression per se” (Bispham, 2006, p. 131).

A BRIEF SURVEY OF CURRENT WORK ON POLITICAL EMOTION

Revisiting the history of political philosophy

Echoing Kant’s dictum that the task of political philosophy is to design a system of justice so that even a race of devils would agree to be bound by it (Kant, 1970, p. 112), mainstream Anglophone political philosophy has long put the ability to appeal to rational egoist agents at the center of its project. The affective turn has reached political philosophy however, and we now see investigations into the way handling the emotions of rulers and ruled is at the core of the major figures of political philosophy (Kahn, Saccamano, & Coli, 2006; Kingston & Ferry, 2008).

To begin at the beginning, both Plato and Aristotle agree on the emotional core of character development and on the shared emotional dispositions of people raised under one political regime or another. For Plato, ethical development entails an emotional reaction prior to any rational justification (“the ugly he would rightly disapprove of and hate while still young and yet unable to apprehend the reason”, Plato, 1961, p. 646 [*Republic*, 402a]). For Aristotle the ethical virtues are constituted by the right disposition of emotions, and such dispositions are attained by consistent training of children’s emotional relation to pleasure and pain (Aristotle, 1984, p. 1744 [*Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.3.1104b10-13]). The widest context for the habitual development of ethical virtues is the customs and laws of the city, such that the character of the citizens is the most important task of the legislator (Aristotle, 1984, p. 1743 [*Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.1.1103b25]; p. 2121 [*Politics*, 8.1.1337a10]).

Among the great early Modern thinkers, Hobbes famously emphasizes the role of fear in the state of nature in prompting the agreement to form the civil state—and fear of a return to the state of nature once in such a state. The reason we must be afraid in – and of – the the state of nature is the widespread ability of people to kill each other; while asleep, even the strongest can be killed by the weakest (Ryan, 1996; Foucault, 2003; Hull, 2009; on the general relation of reason and passion in Hobbes, see Coli, 2006). The other great early Modern thinker whom we will treat is Spinoza. Although he is perhaps an “eccentric Hobbesian” because of his fondness for democracy (Curley, 1996), Spinoza nonetheless follows Hobbes in arguing that given what we know about the role of the passions in human affairs, it is rational to wish to escape from the state of nature. And within a civil state, the sovereign’s ability to control public religion allows the rational minority to find protection from the unruly passions of the masses by the sovereign’s judicious use of fear and superstition. However, there is a more positive reading of Spinozist political emotion than the Hobbesian emphasis on fear and security. First, there is an “affective genesis” of sociability via the passions that passes through our powers of imagination and imitation. Second, a good political system can support us in pursuing the Spinozist doctrine of making passive affects into active affects. This transformation stems from adequate ideas, that is, understanding the causes of an affect. But the path to adequate ideas goes through common notions, the discovery of the agreement of things with each other, and here “there is no individual thing in the universe more useful to man than a man who lives by the guidance of reason” (Spinoza, 2002, p. 337 [*Ethics*, IVp35c1]), for it is in their rational nature that men most agree (Balibar, 1998; Lloyd & Gatens, 1999; Sharp, 2011).

With regard to the 18th century sentimentalists, David Hume and Adam Smith, Krause (2008a, 2008b) turns to Hume as providing resources for “affectively engaged impartiality” with an eye to sustaining deliberative democracy (Krause, 2008, p. 6). Krause does not advocate adopting Hume whole cloth, however: “Insofar as the moral sentiments are socially constituted ... they will tend to reflect prevailing social inequalities ... The natural limits of sympathy in Hume’s account exacerbate this danger... Hume’s account must be supplemented” (Krause, 2008b, p. 127). The recovery of Smith’s work on sympathy as relevant to political philosophy has had to overcome the appropriation of

Smith by economic and political thinkers as (exclusively) based on rational self-interest. This reading of Smith overlooks the way sympathy is not excluded from the impartial spectator (Amadae, 2003, pp. 193–219, especially p. 216; Foucault, 2008). However, Kingston (2008) traces Smith’s role in occluding the classical notion of a “public passion,” that is, the shared emotional disposition or ethical character of members of a community as seen by Plato and Aristotle. For Kingston, Smith’s emphasis on “localized face-to-face encounters” individualizes the sympathy of the impartial spectator. Hence, despite the importance of sympathy in his work, Kingston sees Smith as part of the movement by which public passions are occluded and private passions delegitimized so that “shared rational norms became the sole possible basis for understanding the creation and shaping of political community” (Kingston, 2008, p. 124).

