**Emotions and Time:**

**Approaching Emotions through a Fusion of Horizons**

**Abstract:**

*America at its best is also courageous…. The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake: America remains engaged in the world, by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favours freedom…. America at its best is compassionate.*

George W. Bush, 20 January 2001, Inaugural Address

*In a single instant, we realized this will be a decisive decade in the history of liberty, that we’ve been called to a unique role in human events. Rarely has the world faced a choice more clear or consequential.*

George .W. Bush, 29 January 2002, State of the Union Address

*Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged because it separates; it is actually the supportive ground of the course of events in which the present is rooted. Hence temporal distance is not something that must be overcome… In fact the important thing is to recognise temporal distance as a positive and productive condition enabling understanding.*

Hans Gadamer [1960]1989), 297

Emotions seldom remain the same as time passes, but neither do they change completely or remain disconnected to each other across time. Understanding the way in which emotional experiences intertwine helps us make sense of how political events are connected and whether they constitute a major break with the past. While experts and commentators on American politics argued that President G.W. Bush’s initial foreign policy sought to isolate the United States from the outside world, a position that apparently changed after 9/11, the quotations above suggest otherwise. G.W. Bush’s January 2001 inauguration speech reveals a number of appraisals about a compassionate and courageous America that struggles against enemies of freedom. Those appraisals set the scene for G. W. Bush’s State of the Union address delivered five months after 9/11 in which he stated that America had now acquired a ‘unique role’ in the international arena. Seen through this prism, 9/11 did not radically change G. W. Bush’s emotional appraisal, for his messianic and expansionist agenda was already present in the January 2001 inauguration speech; in other words, there was just as much continuity as change. Exploring emotional appraisals through time brings this claim forward. Or, using Hans Gadamer’s terminology, continuity and change are unveiled when past and present *horizons* fuse.

A fusion of horizons is a process in which multiple temporal perspectives, arising from either different or similar traditions, are placed in dialogue with one another in order to foster a shared understanding. Though Gadamer’s approach may often be applied to the study of texts and worldviews, we argue that it can also be transferred to the study of emotional appraisals in International Relations (IR). By emotional appraisals we mean the expressions by which certain communities are united, such as love of freedom or anger towards another (Koschut, 2014). Hence, this chapter speaks to Koschut’s (2014) and Hochschild’s concepts of ‘emotion norms’ and ‘emotional communities’ whereby communities are governed by a social structure of ‘appropriate feelings’ so as to create ‘feeling rules’ (Hochschild 1979, 552). Feeling rules or emotional appraisals mark the boundaries by which one can feel adequate to express guilt, joy, or anger with regards to a certain situation (Hoschild 1979, 552).

For all the promise that may come from fusing different horizons of experience, there has been a reluctance to connect or fuse emotional appraisals across time, perhaps because of the assumption that emotions are inherently ephemeral (Crawford, 2000, p. 118). This chapter argues otherwise. Instead of taking emotions to be isolated experiences, we explore the extent to which they are intertwined across time, whereby time is a productive condition that enables understanding (Gadamer, [1960]1989, p. 297). Understanding is thus ‘to be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated’ (Gadamer, [1960]1989, p. 291). We suggest that by taking experience to be an evolving tradition, it is possible to unravel the complex relationships existing between emotional appraisals across time and the extent to which those experiences have changed or continued. An appreciation of time can thus open the methodological compass of the study of emotions. In order to apply Gadamer’s fusion of horizons to the study of emotional appraisals, we turn to Stanley Fish’s (1970) affective stylistics, a method which is concerned with texts and which takes the reader as an ‘actively mediating presence.’ We thus approach emotions from an interpretative or hermeneutical approach, focusing especially on language. To do so, the first section examines key challenges to the study of emotions, which we take to be the debate between the ‘representational’ and ‘non-representational’ bases of experience. The second section clarifies the ontological and epistemological foundations of our approach, laying the groundwork from which to build our methodology. Afterwards, we explore Gadamer’s fusion of horizons and Fish’s affective stylistics. Finally, we illustrate our methodological framework by examining G.W. Bush’s two key speeches in 2001 and 2002.

1. **The methodological challenge of the emotional turn: between non-representation and representation**

Emotions are part of who we are and what we do every day; we have all experienced emotions in some form or another (Zalewski, 2013, p. 133). As Crawford (2013, p. 121) suggests, they are ‘everywhere.’ A significant number of scholars now recognise that emotions are part of the logics of war, peace and conflict and that they should be explored thoroughly. Although mainstream IR theories have turned a blind-eye to the role of emotions in world politics (Reus-Smit, 2014, p. 568), often as a result of rationalist prejudices (L. Åhäll & Gregory, 2015a), an ‘emotional turn’ is now well under way. It has generated a wealth of publications concerned with war and politics (L. Åhäll & Gregory, 2015b), humiliation and political violence (Fattah & Fierke, 2009; Saurette, 2006), non-recognition and radicalisation dynamics (Clément, 2014), trust, empathy and the transformation of conflict (Head, 2012, 2016), trauma and affective communities (Hutchison, 2016), “mixed” emotions (Ross, 2014), cultural politics (Ahmed, 2014), securitisation theory (Van Rythoven, 2015), and the security dilemma (Booth & Wheeler, 2007). Now that the role of emotions has gained a certain momentum in IR, turning to the question of how to study them is the next logical step.

