

## Emotion, History Notes

### Emotion: Physiological states

- **Physiological blends of emotional states**

1. From this point of view emotion is understood as brain biochemistry that involves physiological changes
2. This point of view suggests that we have hard wired emotions which, this viewpoint suggests, is associated with our genes.
3. So for, example the **frontal lobe** is associated with regulating emotion

- **Bodily responses and facial expressions recognised across cultures**

1. We need to be able to recognise emotions in order to note the differences between them
2. There are bodily responses to emotions – such as the **heart beating faster when in fear**

### Robert Plutchik's Psychoevolutionary Theory of Emotion (1980)

- **Eight primary emotions**

1. In pairs of opposites: joy versus sadness; trust versus disgust
2. Colour increase as intensity of emotion increases
3. Secondary emotions are combination of primary ones: **acceptance and apprehension combine to create submission**
4. Not sure I entirely agree with this chart, but it is an interesting way to give names to emotions

### Emotions: Culturally constructed

- **Emotions as discursive constructions rather than bodily responses**

1. Emotions are part of the **wider cultural contexts** and discourses that people find themselves in, and able to draw upon

- **Emotions as cultural constructed judgements**

1. Some academics argue that we **participate in emotions** or that we 'do' emotions – we perform them.

- **Subject to historical and cultural change e.g. grief displays**

1. Emotions themselves – and how we view and define them – are **subject to cultural and historical change**
2. For example, the displays of grief has changed over time in the UK – public grief being frowned upon or encouraged at certain times and in certain contexts.

- **Expectations at weddings/funerals**

1. There are **various rules** that we are expected to behave by such as how emotions should be displayed at funerals and weddings.

2. For example, for some people, we are expected to be **happy at weddings**
3. Though in some cultural contexts, the bride is expected to **cry at her own wedding**

## Diagram

### Circuit of emotion

1. The circuit of emotion is about the **moments in the circuit** which are all interrelated and work in relationship with each other
2. Emotion is generated at each level of the circuit
  - **Cognitive processes – media/culture plays a role**
1. Cognition is about **receiving and processing information**.
2. It is linked with such processes as awareness, attention, thought and representation
3. We use emotion to evaluate what information is important to us and what is not
  - **Physiological sensations**
1. These include things like an accelerated **heart-beat, sweaty palms, the fight or flight actions**
2. The physiological sensations are acted out in different ways in different cultural contexts – **such as hitting someone or playing or learning to take deep breaths**
  - **Biochemical brain activity**
1. Emotions may cause **chemicals to be released which** impart molecular messages that can dramatically impact on physically on us.
  - **Cultural processes – media**
1. There are **social contexts** in which emotions are named, learned, displayed and regulated. For example, the notion of the **British stiff upper lip**
2. **The media plays a role in this**
  - **Emotion is the outcome of a range of the above**
1. So rather than purely physiological responses or biochemical brain activities or cognitive processes, emotions are the **outcome of the interactions** of all of these

### Emotions as cross-cultures

- 1. There are cultural differences in how emotions are both perceived and displayed
- 2. For example, the **collective more communal societies** where we have responsibility for each other.
- May mean that **interpersonal conflict is** experienced more negatively than in individualistic societies

**The way emotions are lived – through cultural discourses, display rules etc.**

1. **Individualist cultures**, such as the U.S. focus on individuals standing out and becoming distinguished through **one's own achievements**

3. Collectivist cultures such as Japan focus more on social obligations and responsibilities in order to maintain interpersonal relationships and harmony

- **Emotions in excess (often wanted in reality television programmes)**

1. **Reality television programmes** often want emotions in excess

2. For example, the responses on programmes like *XFactor* when someone is told they are unable to sing. But these guide us in how we should/should not display emotion

- **Cultures and media produced by those cultures tend to promote and create culturally desirable emotions**

- 1. America, may promote **individual happiness** and praise and encourage each other for various achievements

- 2. Cultures that devalue anger, such as the Utku Inuits, and Japanese tend to **reduce in-group contexts in which anger is likely to emerge**

- 3. These emotions are reflected in the media and cultural products that societies produce

### **Emotional intelligence**

- **Ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions**

1. All this is about is the **ability to monitor one's own** and other people's emotions

2. To discriminate between **different emotions**

3. And to also label them – to give them appropriate names in language

4. And to use these labels to guide thinking and behaviour.

### **Cultural intelligence**

- **Capability to relate and work effectively across cultures**

1. Cultural intelligence is about the **ability to relate to different cultures**.

- **Person's interest and confidence in functioning effectively in culturally diverse settings**

1. It is about a **person's interest** and confidence in functioning in culturally diverse settings

2. being able to **negotiate one's way effectively** in those contexts

- **Knowledge about cultures/differences**

1. This is the knowledge about **how cultures may be similar and different and includes** knowledge about social norms, values, ways of speaking and rules for such behaviour

- **Making sense of culturally diverse experiences**

1. This includes **awareness of one's own cultural** and checking assumptions before **culturally diverse encounters**

- **How people adapt verbal and nonverbal behaviour to make it appropriate to diverse cultures**

1. This is how a **person is able to adapt** to verbal and nonverbal behaviour

2. Which involves about being **flexible with behavioural responses** and being able to modify one's behaviour

### **Media/culture**

1. We may gain **knowledge about** other cultures through images in the **media**

2. Some of these may **espouse myths about those places** and reinforce stereotypes

### **The happiness industry**

1. There is a lot of positive psychology around with focus on wellbeing and happiness

2. With a wide range of self-help books and the whole self-help or happiness industry

3. Promoting ideas such as mindfulness and meditation

4. Focusing on how things feel to us

5. So much that these have been integrated into school timetables and workplaces

### **Mind**

1. It attempts to improve wellbeing through psychological techniques

2. Feelings of acceptance of ourselves and feelings of joy and gratitude for the good things that have happened And it is about being present – in the moment

3. Happiness as something that is measured and just about the right way of thinking

### **Criticisms**

1. This ignores the circumstances that people might find themselves in

2. And the notion that to understand happiness one must know the opposite as well.

3. There is anxiety brought about by the idea that we should all be happy all the time.

4. We can also question whether happiness can actually be measured – aren't there different ideas of what happiness is?

5. Living a good life – rather than individual happiness

### **History**

- **History is also a human construction**

1. History itself is also a human **construction or reconstruction**

2. **history involves the interpretation and selection** of elements and particular viewpoints of the past

- **History is one aspect of culture and identity**

1. History is **one way in which people** make sense of the world and experiences

2. Often we **rely on documents, biographies, accounts, novels, journalist accounts**

3. But equally we can be informed by **media representations** on television programmes, films etc.

4. Which may present particular versions of the past

- **History is about the production and circulation of meanings**

History is also about **maintaining power relations**

History uses similar devices to fiction such as plot and characters E.g. **The villain/hero**

### **Myth and history**

#### **1950s Hollywood western, Native Americans were represented as enemies to be vanquished**

1. So for example, **Hollywood films** often tend to have the dominant norm tended to be the white American as being **under threat** from the **Native American**.

#### **Heroes/heroines acquire mythical status**

1. **Stories circulate** about certain people being seen as responsible for the destinies of whole nations

2. These **representations often simplify events**

3. News often has to simplify events to get the story across in the **limited amount of time**

- **Stories circulate which affirm their lives/actions as virtuous, courageous**

1. Barthes **argues that myth is** one of the most significant ways in which we deal with complexities of life

2. Our sense of the past is often organised around myth