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Reason  
and Emotion  
in International Ethics

RENÉE JEFFERY



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## *Reason and Emotion in International Ethics*

The study of international ethics is marked by an overwhelming bias towards reasoned reflection at the expense of emotionally driven moral deliberation. For rationalist cosmopolitans in particular, reason alone provides the means by which we can arrive at the truly impartial moral judgments a cosmopolitan ethic demands. However, are the emotions as irrational, selfish and partial as most rationalist cosmopolitans would have us believe? By re-examining the central claims of the eighteenth-century moral sentiment theorists in light of cutting-edge discoveries in the fields of neuroscience and psychology, Renée Jeffery argues that the dominance of rationalism and marginalisation of emotions from theories of global ethics cannot be justified. In its place she develops a sentimentalist cosmopolitan ethic that does not simply provide a framework for identifying injustices and prescribing how we ought to respond to them, but actually motivates action in response to international injustices such as global poverty.

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## Preface

Emotions matter. This is something I have always known. But *why* do they matter? This question, along with a whole raft of others, has been nagging away in the back of my head for many years. What exactly are emotions? What do they do? What contributions do they make to human interactions? How should we understand their contribution to politics, both domestic and international? And what role do emotions play in making moral judgments and motivating ethical actions?

Arriving at the point where I can now, at least partially, answer some of these important questions has been a long and circuitous journey that began well before I began self-consciously researching and writing about the emotions. This journey began during my time as a Ph.D. student at the University of St Andrews in the early 2000s. There, sitting in my icy little office researching a thesis on Hugo Grotius and the ‘Grotian tradition’ of thought in international relations and international law, I developed an interest in the work of the early Scottish international lawyers, the moral sentiment theorists and, in particular, David Hume. I suppose, living in Scotland, if not inevitable this was at least fitting. However, such was the nature of my Ph.D. that, no matter how hard I tried, I could not wedge Hume and his contemporaries into it or, indeed, into the book on Grotius that followed. And so, my work on Hume and the moral sentiment theorists was relegated to the metaphorical bottom drawer. There it stayed for some years while I undertook my first academic job at La Trobe University and focused my research on the idea of evil in international relations.

In 2007, however, I was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Adelaide. There my colleague Lisa Hill, a renowned scholar of two other great Scots, ‘the two Adams’, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, helped to re-ignite my interest in Hume. Together with Ian Hall, she invited me to contribute a chapter on Hume to an edited book, *British International Thought from Hobbes to Namier* (2009). This was the

only encouragement I needed to return, once more, to studying Hume's works.

In the intervening years, my interest in Hume's moral sentiment theory turned, unsurprisingly, into an interest in the emotions more generally. More surprising was the fact that my background in the history of international political thought led me to study advances made in our understanding of the emotions within the neurosciences. The reason for my scientific turn was simple. The history of international political thought provides us with a set of very good reasons why Hume's moral sentiment theory came to be marginalised in the study of ethics, politics and, later, international relations. But those reasons were based on assumptions about the nature of emotions and the nature of reason and rationality. I thus began to wonder whether those assumptions were right. Surely, I thought, we know enough about the human brain to adjudicate between those who advocated a sentimentalist approach to ethics and those who discarded it in favour of more reasoned approaches? As it happens, a rapidly advancing and vibrant area of the brain sciences focused on the nature of the emotions and their relationship to reason does exist and, as we will see, has provided crucial insights into the claims made by the moral sentimentalists and their adversaries. In this, I must thank Alex Wendt who, as one of the editors of *International Theory*, the journal in which I published my first major piece of work on the emotions, encouraged me to delve further into the neuroscience and psychology of the emotions.