Different contributions to IR and politics have looked at emotions in manifold perspectives. But, in doing so, they may sometimes neglect the ontological complexity of experience, suggesting - sometimes inadvertently - that only one aspect of emotion matters. Janice Bially Mattern (2011, pp. 66-67) alludes well to this problem:

The field has solved the ‘problem’ of the elusive ontology of emotion by focusing instead on epistemology; *on the site or force through* which the emotional experience becomes known to those in its throes, and to researchers. The result is a literature organized around three broad analytics: those that emphasize the cognitive or affective dimensions; and those that emphasize the forces of the socio-cultural environment in which the emotional body is situated; and those that emphasize the forces of the socio-cultural environment in which the emotional body is situated.’

Any study of emotions is confronted by differences between what emotions are and how they ought to be researched. In this regard, emotions are often taken to be a specific type of experience: ‘emotions are first of all subjective experiences that also have physiological, intersubjective, and cultural components’ (Crawford 2000, 125). Emotions are thus beset by a complex ontology to the extent that scholars do not always agree on how to approach them. There are those who take a more somatic understanding of emotions, seeing them as instinctive or unconscious, and those who emphasize a more cognitive perspective, likening them to subjective and intentional experiences (L. A. Åhäll & Gregory, 2013, p. 118). This divide can also be labelled as the representational versus non-representational debate. Either emotions require cognition, that is to say, some sort of reflected representation; or they are somehow non-representational, as if unconscious, unable to be fully categorized by way of language as events happen in real time (Prinz, 2007). At any rate, the debate between a representational and a non-representational understanding belongs to a much larger conversation about the study of movement and action more broadly. Scholars sympathetic to the practice turn in IR argue, for example, that social science has too often emphasized cognition and representation: ‘conscious representations are emphasized to the detriment of background knowledge—the inarticulate know-how from which reflexive and intentional deliberation becomes possible’ (Pouliot, 2008, p. 258). Potential incompatibilities notwithstanding, it is worth gauging some of these differences.

Insights from non-representational theory inform us that ‘human life is based on and in movement’ (Thrift, 2008, p. 5). Indeed, one of the main claims of a non-representational ontology, as conveyed by Nigel Thrift (2008, p. 176), is that ‘emotions form a rich moral array through which and with which the world is thought and which can sense different things even though they cannot always be named.’ Likewise, Andrew Ross (2014, p. 2) argues that ‘standard emotional categories – such as hatred, anger, fear, joy, and empathy – are of limited usefulness when studying real-world social environments.’ Textual and symbolic approaches downplay the visceral dimension of emotional experience and, according to Ty Solomon (2015, pp. 56-57), discourse-based approaches lead inevitably to a ‘neglect of the body’ and are for that reason remarkably *dis*embodied.

While the non-representationality of affect suggests that discursive representations do not fully account for bodily experience, we argue that emotions are nevertheless shaped by both representational and non-representational features. Further, although the differences between representational and non-representational experiences are important to detect, they are in no way incompatible. Jesse Prinz (2007, p. 65) appeals instead for what he calls ‘embodied appraisal,’ arguing that ‘emotions are embodied, because they are somatic signals.’ And yet, for Prinz (2007, 65), ‘emotions are also appraisals, insofar as they represent concerns, as standard cognitive theories maintain.’ One particular way to break away from the divide between the somatic and the cognitive, a divide that unhelpfully reifies the Cartesian split between mind and body, is to look at the collective and intersubjective understanding of emotions. A constructivist outlook argues that while emotions can be felt subjectively, the *expression* of emotions is in relation to others, in a language that others understand (Fattah and Fierke 2009, 70). In this neo-Wittgensteinian view, emotions do not stand alone, but rather depend on a shared understanding of the meaning of objects and practices (Fattah and Fierke 2009, 70). This implies that appropriate expressions of emotions ‘are shaped as much by context and socialisation as neurology’ (Fierke 2015, 43). The dependence on customs and past interactions highlights the social foundations of emotions or a ‘social emotionology.’ Drawing from Stearns and Stearns, Fierke (2015, 46) argues that ‘through the process of socialisation, the emotionology of a culture influences how the individual experiences emotions.’ In other words, ‘emotionology’ allows us to look at norms and how actors are emotionally invested toward them, experiences which are represented (though not exclusively) by language. As shown below, it is precisely that element of representation which permit us to look at emotional appraisals through time and to turn to Gadamer’s approach. Although emotions spring from a somatic, almost non-representational experience, they can still be studied with recourse to language.