Feminist, “continental,” and cultural studies approaches to political emotion

Limitations of space prevent a full discussion, but the following are noteworthy. Lloyd (1993) offers a critique of the identification of man with reason and woman with emotion in the history of Western philosophy. Mendus (2001) looks at feminism and emotion in 18th and 19th century thinkers (Kant, Wollstonecraft, and Mill among them). James (2006) provides a very useful overview, with particular attention to Spelman (1989), on feminist reclaiming of anger and indignation, and to Nussbaum’s (2003) cognitivist reading of emotions as judgments. A powerful pair of works by Butler (2004, 2009) posits the grieving attendant upon our precarious material and social selves as furnishing “a sense of political community of a complex order . . . by bringing to the fore the relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility” (Butler, 2004, p. 20). Through the focus on grieving we see “the fundamental sociality of embodied life” such that the public emotions of “mourning, fear, anxiety, rage” in post-September 11 America are seen in relation to foreign policy, and its intervention into and constitution of “the geopolitical distribution of corporeal vulnerability” (Butler, 2004, pp. 28–29). Finally, we can note how William Connolly (2008) enlists Nietzsche and Deleuze in his critique of contemporary American *ressentiment* as it appears in “the contemporary conjunction of cowboy capitalism, evangelical Christianity, and a providential image of history” (Connolly, 2008, xiv).

The “affect theory” school (recently anthologized in Gregg & Seigworth, 2010) is a noteworthy interdisciplinary approach to political emotion. It owes its start to Sedgwick and Frank (1995), which renewed interest in the American psychologist Silvan Tomkins, who provides a naturalist taxonomy of affects, distinguishing nine neurobiologically hardwired and recombinant affects (in their high intensity modes: joy, excitement, startle, rage, disgust, “dissembl,” anguish, terror, humiliation). Massumi (2002) is the other origin of affect theory; his work is based on a Deleuzian appropriation of Spinoza’s theory of affect and affection. Affection is the change in the material relations defining a body (its “speeds and slownesses”) by an encounter with another body, while affect is the change in the power of acting of the affected body due to the affection. “Power of acting” is often taken by the Deleuzo-Spinozists as the potentials of a body to form “assemblages” linking it to other bodies in an emergentist scheme. See also Ahmed (2004) on the “cultural politics of emotion” in contemporary Britain; Massumi (1993) on the “politics of everyday fear,” a work that is even more relevant post-September 11; and Berlant (2011) on the “cruel optimism”—a self-defeating relation in which objects block the motivating attachment to that very object—that pervades the continual crisis mode of American neoliberalism.

Recent scientific studies of political emotion and its relation to (American) electoral politics

Very little work has been done here on a strict notion of collective political emotion. However, the following studies, despite their individualist methods, provide important materials for further study on collective political emotion once the “scalability” issue has been addressed.

In areas peripherally related to political emotion, there has been a renewal of interest in the notion of the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1988; Jost et al., 2003). There

is also been much neuroscientific work on the bases of emotional and rational approaches to moral problems (Greene, 2003, 2008; Greene & Haidt, 2002), as well as work on the hormone oxytocin's effect on sociability (Zak, 2011). Work on the evolutionary roots of pro-sociality and altruistic behavior in relation to empathy and morality can be found in Hrdy (2009), Gintis et al. (2005), De Waal (2006), and Joyce (2006). Work in child development and cooperation can be found in Tomasello (2009). For the philosophical renewal of interest in empathy, see Stueber (2006). For work on collective emotion in the economic arena, see Berezin (2003, among other topics, the Keynesian notion of "animal spirits") and (2009, for instance, the metaphor of a "fear index" used among financial workers).

Directly relevant to the study of political emotion, Neuman et al. (2007) is situated at the intersection of "political psychology"—as a subfield of political science—and psychology itself, including neuroscience. One of the important technical questions addressed by the essays in Neuman et al. (2007) is that of "dual processing" theories, that is, separate channels for 1) fast, "bottom-up," automatic or "reflexive," and mostly emotional processing and 2) slower, "top-down," executive or "reflective," and mostly cognitive processing. Departing from a strict dual processing model, Spezio and Adolphs propose a very interesting "recurrent multilevel appraisal model" in which "the evaluative processing and emotional processing functions form bidirectionally coupled, iterative loops that are extended in time" (Spezio & Adolphs, 2007, p. 83).