It is currently a great time to be working on the emotions in international relations and international ethics. Not only have scientific advances helped to clarify many key aspects of the emotions but a growing group of scholars have begun to engage in debate over the place of the emotions in International Relations studies. I have been extremely fortunate to spend time discussing the emotions with several pioneers of this emergent area of research including Roland Bleiker, Emma Hutchison and Neta Crawford, the latter of whom, in contrast to Wendt, encouraged me to continue developing my work on the emotions in the history of international political thought. In addition, I had the great pleasure of attending a workshop on the emotions and world politics at the University of Queensland, hosted by Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison. Although the manuscript of this book was almost entirely complete by then, the two days of rigorous engagement with Neta Crawford, Jonathan Mercer, Janice Bially-Mattern, Christian

Reus-Smit and Tim Dunne helped to iron out some remaining wrinkles in the argument.

Although inspiration for this book was the product of my time at the University of Adelaide, it was written and researched at Griffith University and the Australian National University. My thanks therefore go to my colleagues at the Griffith Asia Institute and the Centre for Governance and Public Policy at Griffith University for their support, engagement and commitment to scholarly inquiry. I not only thoroughly enjoyed my time at Griffith but learnt an awful lot from my colleagues there. I particularly wish to thank Jason Sharman, Pat Weller, Andrew O’Neil, Michael Wesley, Sara Davies, Alex Bellamy, Juanita Elias, Gideon Baker, Haig Patapan and Hunjoon Kim for their collegiality and support during the three years of my fellowship. In January 2012 I took up a position in the School of Politics and International Relations at the ANU. It was there, in 2012 and 2013, that the manuscript of this book was finally finished. At ANU I have particularly benefited from conversations with and support from several of my colleagues including Keith Dowding, Juliet Pietsch and Maria Rost Rublee. I thank them all.

As always, however, my greatest thanks are reserved for my family. To Ian, Sadie and Scarlett, thank you for being so patient as I worked so obsessively to finish this book. I can’t promise I won’t do it again – you all know me well enough to realise that before long we will be back in the intense final writing stage of whichever book comes next. What I can promise is not to lose sight of the fact that without the three of you, my work and my life would be greatly diminished.



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# 1 | *Ethics, emotions and the human brain*

Global poverty is, without question, the most pervasive moral problem confronting contemporary world politics. Affecting more than 2.6 billion of the world's poorest inhabitants, grinding poverty, hunger and deprivation is the leading indirect cause of mortality in children under five, accounting for a staggering 27,000 deaths every day, or 10 million deaths per year.<sup>1</sup> Since the early 1970s, debate about the contours of this problem has been dominated by rationalist cosmopolitan scholars of international ethics and political philosophy who have focused their efforts on defining the nature of the duties those of us living in affluence have to assist the impoverished.<sup>2</sup> As the continuing plight of the global poor makes clear, however, the problem of world poverty lies not just with the identification of the injustice it entails, or even with the articulation of an obligation to address it, but with the transposition of that moral obligation into ethical action.<sup>3</sup> Thus, almost three decades after Peter Singer first argued that the failure of rich nations and individuals to help alleviate extreme poverty was morally indefensible his recent

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Fact Sheet, available at [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/pdf/newsroom/Goal%201%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/pdf/newsroom/Goal%201%20FINAL.pdf); Peter Singer, *The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty* (New York: Random House, 2009), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Singer, 'Poverty, Facts, and Political Philosophies: Response to "More than Charity"', *Ethics and International Affairs*, 16, 2 (2002), pp. 121–4; Onora O'Neill, *Faces of Hunger: An Essay on Poverty, Development and Hunger* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1986); Charles R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 1979); Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and US Foreign Policy*, 2nd edn (Princeton University Press, 1996); Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); Thomas Pogge, 'World Poverty and Human Rights', *Ethics and International Affairs*, 19, 1 (2005), pp. 1–8; Kok-Chor Tan, 'Poverty and Global Distributive Justice', in Duncan Bell (ed.), *Ethics and World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> Rüdiger Bittner, 'Morality and World Hunger', in Thomas Pogge (ed.), *Global Justice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 24.

work *The Life You Can Save* asks, despairingly, why the wealthy do not give more and what can be done to motivate action.<sup>4</sup>

In response to Singer's questions, this book defends a sentimentalist version of cosmopolitanism that does not simply identify injustices and prescribe how we ought to respond to them, but actually motivates action. It is driven by a fundamental commitment to practical ethics. Articulated by the most prominent sentimentalist cosmopolitan, David Hume, and shared by rationalists as diverse as Peter Singer and Onora O'Neill, this perspective maintains that '[m]orality requires action of some sorts'.<sup>5</sup> That is, 'ethics' is not simply an abstract armchair exercise from which ideal rules or principles are derived, the practice of making and understanding judgments about what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' is undertaken, or prescriptions about how actors ought to behave in general or particular contexts are formulated.<sup>6</sup> Being essentially concerned with how we ought to live, it is all of these things, considered in theoretical terms and, crucially, applied to real life.