1. **From ontology to methodology: Appraisals and emotional temporality**

Emotional appraisals are ‘essential to an emotion’s identity’ (Prinz 2007, 51). Because we judge certain objects, however unconsciously, we can discuss and label, the feelings and the reactions of others to particular ideas, events, objects, and so on. Put differently, the fact that emotions can be identified allows us to understand methodologically *what* changed and continued through time. Appraisals, which rely in part on a cognitive experience, are but one part of emotional experience. By appraisal, we follow Jessie Prinz’s (2007, 51) definition:

A representation of an organism/environment relation that bears on well-being. Call such a relation a ‘concern.’ Anger, for instance, involves an appraisal of threat or offense. Fear involves an appraisal of danger. Sadness involves an appraisal of loss. Offenses, dangers, and losses are all matters of concern.

Hence, we agree with Simon Koschut (2014, 545) that emotions can be regarded as ‘moral judgments that reflect an intellectual appraisal of present expectations and past experience,’ although we maintain that this is but one side of the whole spectrum of emotional experience. The focus on emotional appraisals has the benefit of bringing to the fore the emotional ‘norms communicated through language,’ such as the objects, symbols and political positions one hates or loves through time (Koschut 2014, 544). And yet, given the limits of language, a pluralist understanding of emotional experience is essential. It is for that reason that some scholars refer to an entire *array* of emotional experiences in the course of studying particular events. For instance, when approaching violence, war and trauma, Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison (2015, 515) speak of a ‘whole spectrum of emotions – not only anger and fear for instance, but also empathy compassion and wonder.’ The first step toward studying emotions through time is thus to admit that those experiences are inherently complex and never entirely represented by one single category. Bearing that caveat in mind, there is then the issue of connecting those appraisals through time.

*Emotions as temporal experiences: fusing horizons*

We turn hereby to the hermeneutic philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer to conceptualise how emotions, as experiences, flow and are entangled through time. While this may seem intuitive, emotions can sometimes be regarded as fleeting and ephemeral experiences, something that appears just as quickly as it disappears (Crawford 2015, xii). Though this is not necessarily the predominant view of emotions, not least because several scholars underscore the lasting effects of humiliation and traumatic experience (Hutchison 2016; Fattah and Fierke 2009; Saurette 2006), our approach highlights precisely the strong relationship between continuity and change in the sense that emotional appraisals are far from being isolated experiences in time. Indeed, they have temporal effects that last beyond their initial manifestation and articulation. To understand how emotional appraisals are connected, it is best to visit Gadamer’s notion of evolving tradition. Taking experience to be a tradition that is changing through time is, for Gadamer, the first step towards accounting for and raising awareness of how the past and present are intricately connected. It makes little sense to interpret human experiences, even more so events, if the past is ignored.

The past is made present because we are all conditioned by a horizon. The past influences us not so much because one is consciously aware of continuity, that is of the extent to which our previous choices conditioned our future, but because we make use of historical symbols and language to make sense of the present (Gadamer 1972, 237-8). According to Gadamer ([1960]1989, 301), individuals are often in a situation that is structured by a horizon: ‘we define the concept of ‘situation’ by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of ‘situation’ is the concept of “horizon.”’ Thus, to avoid the restrictions that our own horizons place upon us, Gadamer ([1960] 1989, 367) argues for their fusion across distinct moments in time, a fusion that allows us to ‘regain the concepts of a past in such a way that they also include our own comprehension of them.’

Gadamer’s concept of a fusion of horizons – and in our case of emotional appraisals – dispels the assumption that emotions are experiences that seem to appear only in isolated moments in time. Experience is still interpreted in light of past concepts, appraisals and symbols. No new language or mode of expression is suddenly brought to the fore; rather the event is likely to be interpreted with recourse to several concepts rooted in the past. That said, appealing for an awareness of ‘tradition’ is not to suggest that change is impossible, nor to claim that all understanding must necessarily be conservative or otherwise incapable of sensing change. Rather what Gadamer means by tradition is the historical ‘situatedness’ of experience. In the course of understanding, the interpreter is limited by his or her prejudices and fore-meanings ([1960]1989, 276-280) but, as Hoy (2012,109) suggests ‘what counts [for Gadamer] as the tradition is always revisable. Tradition therefore is not necessarily reactionary, but it can be radicalized as well.’

The limits of a horizon and the nature of tradition suggest that emotional appraisals need to be contextualised in light of their past. And yet, Gadamer’s perspective has consequences not only for how we interpret the emotional appraisals of others but also for how we position ourselves as interpreters; for ‘a person who is trying to understand is exposed to distraction from fore-meanings that are not borne out by the things themselves’ (Gadamer [1960] 1989, 280). As we come to terms with the experiences of others, we too - however indirectly - are projecting our own ‘fore’-meanings upon their experiences. The historical ‘situatedness’ of all experience implies that no single event is likely to be interpreted in like manner, but it is not an appeal to relativism. As already noted, all interpretations are conditioned by a set of historical concepts, words, symbols and habits that are more or less transferable among speakers or else no communication would be possible. Whether a group of interpreters may or may not empathise with a leader’s speech, such as G.W Bush’s declarations before and after 9/11, one is nevertheless subject to the constraints of language in the sense that all the interpreters will more or less agree on the meaning of the words, particular gestures and emotional appraisals. What may be subject to dispute, however, is precisely the element that is shaped by our ‘fore’-meanings, such as the emphasis that one gives to one particular appraisal or another, or the extent to which one considers this or that expression to be sincere, over-stated or insignificant. In any case, accounting for those ‘fore’-meanings remains an important task, for it contextualises the role of the past in our own personal interpretations and just how much they are the product of a historical context.

