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Emotion Refinement

A Theory Inspired by Chinese Poetics

Nico H. Frijda¹ and Louise Sundararajan²

¹Amsterdam University and ²Rochester Regional Forensic Unit

ABSTRACT—William James made a distinction between coarse and noncoarse emotions. In the present article, we explore the nature of such noncoarse emotions, which we designate as emotions with refinement. We take our cue from the treatment of refined emotions in Chinese poetics and philosophy. The theory and description of savoring (in Chinese, p'in-wei) points to several features of emotion experiences and behavior that are usually absent in direct emotional responses to emotional events, such as self-reflexivity and higher level second-order awareness, detachment, and restraint. Emotions with those features can be found outside savoring and aesthetic contexts, for instance while dealing with actual life events. It appears both feasible and illuminating to analyze such emotion experiences and behavior in terms of current emotion theory, notably by means of the constructs of appraisal and action readiness. Emotions with refinement thus fit general emotion theory while also possessing distinctive character within the motion domain. Our analysis has implications for the structure of emotion experience and the study of consciousness.

In his famous paper “What is an emotion?” (James, 1884), James contrasted “coarse emotions” with other emotions such as those that might be evoked in response to art. He proposed that felt emotions consist of felt feedback from emotional responses. This theory, he wrote, applies mainly to coarse emotions. Coarse emotions are characterized by distinct bodily upset, overt behavior manifestations with brisk time courses, and relatively simple event–emotion relationships. They are more or less paradigmatic and are the main subject of psychological studies of emotion (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Oatley, 1992). They are best illustrated by an emotion-arousing event like meeting a bear in the woods.

Coarse emotions differ from emotions that are more felt than acted upon and thus do not obviously manifest themselves in

overt behaviors like attack, embrace, or flight; may not show very pronounced physiological upset; are often about complex events or subtle event aspects; and are not easily done justice by common emotion labels. We will refer to noncoarse emotions collectively as *emotions with refinement*, or *refined emotions* for short. We hold that they do not form a subset of emotions. It is not that anger would be considered as a coarse emotion and that love would be considered as a refined emotion. Rather, refinement represents a mode of perhaps all emotions that language or emotion taxonomy could distinguish. There exist refined anger, love, and sexual ecstasy, as well as coarse, straightforward anger, love, and sexual ecstasy. We think it worthwhile to examine emotion refinement to benefit emotion theory by shedding some light on the relationship between refined and coarse emotions, on emotions that are not done justice by simple emotion labels, and on emotions aroused by perceiving objects of art, often called aesthetic emotions, which pose unresolved problems for theories of emotion.

Our analysis will show how *refined* is an appropriate designation for emotions that show few outward signs but still involve strong feelings and that share the following features: They occur under attitudes of detachment and restraint, their experience involves reflexive second-order awareness, they result from and contain extensive elaboration of appraisal of the eliciting events that may invest the events with meanings far beyond their immediately given aspects, and they include virtual states of action readiness rather than states that are manifest in overt acts or suppressed action impulses.

This article is inspired by the elaborate discussion of emotion refinement in Confucian philosophy and Chinese poetics. Emotions depicted in poetry, experienced or imagined by its poets, and evoked in the readers of such poetry allow us to infer underlying principles that also exist outside aesthetic contexts. We will examine the structure of the emotions that embody those principles and look at their relationship to emotions as discussed in current psychological theories of emotion.

THE CONFUCIAN NOTION OF HARMONY

The notion of refinement has a long history in China. To this day, it is axiomatic that even “basic emotions” (joy, anger, sadness,

Address correspondence to Nico H. Frijda, Seranggracht 1, 1019PM, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; e-mail: n.h.frijda@uva.nl.

and happiness) can benefit from refinement (Yan, 2000). The principle that governs the Chinese notion of refinement is harmony.

Appreciation of harmony is the outcome of a holistic perception that leads to an overall sense of things rather than to the appreciation of any particular thing (Lu, 2004). The overall sense of things is an abstraction over multiple aspects of information. Harmony results when such abstraction provides a successful integration that has proceeded without effort. Harmony has several attributes.

Harmony Reflects Dynamic Equilibrium

The Chinese term for harmony (*he* or *ho*) is derived from terms for musical instruments and the cooking cauldron. “The notion of harmony is intimately connected with the beauty of music and flavors” (Lu, 2004, p. 218). Indeed, flavors are seamless blends of different sensory impressions, such as taste and smell and the touch on the tongue (Rozin & Cohen, 2003). A classical definition of harmony was given by the book *Chung Yung* (attributed to Tzu-ssu, 492–431 BCE): “While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of *equilibrium*. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of *harmony*” (Doctrine of the Mean, 1971, p. 384; emphasis in the original). The “due degree” comes from a paradoxical combination of perturbations and balance, which includes contradiction and its resolution. Together, these complementarities and constraints entertain the complex relationship known in Confucian philosophy as the golden mean. “To have the emotions welling up and yet in due proportion is also a state of the mean” (Fung, 1962, p. 107). Thus, contrary to its widespread misconception as status quo, harmony is a dynamic equilibrium of difference and diversity. “Exemplary persons seek harmony not sameness; petty persons, then, are the opposite.” said Confucius (Analects, 13/23, as quoted from Ames & Rosemont, 1998, p. 169).

The Golden Mean and the Principle of Complementarity

The golden mean implies the principle of complementarity, which is a balancing act between thesis and antithesis. “Harmony is like soup,” Zen Tsu (died 493 BCE) is quoted as saying in the *Tso Chuan*: “The salt flavoring is the other to the bitter, and the bitter is the other to the salt. With these two ‘others’ combining in due proportions and a new flavor emerging, this is what is expressed in ‘harmony’...” (Fung, 1962, p. 108). This principle of complementarity has a wide range of applications.

Mutual Inhibition and Constraint

Keeping things in due proportion requires inhibition and restraint. This principle of inhibition and restraint is considered essential to music. It is said in the *Book of Documents* (II, 1/5): “When the eight instruments are in good accord, and do not

encroach upon one another, then the spirits and man will be brought into harmony” (cited in Holzman, 1978, p. 23). Thus, the principle of the mean is sometimes expressed in negative terms. Confucius allegedly said of the first ode in the Book of Songs: “The Kwan Tsü is expressive of enjoyment without being licentious, and of grief without being hurtfully excessive” (Analects, 3/20, Legge, 1935/1971, p. 161).

The principle of harmony dominates the writing and appreciation of classical Chinese poetry. A negative example may help. Consider the following lines by Ch'in Kuan (1049–1100): “Unbearably, the lone inn is locked by spring chill;/ The setting sun, dusk amid the chirping of the cuckoo.” The modern critic Wang Kuo-wei (1877–1927) criticized these lines for being “[excessively] sad and even bitter” (K.-W. Wang, 1977, p. 19). In other words, this poem fell short of the Confucian ideal of expressing “grief without being hurtfully excessive.” Yeh explains: “images such as the ‘lone inn,’ ‘spring chill,’ and ‘cuckoo’ are already sad and melancholy. Ch'in Kuan added ‘lock’ to the lone inn and spring chill, and ‘dusk’ to the ‘setting sun,’ thereby exacerbating the original melancholy to the point that there is no relief as if there were no breathing space. . . . That's why it is considered bitter” (Yeh, 2000, p. 319).