In accordance with this commitment, I demonstrate that the answer to Singer's question is found, at least in part, in the role that emotions play in ethics. I argue that emotions are not only central to processes of ethical deliberation and moral judgment but play an indispensable role in the practical application of ethics to moral dilemmas in international politics. That is, working within the broad frame of cosmopolitan thought, I argue that, alongside reason, emotions constitute a key component of any practical cosmopolitan ethic. In presenting and elucidating this argument, I explicitly challenge the set of rationalist assumptions that have led most thinkers concerned with questions of international ethics to conclude that emotions ought to be subjugated by their master, reason, in processes of ethical deliberation. In

<sup>4</sup> Peter Singer, 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1 (1972), pp. 229–43; Singer, *The Life You Can Save*.

<sup>5</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford University Press, 1998), App. 1.21 (henceforth *EPM*); Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 1979); Onora O'Neill, 'A Simplified Version of Kant's Ethics: Perplexities of Famine and World Hunger', in Heimir Gersson and Margaret Reed Holmgren (eds.), *Ethical Theory: A Concise Anthology* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2001), p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> Although 'morality' and 'ethics' are technically distinct terms, in common usage they are conceived as being broadly synonymous. See Terry Nardin, 'Ethical Traditions in International Affairs', in Terry Nardin and David R. Mapel (eds.), *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 3–4.

particular, drawing on cutting-edge research in the brain sciences, I confirm and develop the argument articulated by the sentimentalist cosmopolitans of the Scottish Enlightenment that ‘reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions’.<sup>7</sup>

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to explaining and defending the approach to be taken in the rest of the book. It briefly introduces the central tenets of the contending rationalist and sentimentalist versions of cosmopolitan ethics and, in particular, the place of emotions within them. The chapter then goes on to outline the interdisciplinary approach to be pursued in adjudicating between the sets of assumptions made by rationalist and sentimentalist cosmopolitans about the relationship between reason and emotion in processes of ethical deliberation. In doing so, it defends the use of recent findings in the brain sciences to evaluate and develop a sentimentalist cosmopolitan ethic. The chapter concludes by outlining the argument to be pursued in the remainder of the book. It begins, however, by situating rationalist and sentimentalist versions of cosmopolitan ethics within the wider rise of scholarship concerned with the emotions in international relations. It demonstrates that although the commanding rationalist form of cosmopolitan ethics accords well with the dominant rationalist approach to international relations more generally, it does so at the expense of keeping pace with increasing acknowledgment that emotions matter in key processes and practices of world politics.

### Getting emotional about international politics

In the study of international relations the cult of reason and rationality reigns supreme. With few exceptions, dominant theories of international relations, from realism and idealism<sup>8</sup> to their ‘neo-’iterations,<sup>9</sup> formal theories such as game theory,<sup>10</sup> and popular explanations for the

<sup>7</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (hereafter *THN*) (Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.3.3.4.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Joseph Smith, ‘Liberalism and International Reform’, in Terry Nardin and David R. Mapel (eds.), *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 202.

<sup>9</sup> Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye, ‘Power and Interdependence Revisited’, *International Organization*, 41, 1 (1987), p. 728.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Walt, ‘Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies’, *International Security*, 23, 4 (1999), pp. 9–10; Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

causes of war,<sup>11</sup> rely on reason and rationality as guiding principles and explanatory tools.<sup>12</sup> Despite its centrality to human existence, emotion is routinely and systematically excluded from accounts of politics, both domestic and international. '[B]eing emotional about politics', as George Marcus, Russell Neuman and Michael MacKuen note, 'is generally associated with psychological destruction, distortion, extremity, and unreasonableness'.<sup>13</sup> Emotions, it is thus generally assumed, ought to be assiduously avoided in the fundamentally rational, reason-centred pursuits that are the study and practice of international politics.