We turn now to a series of popular works that take political emotion as their topic. I include them here for their accessibility as well as the coverage of the primary literature that they synthesize. In addition, the very fact of their publication indicates self-awareness on the part of the electorate of the affect-soaked American political scene. Mooney (2012) looks at dogmatism about beliefs more than at emotions per se in his survey of work on bias, motivated reasoning, selective exposure, cognitive dissonance, and so on. Nonetheless, Mooney does have the notion of "openness to experience" as his key, and this can be seen in terms of emotional disposition. Frank (2004) analyzes how emotional appeals have overridden what should have been seen as economic self-interest on the part of lower-income voters. Lakoff (2008) rejects the association of the unconscious with the emotional and the conscious with the cognitive. Instead he wants to render conscious the "frames" of the "cognitive unconscious" that shapes our political discourse. His hope in making the workings of the reflexive unconscious reflectively accessible is to facilitate deliberative democracy. Despite this focus on the deliberative, he nonetheless refers to political emotion in noting that progressives appeal to empathy while conservatives appeal to fear and authority. The political task for progressives is then for Lakoff the cultivation of empathy (On that front, there is a new school that reads the development of the mirror neuron base of empathy in terms of exposure to properly nurturing interpersonal relations, see Heyes, 2010; see also the popular work of Szalavitz & Perry, 2010).

In the electoral politics work there is a strong neo-Humean angle in which reason is the slave of the passions. For Westen (2007), bounded rationality is not enough; political appeals must go through emotions rather than through the rationality of interests. Haidt (2012) focuses on different moral logics leading to political impasses and bitterness. In Haidt's "social intuitionist" model, in the vast majority of cases affect-laden moral intuitions drive moral judgments, with moral reasoning following after. Moral reason is thus motivated by prior intuitions, so it is much more like a lawyer fighting a case than a scientist searching for truth. The political problem comes from a population whose differing intuitions stem from multiple moral values. While the affect-laden intuitions of American-style "liberals" come from the logics of care and fairness, "conservatives" also have strong intuitions from moral logics of liberty, loyalty, authority, and sanctity.

CASE STUDY: COLLECTIVE EMOTIONS IN MILITARY TRAINING

Max Weber provides a canonical definition of political sovereignty as the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a territory (Weber, 1978). But there is a problem: how to unleash yet control the killing potential of the forces of order, the army and the police? (Protevi, 2008, 2010) The

problem is especially acute in the crucial point of counter-revolution: will the army fire on “the people”? Plato saw this problem clearly in his analysis of the character of the guardians, who had to be kind to friends yet fierce to enemies (Plato, 1961, p. 622 [*Republic*, 375c]). Interestingly enough, the problem is more on the “unleashing” side than on the “controlling” side, for killing is less easy than it might seem for those raised with a Hobbesian outlook in which the ability to kill is assumed to be widespread. Researchers expecting to find that ability displayed in combat, where the logic of “kill or be killed” would predict high rates of deadly interaction, were shocked and dismayed to find that traditional military drill (target shooting at bull’s-eyes) produced only a 15-20% firing rate among American infantry troops in WWII, excluding machine-gunners (Grossman, 1996, pp. 3–4, citing Marshall, 1978; see also Collins, 2008). While close-range killing can be done by a very small percentage of soldiers in “cold blood” (i.e., with full conscious awareness), Grossman (1996) argues for a deep-seated inhibition against one-on-one, face-to-face, cold-blooded killing on the part of some 98% of soldiers, a figure which correlates well with the estimated 2% of the population who count as low-affect or “stimulus-hungry” sociopaths (Niehoff, 1999; Pierson, 1999). The problem with close-range killing is the emotional barrier of fear (Grossman, 1996; Collins, 2008). So far from facing the Hobbesian problem of having to restrain a widespread ability to kill by creating a fearful State, the contemporary American state in fact faces a problem in training its forces to overcome fear so that they are able to kill.