Harmony as Phenomenon Over Time

The dynamic equilibrium among multiple constituents is an inherently temporal phenomenon. Multiplicity in harmony is diachronous as well as synchronous. Events occurring concurrently have to correspond in due degree, and this also holds for the events in sequence. Growth and decay of impulses, onset and release of restraints, and oscillation of balances between impulses and restraints may be out of proportion or of due proportion.

The temporal stance is also manifest in a concern for the future development of experiences, such as when one is always preparing for the next step or anticipating others’ responses. Thus, “Confucius instructs the filial son to endure only light physical punishment from an enraged father. To run away from a severe beating, the argument goes, is not only to protect the body which has been entrusted to him by his parents but also to respect the fatherliness in his father that may have been temporarily obscured by rage” (Tu, 1985, p. 239). From this perspective, emotions are phenomena in time that are always capable of further development and transformation.

SAVORING

Harmony is rooted in events that happen to be composed of multiple elements in due proportion. When grasped as such, it engenders peace of mind or behavioral relaxation. But it can also draw attention to itself and then induce explicit awareness of harmony. That, in turn, may incite activity to search and produce

harmony. The mental act or attitude of being sensitive to harmony and the activity to search for it is termed *savoring*.

Savoring and Self-Reflexivity

The Chinese notion of savoring (or, more properly, of *p'in wei*) is more elaborate and wider in scope than what is implied by its English counterpart. Savoring in its common parlance can be restricted to consumption or perception with prolonged attention. It is not a commonly occurring act. By contrast, *p'in wei*, in Chinese treatments, is a household term. The act or attitude goes beyond merely prolonging a particular pleasant experience. Chinese theories of savoring emphasize the self-reflexive awareness in which the intentional object of emotion is the experience rather than the experienced object. One does not primarily relish the smelling rose but instead the delightful smell. When dining, one does not just undergo the joyful harmony of that dinner but explicitly enjoys the joyfulness of the experienced harmony (Kubovy, 1999). On this account, a Western formulation of savoring also agrees (Bryant & Veroff, 2007) but does not go into details of how this works. For further information, we turn to Chinese sources.

The Chinese poet and critic Ssu-k'ung T'u (837–908), one of the earliest theorists of savoring, claimed that the aesthetic experience of poetry comes from “flavor beyond flavor” and “image beyond image.” “Flavor beyond flavor” expresses the idea of second-order awareness of a first-order sensory experience. Savoring is a self-initiated action of attending and absorbing. It is not reactive and cannot be imposed from without—the devil can be made to taste his own medicine, but not to savor it unless he himself wants to. This active aspect of savoring looms large in early textual references to flavor: “There is nobody but eats and drinks. But they are few who can distinguish flavors” (*Doctrine of the Mean*, 1971, p. 387). The term used in the text rendered here by “distinguish” is *zhi*, literally “cognize.” To be *zhi* or cognizant of flavors implies knowing that one knows the flavors. Articulate cognizance enables manipulating one's experience in ways characteristic of savoring by seeking and making fine discriminations.

The Process of Savoring

The concept of savoring is linked to a number of process terms, such as evaluation of flavor (*p'in wei*), cognizance of flavor (*zhi wei*), and retrospective savoring (*hui wei*). All these terms indicate specific modes of processing, which we will examine more closely later. In contrast, concepts that denote the content yielded by savoring are nonspecific and general. The most frequently used term to indicate that content is *meaning-flavor* (*yi wei*). For instance, “therein lies endless meaning-flavor” (Q.J. Wang, 2004, *Cai-gen Tan*, item 109) or “The word ‘endurance’ has a lot of meaning-flavor” (Q.J. Wang, 2004, *Cai-gen Tan*, item 142). The term *flavor* does not add specific content to the first term, *meaning*, but it refers to the phenomenology of the

experience or to felt meaningfulness. Like other feelings, it is best understood as an inkling that the perceived entity could be explicated when attention would drift towards doing that (Frijda, 2005, 2007). The inkling itself is global and holistic.

Savoring also entails mental and even motor action. One devotes attention to the flavors of the experience and is receptive for them but also explores and deepens them. Pleasant flavors induce what have been termed *acceptance wriggles* (Frijda, 2007): movements designed to enhance and prolong pleasurable sensations. One's tongue curls around the savors from the morsel in one's mouth, one's fingers follow the surface of the loved skin while one's eyes follow the loved body's contour. Taste and smell acceptance wriggles have their animal precursors in the orofacial patterns of hedonic response in rats and other animals, even when approach tendency is disabled and even in anencephalic infants, in which self-reflexivity is presumably lacking (Ber ridge, 2003).

Savoring takes time. One dwells on one's object of interest and the experiences it generates. Savoring involves a lingering that slows down or halts the pragmatic progress; when used in this context, the Chinese term *pai-huai* literally means “slowly pacing back and forth.” One nibbles, one takes small bites, one throws glances, turns away, throws new glances. Such lingering is not restricted to sensory impressions. One can dwell on an object's nonsensory properties or on the meaning of events such as the tenderness of winds or the vulnerability of a branch, an icicle, or a child. By lingering, thought produces *proto-narratives*, which are descriptions of seemingly uneventful events that are nonetheless gravid with meaning when the potential for savoring is let loose on them (Sundararajan, in-press b). Meanings can be pursued in thought so as to produce insights about life in general, such as a sense of the vulnerability of things and the transience of fortune, rather than merely producing associations to the perceived object. Chinese treatments of savoring are explicit about the moral implications of such prolonging of savoring.

Savoring as Explicit Appraisal

Savoring implies a shift from implicit to explicit appraisal. In implicit appraisal of harmony, one just becomes restful and inclined to remain in the current situation. In savoring harmony, however, one becomes aware of harmony itself. There occurs a transition from the hedonically based action of relishing to *p'in wei* or evaluation of flavor.

As a consequence of the shift from implicit appraisal to savoring, appraisal itself may be appraised. The various skills of discrimination can be rank ordered. Ssu-k'ung T'u made the following statements in a letter to a certain Mr. Li:

In my opinion we can adequately speak of poetry only in terms of making distinctions in flavors. In everything that suits the palate in the region south of Chiang-ling, if it is a pickled dish, then it is

indeed sour—but it is nothing more than sour. If it is a briny dish, then it is quite salty—but nothing more than salty. The reason people from the north, when eating such food, simply satisfy their hunger and then stop eating is that they recognize that it somehow falls short of perfect excellence and lacks something beyond the distinction between “the merely sour” and “the merely salty.”

(quoted by Owen, 1992, p. 351)

The ideal poet, according to Ssu-k'ung T'u, is one who is able to make subtle discriminations beyond the conventional ones (see Sundararajan, 1998, 2004). Attention to subtle variations has a long history in China. Producing harmony is said to be a “subtle” art. Attention to subtleties in experience was considered essential to aesthetics: “That which rouses the affections depends on something subtle for the sake of reflective consideration” (Liu Hsieh, ca. 465–522, cited in Owen, 1992, p. 256).

Conscious appraisal may extend to the context of the meaning of the event or experience for the individual, such as the satisfaction or frustration it may entail. This goes to the heart of experiencing pleasure in savoring: Momentary pleasure points beyond the event or experience itself to the enticement of its being prolonged. It may extend to the significance of savoring as such—as an undertaking that I, its subject and agent, approve of, and that enriches or enlarges me. It may extend indefinitely by the enjoyment of novel meanings and vistas that savoring opens up. How far that actually extends will depend on personal sets and ideology. In Chinese treatments of savoring, inspired by Confucian philosophy, any true savoring follows an effort after meaning.