All in all, analysing emotional appraisals requires a fusion of horizons. A fusion of horizons allows researchers to go beyond their own horizon, by creating an alternative one. This new horizon is not new in the sense of escaping previous horizons, but novel in proposing a new understanding of those emotional appraisals. One cannot totally escape previous horizons, since those horizons partly constitute the new horizon. Therefore, the task of fusing horizons needs to be developed reflexively, since the past influences not only the subjects of one’s inquiry, but also ourselves as interpreters. We turn therefore to Stanley Fish’s affective stylistics, a method that does justice to Gadamer’s fusion of horizons.

1. **Applying Stanley Fish’s affective stylistics to emotional experiences through time**

Though less concerned with ontology, Fish’s approach is by and large compatible with the broader temporal claims invoked by Gadamer. It offers a way of locating and juxtaposing distinct emotional appraisals across time. Contrary to approaches to art criticism which analyse texts without considering their effects on experience, Fish’s method underscores the need to imagine an ‘idealized reader’ who constructs and understands the flow of continuous, as well as changing, experience (Fish 1970, 45). An idealized reader has the semantic competence to make sense of the words spoken. When reading a sentence, an idealized reader draws on his internalised repertoire of words and thus on his particular horizon and ‘fore-meanings.’ Because of the historical situatedness of experience, an idealized reader is never an objective observer standing outside of the world and the emotional appraisals he/she interprets. Yet, an idealized reader does neither interpret emotional appraisals from a purely subjective standpoint whereby his interpretation only belongs to and is understood by him. As Gadamer (2012, p. 109) points out, ‘the fact that one can never depart too far form linguistic conventions is clearly basic to the life of language: he who speaks a private language understood by no one else, does not speak at all.’ Therefore, the idealized reader is he/she who has the semantic capability to understand the meaning of the sentence and who is also reflexive of his own fore-meanings when interpreting the sentence.

To this end, Fish (1970, 125) begins by noting the advantages of his method with recourse to a verse from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*:

Nor did they not perceive the evil plight.

Fish appeals to the experience of the reader by exploring the effects of the sentence on the reader, rather than merely asking what the sentence means: “And what the sentence does is give the reader something and then take it away, drawing him on the with the unredeemed promise of its return” (1970, 125).[[1]](#footnote-1) Put differently, if we are to look solely at the meaning of the sentence, the rules of English grammar offer little room for doubt: the double negative - the ‘nor’ and the ‘not’ - cancel each other out, and so the statement can easily be rejigged to ‘they did perceive the evil plight.’ The meaning is thus quickly conveyed, even if this reductive approach is scarcely appropriate. Further, proceeding in this way ignores the underlying temporal experience of reading:

But however satisfactory this may be in terms of the internal logical of grammatical utterances (And even in those terms there are problems), it has nothing to do with the logic of the reading experience, or, I would insist, with its meaning. That experience is a temporal one, and in the course of it the two negatives combine not to produce an affirmative, but to prevent the reader from making the simple (declarative) sense which would be the goal of a logical analysis. To clean the line up is to take from it its more prominent and important effect – the suspension of the reader between the alternatives its syntax momentarily offers (Fish 1970, 126).

In order to capture the experience by which the statement is characterised, one needs to ask what is actually being done and, more important, look at how an emotional appraisal - followed by all subsequent appraisals – flows through time: ‘essentially what the method does is slow down the reading experience so that “events” one does not notice in normal time, but which do occur, are brought before our analytical attention’ (Fish 1970, 128). This technique imposes a ‘great burden on the analyst, who in his observation on any one moment in reading must take into account all that has happened’ (Fish 1970, 27).

Fish’s method suggests that statements need to be read slowly and chronologically in order to detect the relationships between experiences and expectations. A statement in the past, like when reading the first page of a book, may indicate some sort of emotional appraisal, one which will have to be related to a later section of that book. In short, all these experiences need to be organised chronologically, related to each other, and read not only for their meaning but also for the emotions to which they are giving rise. As noted by Fish, the statement ‘Nor did they not perceive the evil plight’ has not only a direct meaning, easily decipherable by the rules of grammar, but also an emotional dimension that appeals to the reader, reflecting the narrator’s attempt to suspend and highlight the problem of evil.

Table 1 summarises the main tenets of Fish’s affectively stylistics and the extent to which it is compatible with Gadamer’s fusion of Horizons. We use it, however, as a means by which to interpret emotional appraisals across time.