Killing behavior is facilitated by arrangements of distance, teamwork, command, habituation, and mechanical intermediaries. Together they disable a widely distributed inhibition on close-range, cold-blooded killing among humans, which we can say is based in “proto-empathic identification,” and which relies on a fundamental linkage of affect, body image and bodily integrity. Soldiers’ testimonies are clear that seeing someone else’s blood and guts spill out of them is powerfully felt by many soldiers (Kirkland, 1995; Kilner, 2000). On the powerful affects provoked by spilled guts, see Gallese, Keysers, and Rizzolatti 2004 on mirror neurons hooked to “viscero-motor centers” and Singer et al. (2004) in which “empathy for pain” is correlated with increased activity of neural networks mapping the guts.

Since the vast majority of even trained soldiers cannot kill at close range in cold blood, a tried and true technique is to kill in a de-subjectified state, e.g., in reflexes, rages and panics. The Viking “berserker rage” is a prototype here; see Shay (1995) for modern examples. Griffiths (1997) denies that “emotion” is a natural kind, and takes some primary emotions as “affect programs” or fast-acting, pre-programmed, and automatic behavior routines. I accept the affect program notion in extreme cases such as the berserker rage (Protevi, 2009, 2010). To provoke the berserker rage, the Vikings experimented with various training practices; the noted historian William McNeill claims that “war dances” produced a “heightened excitement” that contributed to the “reckless attacks” of the “Viking berserkers” (McNeill, 1995, p. 102; see also Speidel, 2002, p. 276).

While we will not exclusively focus on the berserker rage—indeed contemporary military training seeks to avoid such rage states—we will follow McNeill’s lead here and investigate the wider issue of music and physical entrainment in provoking group feeling in military training. We begin by noting that John Bispham, whose work we discussed above, claims functional affective regulation by means of group music includes “military arousal” (Bispham, 2006, p. 130). Now we should be clear that the semantic dimension of military training cannot be overlooked, as soldiers dehumanize the enemy by a series of racial slurs. But we can note that the semantic dimension receives a boost when it is produced via rhythmic chanting while running (Burke, 2004).

Most soldiers do not “kill,” instead the enemy was knocked over, wasted, greased, taken out, and mopped up. The enemy is hosed, zapped, probed, and fired on. The enemy’s humanity is denied, and he becomes a strange beast called a Kraut, Jap, Reb, Yank, dink, slant, or slope. (Grossman, 1996, p. 93)

Although the semantic / cognitive act of dehumanizing the enemy, aided by affective *esprit de corps* via physical entrainment, helps killing behavior, we should not overlook the fact that the greatest

factor in increased firing rates is a form of reflex training that cuts conscious subjectivity out of the loop (Grossman, 1996; Collins, 2008; Protevi, 2008). But here again we meet political emotion, as there is a return of the subjective with the traumatic, guilt-provoking, sight of kills. Nonetheless, there is yet another turn, as the semantic again plays a role in modulating political emotion, as anecdotal evidence relayed to the author in personal communication by Lieutenant Colonel Pete Kilner of West Point suggests that officers who had talked and thought about the after-effects of killing had less guilt than enlisted men and women without such preparation.

CONCLUSION

Let me end with a few words of caution about political emotion. We need not share the hysterical reactions of Le Bon (1896; Wilson, 2004)—for whom mass politics dragged rational men down to the level of “women, primitives, and children” in an unconscious emotional regression—to be cautious here. Joy in entrained collective action is by no means a simple normative standard. There is fascist joy; the affect surging through the Nuremberg rallies, building upon and provoking even more feeling, was joyous (Berghaus, 1996). If there is to be any normativity in collective political emotion it will have to be active joy rather than passive joy. As we have seen, for Spinoza, active joy comes from adequate ideas, that is, understanding the causes of the affect. I would give a pragmatist twist to this and say active joy is “empowerment,” the ability to re-enact the joyous encounter in novel situations, or to put it in semi-California-speak, the ability to turn other people on to their ability to turn still others on to their ability to enact active joyous collective action, on and on in a horizontally radiating network, or, to use Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) term, a “rhizome”. This active understanding of how to empower others in a “horizontal” network is precisely what was missing from the mystified masses of Nuremberg, who could do nothing but search for further occasions to submit passively to the Leader’s “vertical” commands.

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