Savoring Entails Temporal Modalities

Another consequence of appraisal becoming explicit is awareness of temporality. When the implicit knowledge of sequencing in cooking, for instance, reaches awareness, then temporality becomes an object of reflection. Temporal duration can supersede sensory pleasure as a basis for appraisal: “Rich food is sweet to the palate, but the pleasure is only momentary; while the cheer that comes from a simple and plain life gives us enjoyment to last long” (*Cai-gen Tan*; Isobe, 1926, p. 214). Or consider the evaluation of life styles: “After our passions have cooled down, if we look back on the time when our hearts burned with desires, we shall see how useless it was to run frantically after shadows. (*Cai-gen Tan*; Isobe, 1926, p. 207).

In the above quote, the temporal markers “after” and “look back” indicate an intimate relationship between temporality and the “flavor” of affective experience. “Subtle,” too, can imply a temporal aspect. It not only refers to nonobtrusive aspects of an event but also to the incipient phase of the development of any phenomenon, or what the Chinese call *chi* (or *ji*). *Chi* refers to subtle variations in the phenomena and, in its application in literary theory, to “the most subtle, incipient phase of a movement in a natural process; in this case it is best translated as

‘impulses’ or, in the perception of *chi*, ‘intimations’” (Owen, 1992, p. 584).

Awareness of temporality allows manipulation of time. There are two important temporal markers in savoring: “evaluation of (current) flavor” (*p'in wei* proper) and “savoring in retrospect” (*hui wei*). Evaluation of flavor entails slow, prolonged processing to better appreciate and discriminate the ongoing experience in its multifarious nuances. *Hui-wei* means literally retasting, which refers to “a recollection in the mind of a previously encountered flavor” (Eoyang, 1993, p. 230). *Hui-wei* is savoring that thrives on the poststimulus phase of the phenomenon (Sundararajan & Averill, 2007). Its emphasis falls on the experience’s aftertaste. As Owen (1992, pp. 593–594) points out, “Chinese theorists [of aesthetics] tended not to speak of acts of reflection on the ‘meaning’ of a text, but rather of the ‘continuation’ of the text in the mind after reading is over, a time in which the significance of the text gradually unfolds.”

Savoring not only focuses on what is pleasant. Chinese discourse on savoring recognizes that articulate attention can also be devoted to pain, sorrow, and loss. One may “savor” one’s loss of a loved one or of the meaning of life as a whole, as in instances of *kong* (“emptiness,” see Sundararajan, in-press a), to which we will return.

Savoring as Mental Distance

The articulate second-order awareness inherent in savoring implies a certain mental distance. In a letter to a certain Wang Chi, Ssu-K'ung T'u cited another poet to illustrate this point:

Tai Jung-chou said, ‘Poets’ scenes, such as “At Lan-t'ien [Indigo Field] when the sun is warm, from fine jade arises smoke,” can be gazed at from afar but cannot be placed in front of one’s eyebrows and lashes.’ *An image beyond the image*, a scene beyond the scene—can these be easily verbalized?

(Yu, 1978, pp. 96–97, emphasis added)

The mental distance implied by Ssu-k'ung T'u's imagery of gazing from afar can be broken down into two major components of awareness that are characteristic of savoring but that extend beyond it: self-reflexivity and detachment.

SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Self-reflexivity combines two variants of consciousness, distinguished by Lambie and Marcel (2002): second-order consciousness (as opposed to first-order consciousness) and self-directed attention (as opposed to outward-directed attention). Second-order consciousness consists of “experience plus an additional experience of that experience” (Zelazo, 1996, p. 73). It involves awareness that can be recalled and reported. One knows that one experiences and what one experiences. Inwardly directed attention constitutes awareness as “my” awareness, a self-reflexive consciousness essential to episodic memory

(Wheeler, Stuss, & Tulving, 1997). There are indeed indications regarding the specific neurological bases of this awareness (Gusnard, Akbudak, Shulman, & Raichle, 2001; Lane, Fink, Chau, & Dolan, 1997). Awareness can be directed self-reflexively towards the experience itself. When tasting an apple, one notices that one is tasting a sweet taste. One may discern the shades in this particular kind of sweetness, that tinge of acerbity. One may further notice that the sweetness invites more of it. In addition, one may realize that the apple's taste is one's experience—that one owns it (Lambie & Marcel, 2002).

Self-reflexive awareness can be directed towards many different aspects of the perceived objects (Frijda, 2007). In regard to emotions, one may be aware of one's emotional feeling. One may consciously identify it, explicitly telling oneself "I am afraid." One may evaluate it, for instance, by feeling ashamed of one's cowardly fear, proud of one's feeling of guilt, happy about the sense of power and glory carried by one's indignation. That does not, by itself, turn fear, guilt, or indignation into refined emotions. One can vulgarly wail about one's shame and feel unabashedly proud of the evident moral sensitivity implied by one's sense of guilt. However, detachment may lead to one merely noticing a felt bite or glow.

DETACHMENT

Detachment is the major process in achieving emotion refinement. Mental attitudes and experiences vary along a dimension that runs from detachment to immersion (Frijda, 2005; Lambie & Marcel, 2002). Immersion is defined by the absence of awareness-of-awareness and, with it, of self-awareness. One is immersed in perceiving an event with its meaning and in one's activity of dealing with it. An example of an immersed experience of harmony can be found in a story by Isak Dinesen called *Babette's Feast*. A group of simple Norwegian villagers are invited to a dinner prepared by the maid Babette, who—unbeknown to them—is a former Parisian chef. She has spent the main prize of the French National Lottery that she has won—10,000 French francs from 1870—on this dinner. All those who attend the dinner start to dream, feel childhood memories emerge, and blissfully drift into a state of happiness. But they are hardly aware of the dinner itself. "It was quite a nice dinner, Babette," say the maid's mistresses afterwards (Dinesen, 1958/1974, p. 65). Because of their immersed experience, neither the mistresses nor the other villagers savored the meal; yet, unwittingly, the harmony brought them peace and happiness.

Detachment is defined as a mental distance that renders one an outsider to events. It is what Ssu-k'ung T'u refers to as "gazing from afar." In emotions with detachment, one does not coincide with one's emotion. One is not only aware of one's emotional object but also of one's experiencing and doing. Detachment can take various forms. One can witness an emotional event happening to someone else with indifference. He or she falls, so

what? One can also observe an emotional event that befalls oneself as if happening to someone else. One observes it ironically, coolly, as if from a distance, similar to what the "hidden observer" experiences during hypnosis (Hilgard, 1977): "Hey, I fall!", "Hey, I suffer and shriek" (the observations are based on remarks by Langhoff, quoted in Frijda, 1986, p. 416). Detachment occurs in various states of dissociation (Hilgard, 1977) and is not an uncommon experience when one's car skids. While the car skids, one feels no fear. That only comes later, when, post hoc, the heart goes wild.

Detachment in savoring is different. It is experientially engaged detachment. It does include emotion experience. Indeed, one of the guests at Babette's dinner is given to reflection. He had been a general who had returned to his native surroundings. He ponders how he had failed his youthful aspirations. He savors the dishes brought on the table and, to his surprise, recognizes the wine—a Veuve Cliquot 1860. His thoughts wander back to a dinner he once had in Paris, years and years ago, at the café Anglais, which was the restaurant where Babette worked as the chef.