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| **Table 1: Applying Affective Stylistics to the Study of Emotional Appraisals** | |
| **Steps in order** | **Task** |
| 1. Chronology | Organise texts chronologically, starting from the oldest to the newest |
| 1. Slow reading | Slow reading in order to detect emotional appraisals that are articulated by specific symbols, such as slogans, ideas and words |
| 1. Unravel the pluralist understanding of an emotional appraisal | Avoid as much as possible to reduce the emotional appraisal to one single category, such as love or hate, but detect, with recourse to the surrounding context, whether other emotions are implied, such as, hope, despair, and so on. |
| 1. Fuse emotional norm appraisals | * Relate emotional appraisals about the same object to each other, detecting whether changes about those judgements occurred or whether they continued through time * In case of change, infer how the emotional appraisal of the past related to the more recent appraisal, and thus which emotions and events may have partially constituted the more recent evaluation. For example: hope in the past may open up disappointment by virtue of how new events shatter past expectations. |

Building on Fish, the first task is to place the emotional appraisals in chronological order. It is then important to read the text slowly in order to look for symbols - which can be ideas, words or slogans - and the extent to which people are ‘emotionally attached to them’ (Koschut 2014, 589). For instance, a statement such as ‘I love America’ reflects an emotional judgement about a specific object, in this case America. Instead of simply ‘translating’ the meaning of texts, it is necessary, according to Fish (1970, 149) to see that ‘in any linguistic experience we are internalising attitudes and emotions.’ These emotions can be located within particular norms. In the case of ‘I love America’, love may represent an appraisal about an adherence to the nation-state or a deep affection for an imagined community. By slowing down the process of reading, we also decelerate the speed of contagion by reflecting on the emotions generated by the speeches. Lastly, it is important to fuse those distinct emotional appraisals, detecting whether they changed or continued, including how events and past evaluations constituted the new emotional appraisal. We illustrate this method in the next section.

1. **Case-study**

We look mainly at two speeches preceding and following the Al Qaida attacks of 11 September 2001, otherwise known as ‘9/11’. We choose 9/11 as it has often been represented as a temporal rupture that radically changed the architecture of world politics (Kennedy-Pipe and Rengger 2006, 540). Some in fact maintain that there was an ‘American experience before 9/11,’ and a different one after 9/11 (Rogers 2012). Others suggested that, although most individuals returned to approximate normalcy in the few months following the attacks, it was nevertheless a distinct kind of normalcy (Gaddis 2004, 4-5). If these claims are to be confirmed, we should be able to notice a radical change in the emotional norms evoked by G.W. Bush after September 2001. That said, statements made by G.W. Bush (29/01/2002) often seem to confirm the notion that a radical rupture did take place. Shortly after the attacks, G.W. Bush declared that he was speaking outside of the ‘normal course of events,’ that the United States ‘*awakened* to danger’ (29/01/2002) and that thousands of lives *suddenly* ended’ (11/09/2001). Yet, some scholars now agree that the ‘shifts’ governing world politics after 9/11 were only *symptomatic* of existing tendencies, rather than *caused* by 9/11 (Kennedy-Pipe and Rengger 2006, 546). Further, Holland (2013, 93) rightly points out that the construction of ‘9/11’ as both a ‘crisis’ and a ‘somatic marker’ was the first step toward legitimising the War on Terror.

In any case, we are interested mostly in accounting for the view that American foreign policy changed substantially after 9/11. The United States was often perceived to be pursuing an isolationist policy under G.W Bush until 9/11, the latter of which ‘forced’ Washington to play a more prominent role in international politics. Indeed, before 9/11, G.W. Bush was criticised for his ‘go-it-alone’ style of defence (Plate 23/07/2001), moving America toward isolationism (Buzbee 28/08/2001). His ‘America first’ attitude apparently also led him to eschew international treaties like the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty or the Kyoto Protocol (Chung 22/01/2001). But if isolationism was in effect the sole course of American policy, the resurgence of interventionism would surely help reinforce the idea that 9/11 led not only to serious rupture in world politics, but also to a major change in United States’ foreign policy. We take issue with the latter point of view. By fusing horizons, and thus looking at G.W. Bush’s emotional appraisals through time, it is possible to find an underlying sense of continuity in the way the United States’ government was positioning itself in the international arena. The aims of compassionate protectionism and of hating and responding to tyranny were in fact invoked prior to 9/11 and these appraisals persisted thereafter.

1. Chronology:

In order to underscore continuity, we focus on the emotional appraisals invoked in two key speeches made by President G.W. Bush before and after 9/11. We selected his inauguration speech, delivered on 20 January 2001 as it provides an idea of how the Bush administration positioned itself as an actor in the international system. The second speech is the State of the Union address of 29 January 2002, approximately four months after 9/11. By following our method, we organise and analyse the speeches chronologically, not only to study how they are connected but also to understand how prior emotional appraisals constituted subsequent events. This approach allows us to seize the role of emotions in constructing new security narratives as well as grasp their evolution *in* and *across* time. Moreover, by emphasising active reading, Fish’s method forces us to reflect on how emotional symbols or slogans affect ‘us.’ In other words, affective cues have effects that can prepare the audience to be receptive to certain messages in the future.

