

Passive Inheritance and Active Reconstruction of Historical Emotions

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Abstract:

This article investigates the effects of intergenerational historical emotions, particularly shame and pride. The research first focuses on the level of accountability of different individuals in response to past emotions. It comes to the statement that individuals, different from organizations, which may be trapped in collective feelings, bear limited responsibility for past events. Later, the article focuses on different situations when those past emotions occur. When they are passively inherited, they may function as political tools for consolidating hegemony, but when they are actively utilized, they may enable liberal historical reconstruction. Therefore, even though individuals may not need to derive and inherit emotions from past incidents, they can actively evoke those emotions to dismantle historical myths and bring back the authenticity of history.

Keywords: Psychological emotions, Revisionism, Intergenerational Transmission, Accountability

Introduction

Whether individuals should feel pride or shame toward their history is not fundamentally a question of affective accountability, but rather a profound examination of historical subjectivity and political autonomy. Blindly following historical emotions exposes oneself to the nihilistic crisis of historical revisionism. At such times, the normalization of historical emotions by those in power constitutes a form of invisible violence that effectively tramples on Lockean social contracts. This article argues that the ethical legitimacy of historical emotions does not stem from kinship or given narratives, but from active engagement, using historical emotions to deconstruct hegemony and to conduct liberatory historical reconstruction.

The Passive Carriers in Intergenerational Transmis-

sion of Emotion

To scrutinize the invisible violence, Glen Pettigrove differentiates between two types of emotions mechanisms: objective and psychological. While the former arises from direct involvement, the latter is the result of inheritance (Pettigrove, 2003). Regarding history, psychological emotion predominates with its intergenerational transmission, when descendants passively inherit this emotional legacy as their 'accountability'. Historically, this emotive transmission, passively operating beyond control, contains ethical ambiguity in nature. While indirect benefits from historical injustice and implicit conspiracy partially justify the intergenerational transmission of responsibility, this transfer requires critical scrutiny.

The passivity of inheriting historical psychological emotions can be manifested both horizontally and

vertically. A horizontal reflection centers on confusion between individual and collective responsibilities. Benefits from collective historical events mislead people to blend collective emotions with personal emotions, mistaking the intersection between personal and collective obligations. On an individual level, relating more to personal atonement, individuals will not be held accountable unless they actively perpetrate the harms, though organizations may inherit limited responsibility since their legacies continue across generations.

Vertically, the temporal detachment invalidates the descendant's blind acceptance of historical emotion. Imagine academic misconduct in a university assignment caused by a student's private plagiarism. For other group members, the assumption of responsibility for apologies and guilt seems unreasonable when they only 'knew' it after the event. (Pettigrove, 2003). Applying this academic dishonesty case to historical emotional studies: since later generations are suspended participants, or constant hindsight observers, this temporal delay prevents them from intervening in historical processes through personal actions. In this sense, extending the guilt of past actions that they could not influence to their contemporary responsibilities is unfair.

Therefore, in this intergenerational transmission, individuals bear limited accountability from the past, but the psychological emotions they inherit are not absolute ethos. Even individuals may bear inherently limited accountability; this duty is related to a collective identity, not validating an emotional response since inherent accountability does not involve knowledge and intent. Collective obligations are justice-oriented, functioning through standard norms, whereas emotions like pride and guilt are personal, arising from individual values. As a result, a group may have the duty to compensate for their past actions, but this objective duty does not demand subjective emotions toward the past. Thus, it becomes clear that emotions and responsibility are two mechanisms of transmission. In fact, under the more complex operating rules of modern states, these two mechanisms are mixed and serve a higher level of national imagination.

Should and Should not: Oligarchic Engineering on Historical Emotion

It is already clear that we do inherit some parts of the psychological emotions and the responsibility coming along with it, but that inheritance is not absolute since the suspension of time. In a contemporary context, nations exploit this intergenerational transmission tool for political control, placing individuals in a position to involuntarily accept the constructed emotions. Here, whether it is "should" or "should not," the historical responsibility for emotions is utilized to build a curated narrative for revision.

Both the inclusion and exclusion of historical sentiment are subject to the revisionist hegemony of the state. The exclusion of shame is an intentional act of national revision. The deliberate erasure of Aboriginal narratives known as the "Great Australian silence", including violent events that had taken place in Bowen Town, reveals the phenomenon of "the cult of forgetfulness (Reynolds, 2000). "Australian history belongs to the white people living in Australia" (Reynolds, 2000), this was not passive neglect but an intentional action to structure a sanitized national image (Reynolds, 2000). According to Boyer's 1968 lecture, this tendency "was a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape (Reynolds, 2000). By actively designing the excludable 'view', the nation synchronizes its chosen content that it wants the public to be aware of, to preserve settlers' bright legitimacy, and to delete shame from its history, and all of these actions serve intentional history revision.

In this way, not only is the nation's image purified, but the individualistic subjectivity is also sanitized. Later Australians might believe they inherit innocent selfhood separated from colonial crimes. Therefore, all past wrongdoings are framed as irrelevant to the current or even unreal, creating discontinuity that disrupts psychological emotions to pass down. Thus, the powers weaponized the "view" with exclusion, leading to the guided emotion excluding shame. This emotional construction suggests a core mechanism of "should not evoke emotions" toward history: By burying shame, one of the psychological emotions, the powers build a respectful identity for the settlers, consolidating their power through curated historical narratives. The situation of "Should not evoke a certain emotion" revises the nation's virtue through creating a deliberate psychological discontinuity, while "should feel" revises through continuing a sense of masculinity. An example of this is Russia's continuous effort to emphasize hegemonic masculinity to prove "its political virility, economic independence, and technological and military might," even though the country is only powerful at the surface level (Randall, 2020).