In engaged detachment, one enters into emotional but not behavioral engagement with the event. When savoring food or drink, one holds back from swallowing. When witnessing actors on stage, one is not inclined to jump onstage to intervene or participate. At the same time, it is not a detachment like that found in indifference or contempt. It is a detachment born of contemplation. One is spellbound. When tasting, one notices the precise savors and their subtle shades ("Veuve Cliquot!"). When watching, one follows what happens with empathy. When reading poetry, one is a witness to the scenes the poem calls up and one's imagination builds.

The core of detachment appears to consist of blocking active interaction with the object or event. Instructions to emotionally detach oneself from experience do indeed decrease autonomic arousal (Koriat, Melkman, Averill, & Lazarus, 1972). In experientially engaged detachment, however, decreased arousal appears to be achieved by adopting the overarching action readiness of receptive observation and unfocused attention (Sundararajan, 2004), which allows information in from the outside and allows associated meanings to emerge from within. This, too, replaces readiness for active interaction, as potentiated in coarse emotions. An example is given in a self-report by the photographer Margaret Bourke-White on her photographing concentration camp victims in 1945 (Bourke-White, 1963) in which she reported recognizing the pertinent scenes and taking her photographs without allowing herself to become sick or indignant.

Engaged detachment appears not to be defensive—at least, not always. One does not always seek to be aloof from the event. One often does not blunt feelings. On the contrary, the aim and outcome of engaged detachment appear to be excitatory. Detachment in savoring enables prolonging and enhancing feelings. It can do so when and because it is linked to restraint.

RESTRAINT

In engaged detachment, action is restrained. In fact, behavioral restraint—defined as absence or attenuation of overt action in situations that might call for overt response—is one of the phenomena that suggests the notion of engaged detachment in the first place. Behaviors vary along prosodic parameters: variable time courses with ups and downs and with variable velocities. They contain the main cues for behavior being unrestrained or restrained (Clynes, 1980; Frijda, 2007). Thus, a person may not grab the food perceived as delightful or may not rush to sexual satisfaction when that is desired and within reach. One may go for the food slowly and chew slowly, while savoring it; one may postpone intercourse and climax. Such restraint allows increase of the diversity, extent, and duration of sensations and feelings. During restraint, one is set to relish the sensations and not the final outcome, or at least not immediately. One doesn't kiss her or his lips at once but rather hovers about them. One can let attention roam over the situation, and acceptance wriggles, such as one's tongue curving around the food or one's hands caressing, augment sensed input. Indeed, this is what one does when savoring wine. Restraint allows sensations, feelings, and desires to become more articulate and allows one to become aware of one's pleasure as pleasure.

With the help of behavioral restraint, detachment also produces time and attention to expand appraisal and become aware of wider meanings. In this appraisal, one's partner's lips may be perceived not merely as lips but also as gateways to acceptance and to being accepted. Restraint in savoring allows images to spread from sensory pleasure to “pleasure of the mind,” defined as sequences of different emotions that hang together and that reach their final phase in an equilibrium (Kubovy, 1999, p. 137), and to spread from pleasure to the full-flavored feeling of the emotion of enjoyment. Savoring involves whatForgas (2000, p. 256) refers to as “substantive processing,” which is an “inherently constructive, generative strategy” that allows affect to “selectively prime access to, and the use of, related thoughts, ideas, memories, and interpretations.” We will further discuss such processing later in the article.

Restraint often also aims to strengthen the effect of one's actions on the person one is interacting with and to savor that interaction as well. One may delight in remaining uncertain and become curious or eager. Delay moreover serves in preparing for better action. You don't strike out in anger but pause to compose a more deadly sneer, for instance. We expect that systematic investigation of the prosodic parameters of emotional behavior will corroborate these assertions.

Detachment and restraint often allow one to adjust to the multiplicity of meanings of a given event—that is, to the multiplicity of concerns at stake. Restraining overt anger allows one to reckon with a concern for dignity and with concern for not compromising the affective bonds between oneself and the offender (Mesquita & Albert, 2007). Retaliation can become milder. A kiss can become tender and not merely greedy.

But to repeat the major point, engaged detachment deepens rather than blunts emotional feeling. Immediate coping by action or expressive behavior appears to short circuit the process of fully confronting what the emotional event means. There exist evidence for an inverse relationship between acting and subjectively experiencing the action instigations. Feeling and doing appear to mutually inhibit each other—a point noted by Murphy and Zajonc (1993), among several others. Action-inhibiting mechanisms appear to facilitate imagery and awareness (Jeannerod, 1997).

That inverse relationship probably holds true at least for those witnessing the emotions of others. Restraint reveals and conceals at once; it serves as a veil through which veracity may shine (Sundararajan, 2002b). Powerful expression often appears to trivialize emotions and may contribute to judgments of vulgarity.

Restraint notwithstanding, emotions under engaged detachment are not truly divorced from action. For one thing, we ventured the suggestion that emotions that are only felt may be more apt to subtly change one's conduct of life than would a violent emotional upsurge (although it is true that emotion refinement may equally induce beautiful nostalgia when watching the world decay as one's neighbor starves on one's doorstep). For another thing, activity in neural action circuits is probably forcefully involved, as we will discuss presently.

EMOTIONS WITH REFINEMENT: THEIR SCOPE

Up to this point, we have distinguished emotions with refinement from coarse emotions by an absence of conspicuous expression, behavior and, perhaps, autonomic arousal. Our discussion showed, however, that they can be defined positively by presences. Emotions with refinement are emotional states characterized by detachment, restraint, second-order experience, and self-reflexive awareness.

Refinement extends beyond sensory enjoyment. It includes the enjoyment of using particular objects (a tool, the feel of a particular tool or piece of clothing—see the example of delight taken in a pair of leather-and-glue-smelling leather shoes in the autobiography of Amos Oz, 2005, p. 210) and of elaborate interpersonal interactions with particular people that give rise to pleasures of the mind. *Babette's Feast* presents a paradigmatic example; for the general in that story, at least, the feast was a pleasure of the mind. Refinement may extend to emotions aroused by everyday interactions, such as sexual interactions pervaded by acted-out fantasies, by lust gained through delays, by adoption of unusual positions, or by playing with subjugating and being subjugated (e.g., Stoller, 1979).

All aesthetic emotions entail mental distance that calls or allows for suspension of disbelief; this topic is prominent in aesthetic theory. An aesthetic, detached attitude can also be adopted towards any object or event in real life. Any scene, even the most commonplace or the most ugly, can yield meaning and

thereby become “beautiful” and elicit emotion. They then become protonarratives that suggest a cloud of meanings that goes far beyond the event’s or scene’s literal content.

Emotions with refinement include emotions that are not saturated with pleasure but with meaning; this can apply even to savoring, as we mentioned previously. There are refined emotions that have nothing to do with pleasure. They occur when pondering and exploring one’s misfortunes, aversions, or grief. They also occur when one seeks to assume a detached attitude during actual confrontations, to expand one’s appraisal, to experience meanings to the full, or to forestall impulsive responding. Adopting this stance enables one to come to terms with acute failures, sufferings, and losses, while squarely facing the events and integrating them into one’s attitude to life. Examples of this include the experience of *kong*, the Buddhist notion of emptiness, in Chinese poetry (Sundararajan, in-press a); the attitude of Primo Levi when describing life in the Auschwitz concentration camp (Levi, 1958); or Bourke-Wright’s (1963) experiences when photographing the camps.