1. Slow reading

After organising the speeches chronologically, we discern the emotional appraisals of 2001 and of 2002 by slowing down our reading. This activity is meant to increase the conscious and cognitive part of interpretation. This ‘strategy of decertainizing’ or ‘disorientation’ is however progressive: the reader first commits him or herself (the first time less than consciously) to the assertion of the sentence. Afterwards, he or she has to undergo a change which makes the text less uncertain, as one goes back and forth between words (Fish 1970, 124-5). At the beginning of each sentence, the idealized reader formulates expectations about how the sentence will end. These expectations do not emerge ‘naturally’ or out of the text itself, but reflect the fore-meanings of the idealized reader, which are situated within a particular time and space. This calls to the reflexivity of the interpreter in the activity of ‘slow reading,’ by recognising that expectations about the sentence are not objective but derive from the previous knowledges shared by interpreter and his or her community. Not every interpreter’s expectations will therefore be the same, for we are limited, to some extent, by our own horizon. Hence, when using the possessive pronoun ‘we’ in the analysis below, we are aware that ‘we’ represents the researcher’s epistemological tradition. Yet again, this interpretation is not completely subjective, since it rests on language and language is not a private practice. The conclusions drawn in this analysis are thus bound to a ‘cultural emotionology,’ in other words, bound to a particular social community sharing several epistemological, if not linguistic, conventions.

To take an example from G.W. Bush’s 2001 speech:

All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you.

Here, we commit ourselves to reading the first part of the sentence. We are thus prepared for several constructions:

All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know, that *you* *should* (express dissent) All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know, that *you are* (friends of America). All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know, that *you will* (be free).

Upon stating the first part of the sentence, the symbols ‘tyranny’ and ‘hopelessness’ provoke a sense of discomfort and empathy towards ‘all who live’ under such conditions. The following words ‘the United States will not’ tell us that our expectations were misconceived, thereby reducing our certainty. Moreover, the subject has changed from ‘all who live’ to ‘the United States.’ It is not ‘all who live’ who will change their own conditions of living, but the United States, which has now acquired a paramount role in the transformation of ‘all who live.’ We go forward in the hope that we will find an explanation for our misapprehension: ‘the United States will not ignore your oppression,’ relieving the early experience of discomfort caused by the symbols of ‘tyranny’ and ‘hopelessness’. ‘All who live’ are now being heard and their conditions will change by virtue of United States’ compassion. We are now not only open to the idea that the United States should help ‘all who live under tyranny and hopelessness’, but we demand that this be done. Yet, upon reading the next sentence: ‘When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you,’ we are again disorientated. The compassion of the United States comes with a condition; ‘when’ here stands as a proviso upon which the suffering of ‘all who live’ will be alleviated.

We proceed in this manner chronologically wherever emotional appraisals are found, precisely to detect how the speaker is positioning him or herself as time passes. We can therefore proceed to another statement from G.W. Bush’s 2002 speech:

The last time we met in this chamber, the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school. Today women are free, and are part of Afghanistan’s new government.

We read this sentence by noting that G.W. Bush is now speaking after 9/11. In this light, we are inclined to make several inferences:

The last time we met in this chamber, *we were* (in a state of shock). The last time we met in this chamber, *we awakened* (to danger). The last time we met in this chamber, *we were* *attacked* (on 9/11).