This is not to say that emotions have been wholly absent from the study of international relations. Fear, in particular, looms large in the canon of classical texts to which theorists of international relations traditionally refer and has provided, for many, the bedrock on which their theories of world politics have been built.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, as Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison note, 'just about every philosopher considered central to the tradition of IR scholarship, from Thucydides to Machiavelli and from Hobbes to Rousseau, has engaged the role of emotions' in some capacity.<sup>15</sup> It is thus more accurate to say that unlike in other fields of inquiry, such as psychology and

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); James Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations for War', *International Organization*, 49, 3 (1995), pp. 379–414.

<sup>12</sup> Although each of these theories is underpinned by a particular set of assumptions about precisely what rationality entails, in broad terms they all concur that rationality is 'the need to subject one's choices to the demands of reason'. Amartya Sen, *Rationality and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 4. Rationality, in this sense, is thus distinct from that referred to by Keohane in the context of international institutions or that associated with the 'Grotian tradition' of the English School but, nonetheless, underpins and directs these forms of rationalism. Robert O. Keohane, 'International Institutions: Two Approaches', *International Studies Quarterly*, 32 (1988), pp. 379–96; Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, ed. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (London: Leicester University Press, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> George E. Marcus, W. Russell Neuman and Michael MacKuen, *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (London: Penguin, 1954), I.23, p. 49; I.75, p. 80; VI.83, p. 462; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1961), XVII, pp. 53–6; Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge University Press, 1998), I.2, p. 24; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. Gaskin (Oxford University Press, 1996), I.II.9, p. 67.

<sup>15</sup> Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison, 'Fear No More: Emotions and World Politics', *Review of International Studies*, 34 (2008), p. 117.



sociology,<sup>16</sup> the emotions have, with few exceptions,<sup>17</sup> been ignored or actively marginalised from the study of international relations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

For most scholars of international relations concerned with the emotions, blame for this state of affairs can be laid squarely at the feet of the rationalist and reason-centred approaches that dominate the field. As Neta Crawford argues, ‘the assumption of rationality is [so] ubiquitous in international relations theory’ that even those scholars, predominantly realists, ‘who highlight insecurity (fear) and nationalism (love and hate), have not systematically studied emotion’.<sup>18</sup> However, it is not simply the assumption of rationality that has worked to marginalise emotions in the study of international relations. Rather, a particular set of assumptions about rationality and a series of meta-theoretical claims about the nature of rationalist theories have pushed the emotions outside the bounds of what is deemed to be acceptable scholarship. Rationality, as William J. Long and Peter Brecke note, ‘has come to mean the conscious, goal-oriented, reasoned process by which an individual, expressing and thus revealing his or her preferences, chooses a utility-maximizing action from among an array of alternative actions’.<sup>19</sup> Amongst the meta-theoretical claims that follow from this understanding of rationality is the assumption that rationalist theories ought to avoid consideration of the emotions (conceived as distortions of rationality) and other aspects of human psychology. Psychology, by this reckoning, ‘explains only mistakes’ or deviations from rationality and thus has no rightful place within rationalist

<sup>16</sup> Bleiker and Hutchison, ‘Fear No More’, p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> One notable exception is Harold Lasswell, whose work addressed personal insecurities including ‘emotional insecurities’. He wrote: ‘The expectation that violence will ultimately settle the clashing demands of nations and classes means that every detail of social change tends to be assessed in terms of its effect on fighting effectiveness, divides participants into two conflicting camps, segregates attitudes of friendliness and of hostility geographically, and creates profound emotional insecurities in the process of rearranging the current political alignment.’ Harold Lasswell, *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 57.

<sup>18</sup> Neta C. Crawford, ‘The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships’, *International Security*, 24, 4 (2000), pp. 116–17.