Refined emotions also arise when seeking to experience pain, hatred, contempt, or cruel desires as completely as possible, for instance by methodically administering torture to maximize the victim’s suffering. The ancient Chinese method of torture called “fragmentation into a thousand pieces” consists of the hangman cutting small pieces one by one from the living victim’s body (Dumas, 1948, with photographs). Another field that offers extensive examples is that of fully facing one’s feelings, including undesirable ones such as pain, through mindfulness exercises in Zen and concentrative meditation. Refined negative emotions are also found when one confronts unwanted desires or feelings by writing about them or reexperiencing them—for example, writing about one’s being haunted by sadistic impulses (e.g., Cowper Powys, 1960) or confronting traumatic experiences in ritual (Scheff, 1977).

Considering its many possible functions and forms, emotion refinement can evidently result from a large number of different determinants. It may be facilitated by general cultural models or values, by personal sensitivity, by social convention, by the pressure of specific circumstances, or by voluntary adoption in view of instrumental goals. Various previous examples, such as the general in *Babette’s Feast* and Cowper Powys’s article, make clear that savoring and other emotion refinements are not uniquely Chinese. Even in the Chinese tradition, savoring and other emotion refinement may well have been experienced by only an elite minority inspired by Confucian philosophy. But the Chinese discourse on emotion refinement, and its application in poetics, do open one’s eyes to structure and specificity of these emotions and the emotional potential they reveal.

EMOTIONS WITH REFINEMENT: THEIR STRUCTURE

Emotions with refinement present a challenge. Action is absent, except for contemplation and acceptance wriggles, and so is

noticeable autonomic arousal. What remains to justify labeling the psychological states as “emotions”? What do the emotions of the writers of the poems, as well as those induced in their readers, consist of?

To answer these questions, we will employ a current perspective that views emotions as motivational states that we called *states of action readiness* induced by events as appraised by the person and by appraisal that pivots on processes of pleasure and pain (Frijda, 1986, 2007). This perspective is closely related to appraisal theory of emotions (see, for instance, Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). Felt emotions—that is, emotions as a person experiences them—may reflect this ensemble of three major constituents in an articulate form or more diffusely (Frijda, 2005). These constituents also figure in emotions with refinement, as discussed below.

Action Readiness

Action readiness is defined as a state of being set to entertain, modify, or abandon a particular relationship to some object of perception or thought, including oneself. The notion is derived from the functional equivalence of the many different behaviors occurring under very similar emotional conditions (Frijda, 2007). States of action readiness include action tendencies that are defined in terms of their aims, such as the aim to approach and/or be together with someone, oppose and/or attend someone or something, be unencumbered by something, or to assimilate information. The aims may be specific, such as to attend to a particular scene, or general, such as to be open to any information that passes by or to broaden and build relationships and competences (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001; Frijda, 2007). Apart from action tendencies, states of action readiness include increases, decreases, and variants of activation. Undirected excitement, apathy, and tenseness are examples.

States of action readiness may not become manifest in overt action. They may only translate into mere intention movements, facial expressions, or tones of voice. They may merely lead to mental actions, such as wishing one’s antagonist to fall dead, or to cognitive processes, such as lowered thresholds for detecting relevant stimuli. They may turn into action images. They even may remain entirely virtual, being merely felt or perceived as being attractive or infuriating.

Action readiness corresponds to activation of the neural systems that embody motive states and action dispositions in the same way as the activation of “mirror neurons,” described by Rizzolatti, Fogassi, and Gallese (2001). Such neurons are active when performing actions, but also when seeing actions performed by others and when hearing words describing such actions (Tettamanti et al., 2005). They do not respond when seeing these same movements unrelated to some target (Gallese, 2005; Umiltà et al., 2001). The data provide clear evidence that there exist neural states that represent action readiness without overt action. Felt action readiness reflects this neural readiness. It

further reflects activation in the cortical insula that can correspond to feelings of virtual body activity that Damasio (2003) refers to as the “as-if-body-loop.”

Self-reports support the idea that felt action readiness is a main component of emotion experience. Self-reports of felt urges, desires, and impulses are frequent in descriptions of emotional feelings; different modes of action readiness correlate solidly with different reported emotions (Davitz, 1969; Frijda, 2005). Free-response interpretations of facial expressions indicate that recognition of action readiness is involved in facial perception. An angry person, for instance, is one who is perceived as ready to forcefully oppose or reject something or is engaged in doing so (Frijda, 1953).

Action readiness can also be described as the individual’s positionality, defined as the intentional stance taken towards some situation; this term was initially used to characterize the content of facial expressions (Frijda, 1953). Positionality is the snapshot of action readiness. The term may better describe states of readiness that have little if any motor component, like paying attention. Attention can importantly vary in intentional stance, as it occurs in focused and unfocused modes (Lambie & Marcel, 2002). Unfocused attention is the mode of attention that allows holistic impressions from complex sources and grasping their overall qualities such as harmony. In Chinese poetics, unfocused attention is considered an essential requirement for *chi* (Sundararajan, 2004), the sensitivity for minor changes in events.

In states of action readiness, one is set to do or not do things or to not do anything. These states shape the outlines of action, even if at some level of abstraction (“away with it!”). They are not conceptual or propositional but are the very first stages in the preparation of action itself. As stances and strivings in physical space or in imagined mental space, states of action readiness form the main content of imagined emotions. They can remain virtual, as central activations only, or almost virtual, as we shall see. One can be extremely angry but still experience the image of towering above one’s adversary or hear oneself uttering a devastating insult without actually lifting a finger.

This extensive discussion of action readiness is needed here. The phenomena that led to the notion of emotion refinement include prominent aspects of behavior and reported feelings that suggest complexity of action readiness. Emotion refinement largely consists of such complexity. As argued previously, action tendencies are defined by their aims. The aims of coarse emotions tend to be single and simple: approach, avoid, oppose, and so forth. In refined emotions, there is a multiplicity or a greater specification of aims. In desire, one wants to get close but still retain autonomy, or one may want to get as close as possible, as fully and as intimately as possible. In savoring, one wants to obtain experience but also to be fully aware of it, or one wants to specifically distinguish and enjoy the pattern of the flavor.

Complexity of action readiness shapes behavioral prosody in an infinite number of ways. Actions can be varied in speed of

execution, in smoothness or angularity, in intended magnitude of impact, in fullness, and in precise relational content. One can approach slowly and circumspectly, so as not to startle one’s target. One can temporarily halt progress towards one’s goal to savor the progress as such. One can modulate an urge to establish close proximity to the target of one’s desire by moving forward via a detour rather than straightly and directly in order to have time to contemplate where one goes or why (Frijda, 2007).

Consider how a desire to caress can vary in fullness. One can be set to caress with one’s eyes, fingertips, fingers, or with the palms of one’s hands, or by also bending one’s arm or by bending over and having the remainder of one’s body share in the caress. Each variant implements different balances of giving oneself over and holding back—of abandoning oneself to the other person and retaining autonomy. Each also represents a different aim, as their relational contents differ. Caressing with the fingers allows more visual contemplation, and caressing with the full hand allows more unity by partaking in the other’s contours with one’s movement. Caressing with the fingertips not only savors the warmth of skin, it is careful not to disturb, not to intrude, to respect the other’s autonomy, and leave him or her a way out of unwanted intimacy.