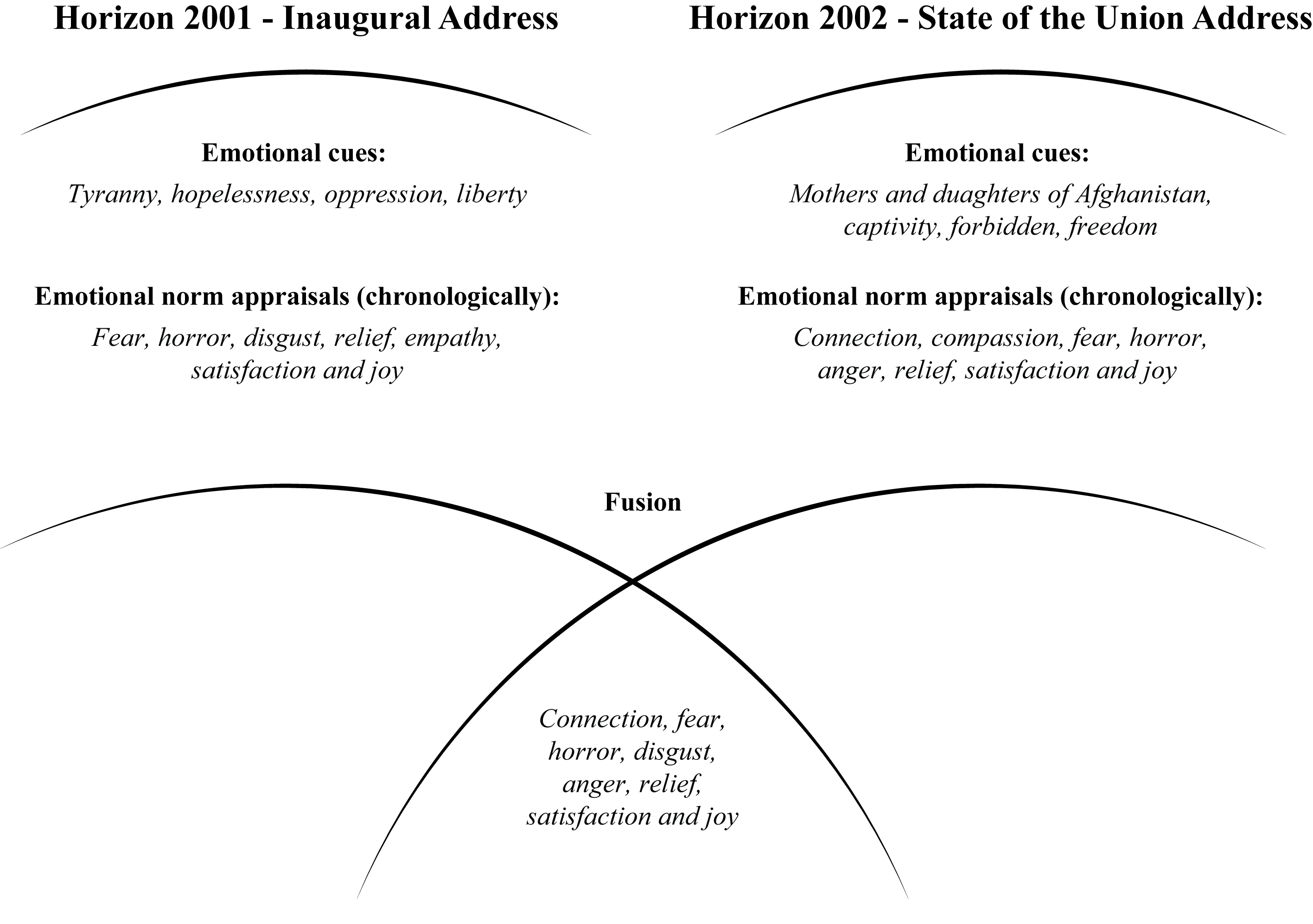
The next five words ‘the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan’ induce emotional uncertainty, pleading for a resolution. We are now actively looking for an explanation, rather than merely ‘following an argument along a well lighted path’ (Fish 1970, 124). Again, the subject changes from ‘we’ to ‘the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan,’ thereby connecting ‘our’ conditions to the ‘mothers and daughters of Afghanistan’. More precisely, American lives, which have been shattered by the attacks, share a similar experience to the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan, a gendered experience of life that is threatened. By contrast, American lives are separated from Afghan men. As such, we are feeling empathy and compassion toward ‘American lives’ and the ‘mothers and daughters of Afghanistan,’ but not toward Afghan men.

We proceed to the next statement that they ‘were captive in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school.’ We are compelled to feel disgust and horror at the sight of mothers and daughters being captive. Here, ‘Afghan mothers and daughters’ do not share the same experience as American mothers and daughters, for American women are free to go to school and work. While directing the reader towards disgust and horror, ‘we’ also feel a sense of relief since the ‘we’ of America is better off than ‘Afghan mothers and daughters.’ The connection between Afghan mothers and daughters and American lives becomes clearer: American lives can provide solace to Afghan women and daughters, an appraisal of reassurance which is satisfied by the next sentence: ‘Today women are free, and are part of Afghanistan’s new government.’

1. Unravelling the pluralist understanding of emotional appraisals

On the whole, the utterances examined in 2001 and in 2002 generate the following emotional appraisals in chronological order: compassion, then empathy, then fear, then despair disgust, then horror and finally relief. On top of that, what is important to detect is not merely a single category, like ‘love,’ ‘hate,’ or ‘anger’, but words that have emotional resonance within a cultural emotionology. In that sense, emotion norms are ‘moral judgements of appropriate behaviour’ (Koschut, 2014, p. 534). Although the word ‘free’ may not be classified as an emotion, the concept of ‘freedom’ has emotional resonance in the ‘West’ that helps constitute it as an emotion norm. Although G.W Bush clearly referred to the emotional symbols of ‘hopelessness’, the two speeches were loaded with other moral judgements about American lives as well as the lives of Afghan daughters and mothers. In this sense, ideas of ‘liberty’ stand hand in hand with emotions of joy, contentedness and satisfaction. By contrast, ‘tyranny’ and hopelessness’ provoke horror, fear and empathy insofar as they are attached to collective norms about what life is and ought to be. To that effect, feelings of compassion and empathy toward Afghan daughters and mothers are vested in an imaginary encounter with American lives, both of which have witnessed the destruction caused by Afghan men. In that respect, Americans share a common experience with people who are oppressed, in this case Afghan mothers and daughters. More importantly, emotions of profound dislike for tyranny, expressed in 2001 before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, were well echoed in 2002. A fusion of horizons allows us to unravel these connections.

1. Fusing emotional norm appraisals



Fusing emotional appraisals helps us capture the sense of change as well as continuity at two different moments in time. It contextualises the underlying tradition by which events are interpreted., On the one hand, the case-study highlights that feelings of disgust, horror and anger were invoked toward authoritarian countries in 2001, appropriated in 2002, and later directed toward the Afghan government and Afghan men more generally. 9/11 was a novel event, but the appraisal against tyranny was not. On the other hand, empathy and compassion were all expressed in favour of oppressed peoples in 2001, which were then embodied by Afghan mothers and daughters in 2002. Thus, in 2001 *and* in 2002, the United States continued to demonstrate its commitment to relieving oppressed peoples.