<sup>19</sup> William J. Long and Peter Brecke, ‘The Emotive Causes of Recurrent International Conflicts’, *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 22, 1 (2003), p. 26.

theories.<sup>20</sup> Though incredibly prevalent in the social sciences, especially political science, these said assumptions, about the nature of rationality and the explanatory reach of psychology, are, as we will see later, mistaken.<sup>21</sup>

Again, this is not to say that rationalist international relations scholarship has been wholly blind to the existence of the emotions in world politics. Rather, the emotions have been seen as unimportant phenomena or dismissed as dangerous distortions that reside outside the legitimate bounds of scholarly concern. For example, although fear has been a persistent theme underlying many theoretical accounts of international relations, the view that '[f]ear is supposed to lurk beyond the reach of our rational faculties' is incredibly common.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Hans Morgenthau highlighted the 'distorting effects' that 'mutual fear' may have on already 'antagonistic foreign policies . . . overlaid with world-embracing ideologies'.<sup>23</sup> More broadly, Morgenthau dismissed the emotions as '[d]eviations from rationality', writing that:

It stands to reason that not all foreign policies have always followed so rational, objective, and unemotional a course. The contingent elements of personality, prejudice, and subjective preference, and of all the weaknesses of intellect and will which flesh is heir to, are bound to deflect foreign policies from their rational course. Especially where foreign policy is conducted under the conditions of democratic control, the need to marshal popular emotions to the support of foreign policy cannot fail to impair the rationality of foreign policy itself. Yet a theory of foreign policy which aims at rationality must for the time being, as it were, abstract from these irrational elements and seek to paint a picture of foreign policy which presents the rational essence to be found in experience, without the contingent deviations from rationality which are also found in experience.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Mercer, 'Rationality and Psychology in International Politics', *International Organization*, 59 (2005), p. 77.

<sup>21</sup> William J. Long and Peter Brecke, *War and Reconciliation: Reason and Emotion in Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of an Idea* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1993), p. 79.

<sup>24</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 7.

That said, Morgenthau did concede that '[t]he possibility of constructing, as it were, a counter-theory of irrational politics is worth exploring', though it was not a project he took up himself.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, and more recently, James Fearon's rationalist explanation for the causes of war suggests that consideration of leaders' 'emotional commitments' might help to explain why 'rationally led states have conflicting expectations about the likely outcome of military conflict' when a strictly rationalist theory suggests that, with identical information, they ought to come to the same rational conclusion.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, Fearon draws on Geoffrey Blainey's argument that conceived 'disagreements about relative power as a consequence of human irrationality'.<sup>27</sup> In particular, mutual and hence irrational and unwarranted 'optimism about victory in war' is, Blainey suggested, a function of 'moods which cannot be grounded in fact'.<sup>28</sup> Yet, despite recognising that they may help to explain why states go to war, no further discussion of the emotions is included in Fearon's work. Rather, the emotions are, again, dismissed as irrational distortions of rational thought.

Despite the strength of this view, however, recent scholarship has witnessed increasing acknowledgment of the role that the emotions play in politics and international relations. In particular, since 2000 we have seen the emergence of a growing 'emotions and ...' literature. In political science, scholars of political psychology and political theory<sup>29</sup> have examined the role that emotions play in democratic deliberations,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations of War', pp. 392 and 391.

<sup>27</sup> Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations of War', p. 392; Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

<sup>28</sup> Blainey, *The Causes of War*, p. 54; Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations of War', p. 392.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Joan Tronto, 'Affected Politics', *Political Theory*, 39 (2011), pp. 793–801, a review article which discusses: Christopher Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Davide Panagia, *The Political Life of Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); and John Protevi, *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> George E. Marcus, *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002); Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton University Press, 2008).

civic engagement<sup>31</sup> and understandings of citizenship.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, interdisciplinary studies originating in the fields of psychology and neuroscience have analysed the impact that particular emotions, such as disgust, have on party political and ideological orientation.<sup>33</sup>