A more complex example can be found in Ssu-k’ung Tu’s works, in which refined emotional experiences are usually portrayed through protonarratives suggesting action tendencies. Consider the following couplet in a poem entitled *The Natural*: “A recluse in the deserted mountains/Stops by a stream and picks waterplants” (Owen 1992, p. 324). The “natural” is the shorthand for the Taoist notion of spontaneous, purposeless action. Thus, Owen interprets the image of the recluse picking waterplants as symbolic of picking “what is provided by chance, easily, abundantly, and naturally.” The imagery primarily concerns two simple action tendencies: walking along while remaining open to impressions and picking up objects provided by chance. It demonstrates with particular clarity how nonaction is a mode of action readiness without an aim. In addition, the protonarrative contains the appraisal of synchronicity, of a moment in which multiple moments have coalesced, such as the stillness of the empty mountain and the tranquility of a mind no less “empty.”

In all this, states of action readiness can remain entirely at the level of inner preparation and felt desire. They may be performed in one’s imagination, while day-dreaming, while watching others with empathy, while reading a poem, or when perceiving daily events with detachment. They also exist without any imagination; they are merely felt, in the same way that activity in mirror neurons is felt when understanding what someone else is doing. In all such activities, action tendency is mostly or wholly of the mind. One feels urges to move backward or forward, to abandon oneself to those urges or to maintain self-restraint, to “soar up” or to “float down.” But these states of action readiness are virtual tendencies, intimations, inner urges. They do not leave the skull.

And yet, these states of action readiness, even while being virtual, hover on the verge of actual movement. The sage who composes a poem may find herself involuntarily twitching her fingers because the image of movement was not entirely virtual. This may also happen to the reader on occasion. Action readiness does occasionally become outwardly manifest. This may occur when one is imagining or witnessing a dancer or tightrope walker onstage. The neural activations embody emotional imagery that encodes the meaning of what is being perceived in a nonpropositional mode (Frijda, 1953).

Because of the extent to which refined emotions exist by virtue of imagery, their action readiness enjoys the freedom of imagination. Action tendencies are unconstrained by the limits of physical capability that make actual corresponding movements impossible. One can imagine flying by flapping one's arms, for instance. The images represent refined versions of action tendencies that occur in standard emotions in a coarser fashion, such as "approach" or "freedom from constraints." By having different overtones from the coarser emotions, action tendencies expand one's domain of emotional capacities. Such an expansion may, in turn, engender novel ways of viewing the world that allows for novel perceptions.

In his collection of twenty-four poems, each representing a category of refined emotions or poetic moods, Ssu-k'ung Tu portrayed the characteristic aloofness of the hermit not as simple social avoidance, but as an indeterminacy between the multiple and contradictory aims of approach and avoidance. For instance, the Tao (the Way), which serves to model the eremitic life, is portrayed in terms of an encounter that never comes to pass, as in the poem entitled *Transcendence*: "Advance from afar, almost arrive,/Yet approach it and it's already gone" (Yu, 1978, p. 91). Similarly, in the poem entitled *Ethereality*, the Tao or the hermit's speech is a word that is forever poised between utterance and silence: "As if just about to echo;/ Those who recognize already understand,/ But seek it and it will move further away" (Yu, 1978, p. 91).

Appraisal

Appraisal is the second emotion ingredient. It is central in current cognitive emotion theories (e.g., Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). Appraisal, as used in emotion theory, does not primarily refer to conscious experience of what an event means but to information processes leading to emotional responses. It is what triggers action readiness and other behavioral and physiological responses as well as experience. Conscious appraisal is only a reflection of what operates automatically in the appraisal processes (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003).

Appraisal processes range from the elementary, such as the immediate liking or disliking certain smells, to the complex, such as sensing a possible threat to self-esteem. They include evaluation of an event as pleasant or unpleasant but may extend to apprehending all implications of objects and events for the

individual's sensitivities, action goals, and concerns. They are shaped by the immediately accessible external events and their context in space and time, as well as by the individual's stored information, expectancies, memories, and conscious and non-conscious associations.

In principle, appraisal processes can avail themselves of a very large amount of information. However, only part of that information is actually selected during the process and brought to bear on shaping action readiness. Which information does enter appraisal depends on how accessible and how conspicuous it is—for instance, by being presented to the senses (Fiske, 1987). But the range of information that is brought to bear depends also on the range, direction, and duration of one's attention and on time spent accessing stored experience, letting meanings unfold, letting thoughts roam over implications for the future, or pondering and engaging in reverie (Sundararajan, 1998). Conversely, available information may not enter appraisal. Attention may be restricted to immediately accessible event features.

Whereas conspicuous event features are perceptually salient or carry common interpretations, subtle event features are harder to detect. Detecting the latter is a second aspect that refines appraisal and thereby also refines action readiness. Fear, for instance, can be said to result from any appraisal of threat, but awe (Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Sundararajan, 2002a, in-press c) results from the more complex appraisal of something as *tremendans et fascinans*: something impossible to cope with, but also worthy of one's devotion. An insult can be merely appraised as offending power balance, but a more refined appraisal points to hostile response that might restore power balance but harm social harmony (Mesquita & Markus, 2004).

The individual's sensitivity in picking up features of events, feelings, and thoughts is also a key factor in determining the information that enters appraisal. Chinese poetics relevant to savoring are explicit about these points. We previously cited a comment by Ssu-k'ung Tu regarding people lacking something beyond the distinction between "the merely sour" and "the merely salty." Subtle distinctions indeed underlie Ssu-k'ung Tu's 24 poetic moods (Sundararajan, 2004). Many of those depend on *chi*, the sensitivity for minor changes in events: "Like that balmy breeze of spring,/Pliantly changing in one's robes./ Consider the tones in fine bamboo-/Lovely indeed, return with them" (Owen, 1992, p. 306).

In emotion refinement, and in savoring in particular, associations and thoughts are allowed their scope. As previously noted, they involve whatForgas (2000) labeled as substantive processing. They lead to elaboration of appraisal; savoring provides the time and effort. They can lead to awareness of wider meanings of objects and events, including oneself and one's acts and person. A given event may be appraised as terrible but also as morally unacceptable. It may lead to further appraisal of the event as revealing conditions of the world or the human condition in general, such as the ubiquitous mixtures of good and bad,

or the fragility of human endeavors. These all turn simple scenarios or images into protonarratives.

Appraisal, like action readiness, is represented in a non-propositional mode. Both involve “intuitive” processing, which is to say that they consist of holistic responses to sensory inputs and to one’s mental and behavioral reactions. They result in imagelike representations of event consequences and of actions that inwardly and virtually simulate the actions one is ready for. They also mirror perceived and anticipated actions of others by way of “simulators,” along the lines sketched by Barsalou (1999) for modality-specific memory representations and by Meltzoff (2002) and Rizzolatti et al. (2001) for action perception and action awareness. Add imagination and creative combination of these mental simulations, and one once more gets “images beyond images.”

Pleasure and Pain

The processes of pleasure and pain are central in emotions; they are often referred to as the two basic motivational orientations (e.g., Lang, 1995; Russell, 2003). We refer to the processes of pleasure and pain rather than to feelings of pleasure and pain because the processes that lead to the feelings also lead to other outcomes, notably to the perception of events as good or bad and actions of acceptance and nonacceptance (Frijda, 2007).

Pleasure and pain (in the extended sense of displeasure) often form the first step of appraisal, and on occasion they may form the only step. As a result of secondary awareness, detachment, and reflexive turning to oneself, feelings of pleasure and of pain can come center stage.