Contrary to the claim that 9/11 ‘changed everything,’ the fusion reveals continuity. The emotional norms espoused in 2001 not only informed but also set the scene for the unique role of the United States in the post-9/11 world. Moreover, by looking at the relations between utterances through time, one is able to see how the emotions are in fact interconnected. For instance, one would not be able to experience relief upon hearing ‘today women are free’ if the sense of shock, horror and disgust had not been evoked prior to that statement. Likewise, it would be difficult for the listener to experience compassion at the conditions of ‘Afghan mothers and daughters’ if he or she had had not been compelled to feel empathy for ‘all who live under tyranny and hopelessness.’ In short, a fusion of horizons allows us to connect moments that are temporally spread far apart as well as locate the intricate connections between appraisals as they are happening in time. All in all, the tradition of emotional appraisals put forth before 9/11 was also manifested after the attack. Even if the direction of those appraisals was narrowed down, in this case to Afghanistan, that change - though relevant - hardly implies a significant alteration. The key emotional appraisals of the Bush administration, focused primarily on seeking compassion for the oppressed, not only persisted thereafter but were reinforced by 9/11.

**Conclusion**

This chapter developed a hermeneutical approach to the study of emotions through the use of Gadamer’s fusion of horizons. Looking at the connections between emotional appraisals helps us dispel the idea that emotions are single time occurrences that bear no connections with the past. There is by contrast an underlying tradition that underpins the way in which actors act and react to particular events. Methodologically, an approach that fuses distinct horizons of experience enables to question the extent to which certain emotional appraisals are novel. We do not contend in this regard that 9/11 was a shocking experience for most if not all Americans. And yet, this tells us little about the meaning which it subsequently acquired and the effects it engendered thereafter. We showed that all the emotions of compassion, empathy, fear and hate that sprung from 9/11 were not isolated incidents. Rather, past emotional appraisals persisted while others helped constitute the experiences after 9/11. The chronological setting and our ability to detect those intertwined experiences are thus crucial, and a fusion of horizons allows precisely to account for those connections.

Apart from these advantages, however, our approach is limited to one facet of emotional experience. Indeed, it concentrates mainly on the representational - in particular the appraisal - dimension of emotions. It does not, therefore, do justice to the whole array of emotional experience, such as bodily reactions, movements or unconscious reflections. One could, of course, argue that these parts of experience are also temporally constituted, but our method is derived from an epistemology that was directed toward the study of language and the effects thereof. Gadamer’s approach has been applied mainly to historical texts and Fish’s affective stylistics to the study of literature. In any case, we find that their approaches are not limited to the study of history, nor to the aesthetic domain. Instead, we agree with Bleiker and Hutchison (2008, 130) that we should complement existing social sciences methods with other ‘modes of inquiry stemming from the humanities.’ On top of that, there may be some skepticism toward the position of the ‘idealized reader’ and the limits imposed by our own horizons. However, their fusion is precisely meant to foster new understandings by placing horizons in dialogue with one another. The ‘new’ horizon is not new in terms of removing the researcher’s fore-meanings, but is new in the sense of generating an approach that is influenced by two horizons. Further, making reflexivity integral to this methodological approach allows researchers to become aware of their own assumptions. In so doing, it encourages us to question our own emotional experiences, but also opens the possibility for creativity, as we become aware of how our own horizons and those of others prompt a new understanding of experience.

Overall, this chapter puts forth a methodology for the study emotions in world politics. By adopting a temporal lens, we hope that it also contributes to wider debates in IR about the influence and problem of time (Hom 2010, 2016; Hutchings 2008; Jarvis 2008; Solomon 2014). Further studies of emotions and time could thus benefit from connecting our emotional appraisals not only to political and ethical norms, such as notions of appropriate behavior, but also to underlying ideas about the way in which time is constituted. We find much promise within these approaches, not least because it would help link promising and ongoing areas of inquiry in IR. It is safe to say that the complex relations between time, experience and emotion are now being taken seriously within the domain of politics, and our chapter takes, we hope, one small step in that direction.

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1. One could argue that the distinction drawn by Stanley Fish between ‘what a sentence means’ and what a ‘sentence does’ resonates with part of John Austin’s speech act theory. Austin distinguishes between the locution, the act *of* saying something, the illocution, the act *in* saying something and the perlocutionary effect, the consequential effects of the word on the hearer, where the success of the first two make a sound utterance, conform to a specific grammar, whilst the last provokes effects on the hearer or reader. In *How to do things with words*, Austin argues that words are performative through these three acts. In effect, for Austin (2008, p. 130) ‘to say something *is* to do something, or *in* saying something we do something, and even *by* saying something we do something.’ Hence, to substitute the question ‘what does this sentence mean?’ with ‘what does this sentence do?’ as Fish suggests, emphaises the effects of the text on the audience and thus the perlocutionary effect of speech. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)