In 2000, Vladimir Putin replaced Yeltsin as president and led the performance of masculinity. "He projected himself as a masculine model" through performative actions like shirtless riding, and labeling the nation as combatants, all creating a shared historical pride for the purpose of creating national courage for restoring the USSR (Randall, 2020). These ritualized emotions transformed the concept of masculinity into a major, emphasized narrative in Russian history and contemporary. This sense of glory justified violence as necessary courage to "build and defend Soviet socialism (Randall, 2020)." Moreover, this

feeling also bridged the later generations with their ancestors through intersubjectivity, since they internalized pride into patriotism and believed that they could restore the previous achieved glorious past. As a result, the replacement of laws with curated historical emotion aligns with John Locke's warning, "wherever law ends, tyranny begins (Watt, 1947)." The nation reduces governance and elevates performative emotions justifying Putin's 2014 annexation of Crimea, invading Ukraine, and also the intervention in Syria as "strong governance" Syria (Randall, 2020). Thus, it is clear that under the context of individuals passively receiving emotions, no matter whether it is acceptance or denial, both pride and shame are manipulated for 'oligarchic narratives', the historical revision machinery. To be exact, overemphasis on masculine pride is to legitimize actions, and deliberate erasure is to purify the nation. From John Locke's perspective, this affective historiography, with no consent granted to the public, mirrors that the government violates the foundation of the social contract by ignoring personal autonomy. They derive their legal power by bypassing their boundary to gain just powers through a non-contractual manner. Thus, this violation indicates that individuals should bear and inherit minimal accountability and emotions (Sasan, 2021).

Human Agency in Historical Emotion

Despite the passivity of emotion, our positions can shift from receivers to senders, calling for the active utilization of psychological emotions to reconstruct historical narratives. While passive emotions are taught for hegemonic revision, active emotional responses are for clarity construction.

In some cases, emotional response can emerge from those had involvement with the events or muted by the powers, such as the indigenous people whom Reynolds has encountered. By experiencing and witnessing such thuggish events, the shame for the settlers was amplified in their minds. Therefore, they chose an authentic path, insisting on their rights to create values and reconstruct the existing limited historical narrative back to reality. The action of utilizing words as historical evidence is a resistant symbol to colonial archives, "bringing the past to life," challenging the previous falsified discipline (Reynolds, 2000). Here, the meaning of shame has been modified with human-centered motivation for generating living evidence for resistance. Here, recognition of shame actively resurfaces as acts of existential resistance in order to reconstruct history. However, it is not rigorous to assume we should always say "yes" to historical emotion whenever it can bring truths back, when emotion might also be used as a tool to create or consolidate a new round of hegemony, as mentioned earlier.

Each kind of historical emotion serves the purpose of ad-

ressing practical demands. History, in Lenin and Marx's perspective, proceeds in spirals, having both plateau and rising parts, instead of in a straight line (Yu et al., 1974). Although it may seem like history has reached stagnation while encountering setbacks in each period, active emotional mobilization counters those illusions in the spiritual temporality. The action to rebuild requires a cohesive public force, and the psychological emotion, pride, indeed catalyzes those actions through a heroic narrative. It operates through self-healing revisionism, converting trauma to glory, and distilling the painful memories into a force to coagulate the public to counter the so-called stagnant time.

In the US, after the Civil War, a period of Reconstruction for blacks began, but it underwent temporary hindrance. (Marable, 1981) With their over-dependence on legislation, outcome-fueled African Americans selected an alternative path, with the power of pride to combat racist ideologies and to push the continuity of history. This sense of pride was not built on achievements but rather on transforming the collective trauma of being treated unequally into a unifying force to call all black people to resist. For example, during the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King said, "Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred (NPR, 2010)." He emphasized the past trauma that the black folks had suffered through "cup of bitterness" and reframed it into pride by linking it with the pursuit of "freedom", actively igniting a unified desire to demand civil rights not as a request but as a legal claim among most African Americans. By utilizing pride as a tool to revise history for self-healing, Martin Luther King's actions broke the stale period, leading to the second round of reconstruction for equality. Thus, it is clear that pride was actively utilized and wielded to reconstruct and rewrite equality in America.

Conclusion

These cases reveal a fact: history is often self-justified to become a crafted, chosen narrative when emotions are involved. When passivity accompanies emotions to revise narratives, it introduces harm and distorts facts by erasing the suffering and emphasizing certain historical concepts. By doing so, society is forcing individuals toward a guided direction, rather than allowing them to embrace a more nuanced reckoning with the past. The nations utilize psychological responses as a weapon to sanitize history, enlarging or shrinking the influence of certain incidents by manipulating people's emotions. The powers determine what counts as "real" history and also who should dominate the society, but the level of validity of the "real"

history behind all these intentions is concerning. On the opposite side, when activity accompanies emotions, the effects are dramatically different. While both can be used for history revision, as the previous guidance transfers into the sole agency, the results change from harm to equality. Therefore, the lesson of this essay is clear: we do not bear the responsibility for deriving emotions from history, but we do own the courage and accountability to dismantle myths that sustain hegemony. However, it is important to note that when actively evoking emotions to eliminate myth, we cannot avoid historical subjectivity, whether the emotion is pride or shame. Thus, on a further level, active contextualization of history should come along with active arising emotions to ensure that what we reconstruct is authentic.

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