Some pleasures and pains are evoked by stimuli or objects; certain tastes, smells, colors, shapes, and textures form their paradigms. But most pleasures and pains are outcomes of monitoring smoothness and success of one’s functioning, with pleasure on goal achievement and pain of failure as examples. Most pleasures and pains indeed are best viewed as outputs of a continuous process of monitoring how well one’s competences function (Frijda, 2007, Chapter 3). The unique property of pleasure in savoring and in other emotion refinement is that it is not based on the hedonic attributes of stimuli or events, but on one’s competence in the actions of savoring and refinement. Thus, even negative emotions can give pleasure, because confronting these emotions challenges one’s ability to handle them, and facing the confrontation head on represents a success. Refined emotions transcend the dichotomy of positive and negative emotions.

The pleasures of competence integrate diverse information. These pleasures are holistic responses to multitudes of things happening at once. Harmony is a paradigmatic pleasure process output, holistically reflecting that handling information is proceeding smoothly, beyond the usual.

When one becomes aware of one’s own pleasure process, felt harmony can be consciously pursued. Pleasures result from

subtle variations in exerting one’s competences and from the conscious exercise of one’s capacity to notice shifts in balance or to make fine discriminations. *Chi*, openness to experience or to subtle variations (Sundararajan 2004), and both cognitive and social functioning are examples of such competences. Refined pleasures result from such openness and fine discrimination and from the competences that demand them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EMOTION THEORY

We summarize the implications that the study of emotion refinement has for the understanding of emotions in general.

Emotion Variations

The components of emotion refinement are self-reflexivity, detachment, virtual action readiness, conscious and expanded appraisal, and competence-based pleasure process. The potential contribution of our study to mainstream theories of emotion is twofold: integrating the notions of emotion refinement and savoring into standard theories, and extending those theories in the direction of emotions that are not geared to the goals of coping and adaptation that form the usual focus of standard emotion theories.

Examination of refined emotions clearly shows that the variety of emotions is badly captured by canonical emotion labels. Russell (2003) has called attention to the vast space of atypical emotions. Whereas refined emotions can be accounted for by mainstream emotion theories, they also reveal features of our emotional lives that are obscured by the latter’s attention on prototypical emotions. Refinement adds a dimension of emotions that are not focused on adaptive dealings. It derives its lack of overt manifestations not from suppressive control but from focus on experience and awareness.

In refined experience, felt virtual action readiness plays a distinctive role. Modes of action readiness differ considerably in ways that the dimension of activation (Russell, 2003) does not allow for. Modes of action readiness represent the cues for the differentiation of emotions, such as those called up by poetry from which so much of the evidence for this notion comes.

Action readiness is a motivational notion that may lead to movements that accomplish the aim of that readiness. This movement aspect largely accounts for the fact that so many emotions have no names or are indeed ineffable. There exist no names for movements except the grossest ones.

Savoring

Savoring is a particular mode of emotional action that has no other aim than to increase pleasant experience independently of consumption; the target selection for consumption has already taken place at the moment that savoring sets in. Savoring thereby paradigmatically illustrates development of second-order reflexive awareness from first-order experiences of taste

and other flavors and also points to the fact that conscious experience directs behavior.

Savoring constitutes a domain of reflection in ancient Chinese thought and not in Western psychology, to the best of our knowledge, until recently when positive psychologists began to conduct empirical studies of the phenomena (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). In these studies, however, savoring is confined to positive experience only. The Chinese notion of savoring and our treatment of refinement indicate instead that its yield does not come primarily from pleasure but from processing competences.

Analysis of savoring clarifies the structure of emotions of enjoyment: driving the acceptance wriggles, prolonging interaction, and increasing the diversity and extent of sensations and feelings. The function of such prolongation can be found at two levels. First, savoring expands the world of experience, leading from pleasure to meaning, thereby expanding the individual's worldview and their sense of belonging. Second, savoring might enhance the close connection between pleasure experience and instrumental learning, as suggested by Balleine and Dickinson's (1998) functional interpretation of consciousness.

Detachment

Our analyses clearly indicate that emotions occur within some general attitudinal context. An experience when viewing events with detachment differs from experience when confronting them through action. Attitudinal context for everyday emotions appears to consist of confronting an event within one's action space, which requires the individual to cope or deal with it. Such an attitude is the natural or immediate one, which humans share with all nonhuman animals. That conclusion is, of course, consistent with the findings on hypnosis (e.g., Hilgard, 1977) and with the results of experimental studies of emotion attenuation as a function of readiness or unreadiness to act (Koriat et al., 1972).

Refined emotions, by contrast, show that humans are capable of adopting a different mental attitude, even in the face of emotional events. As one moves into a mental space detached from pragmatic concerns, emotions differ accordingly. Emotions lose their urgency but at the same time retain their inner structure as appraisals and modes of action readiness. It is unclear which mechanisms are involved. Some may be akin to those in dissociation, in which experiences often are felt as foreign to oneself. But the mental attitude in savoring and other refined emotions is that of engaged detachment. Such detachment does entail a degree of aloofness, proper to an attitude of contemplation, but at the same time intensifies feelings and enhances engagement with one's experience. In this respect, savoring is the antipode of dissociation.

Restraint

Restraint appears to be a separate dimension of emotion structures, well worth more extensive study. Emotion refinement

suggests that restraint may enhance and deepen emotion experience. Restraint has been extensively discussed in the literature on emotion regulation (e.g., Gross & Thompson, 2007). There, it is discussed most often in terms of inhibition. However, it can also serve as an emotion-confronting mode of emotion regulation. Rather than involving emotion suppression or attenuation, it appears that it can represent an emotional response type of its own, involving a systems switch. This is consistent with, and perhaps similar to, the phenomena of "passive coping" or "secondary control" (Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder, 1982), which may well be a more prominent mode of coping in East Asia than in the West.

The phenomena of restraint once again point to the importance of temporality in emotions. Time course reflects functional properties of the processes concerned. It also reflects recursive inputs in those processes—for instance, expanding appraisal, after tasting, and reflection—as well as shifting balances between restraint and desires. There is a lack of research on temporal phenomena in the field of emotion psychology. This should be corrected.

Aesthetic Emotions

Emphasis on states of virtual action readiness may form a perspective on understanding aesthetic emotions. Listening to music, viewing painting, and reading prose and poetry can all be hypothesized to generate differentiated emotions over and beyond what joy or admiration might mean. The role of detachment in such emotions is, of course, standard theory in Kant's disinterested enjoyment; the analysis of emotion refinement may help in better understanding that role.

Consciousness

The phenomena of savoring underline distinctions between levels of consciousness made in the literature. Savoring involves second-order awareness; moreover, it is self-reflexive. It entails awareness of oneself as the experiencer. The content of experience includes the sense that this experience is unique and belongs to the individual—"This is an experience of my own." Furthermore, savoring includes the reflexive second-order positive emotional response that one is relishing one's experience.

Emotions with refinement illustrate the existence of emotion experiences that are lifted squarely out of adaptive contexts. They show that emotions are not always in the service of coping with events. Notably in savoring, experience is there for its own sake. As we just said, it provides meaning, enlarges the world as experienced, draws interest, and makes people spend time on obtaining it. The trivializing of conscious experience, prevalent in certain current treatments of consciousness, disregards an entire domain in which consciousness does something. Savoring conscious experience clearly motivates and directs behavior in the protracted interaction with the object. Conscious awareness

can, sometimes at least, cause further behavior, as well as learning the behavior that brought one to the conscious experience (Balleine & Dickinson, 1998). Examining all nooks and crannies of conscious experience in emotions appears to deliver more than focusing on information from the body and on the adaptive actions that such information allows.