In International Relations, scholars have sought to demonstrate that emotions play a significant role in ‘characteristic processes of world politics’.<sup>34</sup> Thus Dominique Moisi has examined the geopolitics of fear, humiliation and hope,<sup>35</sup> Stephen Peter Rosen’s work explores ‘the ways in which emotional memories may affect rational decisions’, particularly in the context of war,<sup>36</sup> and Andrew A. G. Ross has examined the place of emotions in the global anti-American protest movement.<sup>37</sup> In the subfield of international political economy, scholars have demonstrated the effects of emotions on a range of phenomena, from financial crises to the emergence of self-regulating markets.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps most

<sup>31</sup> Michael MacKuen, Jennifer Wolak, Luke Keele and George E. Marcus, ‘Civic Engagements: Resolute Partisanship or Reflective Deliberation’, *American Journal of Political Science*, 54, 2 (2010), pp. 440–58.

<sup>32</sup> Nicholas A. Valentino, Vincent L. Hutchings, Antoine J. Banks and Anne K. Davis, ‘Is a Worried Citizen a Good Citizen? Emotions, Political Information Seeking, and Learning via the Internet’, *Political Psychology*, 29, 2 (2008), pp. 247–73.

<sup>33</sup> Kevin B. Smith, Douglas Oxley, Matthew V. Hibbing, John R. Alford and John R. Hibbing, ‘Disgust Sensitivity and the Neurophysiology of Left–Right Political Orientations’, *PLoS ONE*, 6, 10 (October 2011), pp. 1–9; David M. Amodio, John T. Jost, Sarah L. Master and Cindy M. Yee, ‘Neurocognitive Correlates of Liberalism and Conservatism’, *Nature Neuroscience*, 10 (2007), pp. 1246–7; Douglas R. Oxley, Kevin B. Smith, John R. Alford, Matthew V. Hibbing, Jennifer L. Miller, Mario Scalora, Peter K. Hatemi and John R. Hibbing, ‘Political Attitudes Vary with Physiological Traits’, *Science* (19 September 2008), pp. 1667–70.

<sup>34</sup> Crawford, ‘The Passion of World Politics’, pp. 116–17.

<sup>35</sup> Dominique Moisi, *The Geopolitics of Emotion: How Cultures of Fear, Humiliation, and Hope are Reshaping the World* (New York: Random House, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Peter Rosen, *War and Human Nature* (Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew A. G. Ross, ‘“Why They Don’t Hate Us”: Emotion, Agency and the Politics of “Anti-Americanism”’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 39, 1 (2010), pp. 109–25.

<sup>38</sup> Wesley Widmaier, ‘Emotions before Paradigms: Elite Anxiety and Populist Resentment from the Asian to Subprime Crises’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 39, 1 (2010), pp. 127–44; Earl Gammon, ‘Affect and the Rise of the Self-Regulating Market’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 37, 2 (2008), pp. 251–78.

prominently, scholars concerned with peacebuilding, post-conflict justice and reconciliation have also begun to consider the ways in which negative emotions born of past injustices might be addressed in ways that reduce the probability of renewed violence.<sup>39</sup> Finally, a further body of literature that recognises and explores the role that emotions play in transnational activist networks is also gathering momentum.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to focusing attention on the place of emotions in the processes and practices of international relations, many of these works are grounded, implicitly or explicitly, in the claim that conventional rationalist approaches are at odds with the patterns of human interaction that mark the actual practice of international politics and ethics. In particular, it is becoming increasingly widely accepted that by overplaying the roles played by reason and rationality, rationalists have overlooked or dismissed the significant contributions that emotions make to the theory and practice of international relations and ethics. Of course, these types of criticisms are nothing new. Since their inception, detractors of rationalist theories of international relations have used the limitations of rationalism as a foil for the development of non-rationalist and, occasionally, affect-based theories.<sup>41</sup>

Many prominent feminists have thus argued that the ‘rational actor model’ with its reason-centred account of interest-seeking behaviour cannot explain the full gamut of relationships and interactions that take place in international relations. As Kimberly Hutchings explains, ‘[f]rom the feminist point of view . . . the model of the individual as a rational “chooser” is highly problematic’ as it is based on the premise that the moral agent is ‘independent and instrumentally rational, with complete discretion over his or her own body and