The phenomenology of refined emotions has brought into focus the nonpropositional nature of the experiences. The analysis of felt appraisal and awareness of action readiness show experienced qualities of a more integrative and more interesting kind than those found in more simple experiences, such as the experience of the color green. The qualia of felt appraisal may unfold into awareness of expectancies and further meanings, and action readiness may unfold into awareness of action readiness and have the format of movements and actions with their prosodies. Nonpropositional representations are distinctly more “experience proximate” (Averill & Sundararajan, 2006) than are propositional renderings of the contents of experience.

Our examination of detachment has found suggestions of an inverse relationship between conscious awareness and overt action. If such a relationship holds up more generally, it is relevant for understanding the possible causal roles of consciousness.

Implications for Psychotherapy

Savoring may shed some light on why it is the difference in modality of self-focus (experiential as compared with abstract evaluative) rather than self-focus per se that makes a difference in psychotherapy (Watkins & Moulds, 2005). In a larger context, the analyses of emotion refinement is relevant for issues concerning representations of emotion experiences that psychotherapy is grappling with. Information in terms of propositional representation is found to be therapeutically ineffective; to be effective, one needs “implicational” representations (Teasdale & Barnard, 1993). Implicational representations might be those that contain representation of felt appraisal qualities and states of action readiness. Rendering such representations explicit may require substantive processing of the raw information (experiences and their “flavors,” current as well as retrieved from memory) involved upon savoring them. This expectation finds support in the success of a well-known psychotherapy technique called focusing (Gendlin, 1981), which coaches the essential techniques of savoring (Sundararajan, 2001). Indeed, development of self-reflexive awareness of present experience has been found to be effective in the prevention of depression relapse (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002).

Cultural and Developmental Differences

Finally, emotion refinement is an exquisite domain for studying cultural and developmental differences in emotions. Savoring and other refined emotions are not specifically Chinese, nor are they necessarily the common everyday emotions then or now, in

any culture. But they form the substance of what is depicted and conveyed by much of poetry anywhere, and savoring in the Chinese sense does occur during wine-tasting sessions in the West as well as in other savoring experiences as described by Amos Oz (2005), and documented by Bryant and Veroff (2007). But the Chinese discourse on emotion refinement does open one’s eyes and ears to the structure and specificity of these emotions.

In addition, a meaningful hypothesis holds that cultural values and models strongly influence the dominance of emotion refinement in psychological theory as well as in practices of savoring and related actions. Mindfulness, one may propose, is more of an ideal in Buddhist and Taoist traditions than it is in the West. In fact, there appear to be tensions in Western history between orientation towards abstract knowledge and the desire to “linger a while” to savor one’s experiences—a temptation from the Devil that Faust fiercely rejected. The cultural and historical reasons behind these differences may well appear from comparative studies on intellectual histories of emotions (e.g., Averill & Sundararajan, 2006).

Within the same culture there are individual differences in emotion refinement. Indeed, the term *refined emotion* smacks of class distinction and has an elitist overtone. Not everyone has them. This is explicit in the Chinese tradition: refinement is of the gentleman and not of a petty person, according to the *Analects*. Emotion refinement appears to be influenced by endowments, whether by nature or by culture, by innate sensitivity or upbringing. The notion, we may say, is indeed elitist. So are the phenomena. That appears to be the way things are; scientific correctness does not always match political correctness. But science can perhaps help to change the status quo. To address the above issues, the current investigations of individual differences in savoring (Bryant & Veroff, 2007) need to be corroborated by other relevant measures, such as the Emotional Creativity Inventory (Averill, 1999).

It would be interesting to compare how far the description of savoring, inspired here by Chinese poetics, fits emotionally charged observational stances in other cultural contexts. Indian psychology and Hindu philosophy discuss the notion of *rasa* (Shweder & Haidt, 2000; Sinha, 1961/1985), the emotions aroused by viewing theatrical performance. *Rasa*, too, is held to be experienced only by “persons of taste” (Sinha, 1967/1985, p.163). But *rasa* appears to have a different detachment structure, which emphasizes fusion between self and a transcendent reality: “Just as in the intuitive realization of Brahman the subject is lost in Brahman, so in aesthetic emotion of the rasa the subject is lost in the enjoyment” (Sinha, 1961/1985, p. 164). Meditational practices, whether as mindfulness or concentrative meditation, appear to show both commonalities and differences between savoring and *rasa* (Goleman, 1996). These various variants of emotion refinement clearly are in need of close comparative analysis, as is their cultural distribution, both across and within cultures. With Nisbett (2003) and others (e.g.,

Averill & Sundararajan, 2005), we may ask whether ideas and practices in a culture's past have any bearing on the contemporary scene. As emotion refinement is self-initiated, the research needs to tap into voluntary activities that are not in competition with social obligations. Solitude would be an ideal scenario. In a cross-cultural study of solitude (Y. Wang, 2006), participants ranked the desirability of things they would like to pursue when alone. Inner peace was ranked first by both U.S. and Chinese (mainland China) samples of college students. Emotional refinement came second in the Chinese sample, whereas relaxation came second in the U.S. sample, who ranked emotional refinement 9th out of the 20 items.

As for the developmental trajectory of emotional refinement, William Gray (1979) posits the last stage of emotional development as constituting a "nuancing and meditational phase" in which ever finer less-intense emotional nuances become differentiated and amenable to conscious reflection.

PERSPECTIVES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The preceding analysis of emotion refinement leads to several suggestions for further research. Engaged detachment clearly merits closer investigation: What is it that constitutes contemplative detachment? That is to say, what separates the experience in detachment from action urges, and what renders it nonanalytic, holistic, and experience approximate? Does mindfulness (Langer, 1989) fit the bill? How is detachment different from controlled processing strategies (Philippot, Baeyens, & Douilliez, 2006)? A first endeavor might be by instructing subjects along the lines of the old studies by Lazarus (Koriat et al., 1972). Another approach would be to examine associational fluency as a function of delays in responding to emotional scenes.

The hypothesis of virtual states of action readiness in emotions aroused by art and during other emotions with refinement might be examined by functional magnetic resonance imaging studies. Positive results are likely, considering cited research such as the study by Tettamanti et al. (2005). The hypothesis could also be examined by looking at facilitation of approach and retreat activities by such emotions, similar to the demonstrated effects of backwardly masked hedonic stimuli.

So far, there exists hardly any research on the prosody of behavior. Prosody, we proposed, suggests varying balances of action readiness and restraint and is supposedly a cue for refinement. Psychological study might profit from studying the literature on choreology and on temporality in music, as well as from experimental studies that vary the prosodic features of behavior and rate emotional ascriptions. Likewise, the levels of autonomic arousal during emotions showing little outward expression also merit further investigation. Existing research may in fact provide evidence for an inverse relationship.

It would be highly relevant to conduct systematic studies of savoring and related observational attitudes. One might access archival data that document savoring in literature or diaries using existing language analysis programs (e.g., Sundararajan & Schubert, 2005). One can conduct observational studies of intake actions (acceptance wriggles) in a variety of situations, such as the replaying of music and film scenes, as well as procedures that are conducive to pleasures of the mind.

Hypothesized enhancement of the scope of appraisal during savoring is testable by obtaining associations to briefly viewed and lengthily observed art or other stimuli, with or without savoring or meditational instructions.

Another possibility would be to make systematic comparisons between savoring, *rasa*, and other notions of emotional comportment, both by interviews and observation of subjects when witnessing theater performance and extending the investigations to functional magnetic resonance imaging analysis. All this may help to escape from the highly pragmatic and adjustment-oriented orientation of Western research on cognition.

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