<sup>39</sup> Long and Brecke, *War and Reconciliation*; Shiping Tang, ‘Reconciliation and the Remaking of Anarchy’, *World Politics*, 63, 4 (2011), pp. 711–49; Yinan He, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations after World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Jon Elster, *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Martha Minnow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

<sup>40</sup> Margaret R. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Sonja K. Pieck, ‘Transnational Activist Networks: Mobilization between Emotion and Bureaucracy’, *Social Movement Studies, iFirst* (2012), pp. 1–17.

<sup>41</sup> Marcus *et al.*, *Affective Intelligence*, p. 5.

capabilities'.<sup>42</sup> This, she notes, reflects only one subset of actors engaged in international politics, 'white, able-bodied, middle class' adult males.<sup>43</sup> As Ann Tickner argues, conceived in this context rationality is 'stereotypically associated with masculinity', while emotion is considered a feminine trait.<sup>44</sup> When coupled with the 'separation of public and private spheres' that has marked most conventional accounts of international politics, a further division between reason and emotion has been engendered. Thus, while reason is commonly associated with the public realm of politics, emotion is considered private and personal.<sup>45</sup>

Of course, at the centre of the feminist movement is the slogan 'the personal is political', 'the central message of feminist critiques of the public/domestic dichotomy'.<sup>46</sup> It thus comes as something of a surprise that 'few explicitly feminist projects ... situate emotions at the centre of research'.<sup>47</sup> Although some elements of moral sentiment theory are present in feminist theories of the ethics of care,<sup>48</sup> the specific roles that emotions play in international politics have not been a core focus of much feminist scholarship.<sup>49</sup> Rather, where the emotions have been considered in recent feminist work, it has largely been in the areas of methodology and research ethics.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Kimberly Hutchings, *Global Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), p. 62.

<sup>43</sup> Hutchings, *Global Ethics*, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> J. Ann Tickner, 'You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and International Relations Theorists', *International Studies Quarterly*, 41 (1997), p. 614.

<sup>45</sup> Joan Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 52.

<sup>46</sup> Susan Moller Okin, *Gender, Justice and the Family* (Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 124. See also Catharine A. MacKinnon's argument: 'For women the measure of the intimacy has been the measure of the oppression. This is why feminism has had to explode the private. This is why feminism has seen the personal as the political. In this sense, for women there is no private, either normatively or empirically.' Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 191.

<sup>47</sup> Bleiker and Hutchison, 'Fear No More', p. 127.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>49</sup> One notable exception to this is Mary Holmes, 'Feeling beyond Rules: Politicizing the Sociology of Emotion and Anger in Feminist Politics', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7 (2004), pp. 209–27.

<sup>50</sup> See Brook Ackerly and Jacqui True, 'Reflexivity in Practice: Power and Ethics in Feminist Research on International Relations', *International Studies Review*, 10 (2008), 696 and, in particular, their discussion of the works of Maria Stern

Similarly, most constructivists criticise, to varying degrees, the rationalist approach to international relations. As Alexander Wendt argues, the rationalist approach that underpins both neorealism and neoliberalism pushes theorists to focus on 'how the behaviour of agents generates outcomes' and, in particular, to take 'the self-interested state as the starting point' of their theories.<sup>51</sup> As such, both rationalist approaches treat 'the identities and interests of agents as exogenously given', thus effectively side-lining '[q]uestions about identity- and interest-formation'.<sup>52</sup> Constructivism challenges these ideas, and argues instead that international relations is a social construction whose 'shape and form is imbued with social values, norms and assumptions'.<sup>53</sup> Rather than rejecting rationalism altogether, however, conventional constructivists (as opposed to critical and post-structuralist constructivists) re-conceive it. Whereas rationalism is ordinarily conceived in most international relations theory in terms of utility maximising behaviour, understood in terms of the logic of consequences, constructivists view rationality in terms of the logic of appropriateness. That is, they suggest that '[w]hat is rational is a function of legitimacy, defined by shared values and norms within institutions or other social structures rather than purely individual interests'.<sup>54</sup> For this reason, constructivism is often said to occupy the 'middle ground' between rationalist and post-structuralist approaches.

Although constructivism has faced criticism from some quarters for failing to consider the emotions in the construction of identity,<sup>55</sup> many key constructivist scholars have recognised their importance and sought to incorporate some analysis of the emotions (even if not systematic analysis) into their work. Indeed, Andrew Ross maintains that

(p. 703) and Bina D'Costa: Maria Stern, *Naming Security – Constructing Identity: 'Mayan Women' in Guatemala on the Eve of 'Peace'* (University of Manchester Press, 2005); Bina D'Costa, *The Gendered Construction of Nationalism: From Partition to Creation* (Canberra: ANU, 2003). See also, 'The Forum: Emotion and the Feminist IR Researcher', ed. Christine Sylvester, *International Studies Review*, 13 (2011), pp. 687–708.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46, 2 (1992), pp. 391–2.

<sup>52</sup> Wendt, 'Anarchy Is What States Make of It', pp. 391 and 392.

<sup>53</sup> Karin M. Fierke, 'Constructivism', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 168.

<sup>54</sup> Fierke, 'Constructivism', p. 170.

<sup>55</sup> Mercer, 'Rationality and Psychology in International Politics', p. 97.

constructivism's focus on norms, identities and shared values makes constructivists 'uniquely qualified to study emotion'.<sup>56</sup> Constructivists, he argues, 'have already arrived at important theoretical frameworks for understanding identities and norms, and it seems only a small step from here to the idea that emotions mediate our receptivity to these phenomena'.<sup>57</sup> For example, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink bemoan the fact that 'affect and empathy have been swept under the carpet in recent decades'.<sup>58</sup> The result, they argue, 'is politics without passion or principles which is hardly the politics of the world in which we live'.<sup>59</sup> Among constructivists such as Finnemore and Sikkink, as well as constructivism's critics, the role that emotions play in the formulation of new norms and social adherence to existing norms is widely acknowledged.<sup>60</sup> Not only do emotions inspire actors to adhere to norms – for example, fear of shame often induces people to behave in a socially acceptable manner – but norms 'emerge and are promoted because they reflect . . . moral interests and emotional dispositions'.<sup>61</sup> In instrumental terms, 'norm entrepreneurs' and members of advocacy networks thus rely on the fact that they can muster more effective support for new norms that evoke an emotional response or reflect the moral sentiments of the population.<sup>62</sup>

In light of the growing acknowledgment afforded the role played by emotions in processes and practices of international relations, and in

<sup>56</sup> Andrew A. G. Ross, 'Coming in from the Cold: Constructivism and Emotions', *European Journal of International Relations*, 12 (2006), 198. That said, Ross agrees with Mercer that 'common presuppositions in orthodox constructivism in fact obstruct the study of affect and its role in social and political life', p. 197.

<sup>57</sup> Ross, 'Coming in from the Cold', p. 198.

<sup>58</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, 52, 2 (1998), p. 916.

<sup>59</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics', p. 916.

<sup>60</sup> Among the critics I include Jonathan Mercer who accepts some aspects of constructivism, such as 'the argument that identities are made, not given' but whose findings support and complement neorealist assumptions about state identity. Jonathan Mercer, 'Anarchy and Identity', *International Organization*, 49, 2 (1995), p. 230. With regard to norms and emotions, Mercer argues that 'One way to test for the presence of norms is to look for emotion.' In Crawford, 'The Passion of World Politics', p. 122. Similarly, Jon Elster goes so far as to argue that 'norms are sustained by emotions'. Jon Elster, 'Rationality and the Emotions', *Economic Journal*, 106, 438 (1996), p. 1390.

<sup>61</sup> Ethan Nadelman, 'Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society', *International Organization*, 44, 4 (1990), p. 524.

<sup>62</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics', p. 915.



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