Editors’ Introduction

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We, the editors, are delighted to introduce the new journal of the European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotion, Passion. Since 2014, The European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotions (EPSSE) has been a lively and friendly community of scholars working on philosophical issues related to emotions. The society has provided a supportive and welcoming space for scholars to develop their work, meet others working in their area and get inspired by new ideas. An important part of EPSSE’s success has been its pluralistic approach. Any given EPSSE conference is likely to feature analytic philosophers of emotions, phenomenologists, ethicists, political theorists, hermeneuticians, experimental philosophers and more, discussing the emotions together in ways that cross narrow sub-disciplinary boundaries.

Like many philosophical ideas, the inspiration for EPSSE arose during a summer day in Athens. In August 2013, during the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy, Aaron Ben-Ze’ev and Anthony Hatzimoysis discussed the need to bring people working in the philosophy of emotions together. They envisioned a pluralistic forum that would highlight a variety of theoretical perspectives on affective phenomena, one that would encourage researchers from diverse backgrounds and in various stages of their careers to exchange ideas from across the European continent and beyond. They soon asked Angelika Krebs to help steer this effort.

Once the founding team was in place, things moved quickly. They decided to call this new society the “European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotions,” and began working on various issues such as establishing a steering committee, drafting a statement concerning EPSSE’s nature and aims, and planning the inaugural conference. By the end of September 2013, the steering committee was in place, and a society statement — still on the EPSSE website — was drafted. This statement emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of emotions, the need for philosophers to contribute to this work, and affirms a special commitment to supporting early-career scholars in this endeavor. In July 2014, EPSSE’s Society Statutes were approved at the first Annual Conference in Lisbon, which was a vibrant and well-attended event that attracted scholars from around the world.

Since then, EPSSE has continued to grow and flourish. In 2017, Achim Stephan took over as President of EPSSE, with Alessandra Fussi and Damian Cox as Vice-Presidents, and together they helped the society expand its
membership and achieve an even greater level of international recognition. In its 10 years of existence, EPSSE has convened 10 annual conferences and 5 workshops at several different European academic institutions.

The growing success of this community, together with the absence of an academic journal dedicated to publishing the kinds of papers that EPSSE members were writing, led the previous executive committee (led by Prof. Achim Stephan) to explore the possibility of starting a journal. The idea of a journal had been discussed for several years and had broad support amongst EPSSE members. We, the editors, took on this project when we took over as the executive committee in 2020.

Passion is a journal that aims to carry the spirit of EPSSE onto the printed (or digital) page. It is a journal dedicated to philosophical research on emotions. We aim for the journal to be open to all philosophical traditions. We hope to transcend the analytic and continental divide, while also conceiving of the journal as an outlet for interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and feminist work. We especially encourage work that proposes fresh perspectives on the emotions and their interconnections with the way we live, think, act, interact, and so on. We are also open to philosophically engaged empirical work, reflecting our general attitude that any study of the emotions can be philosophical in nature and be philosophically impactful even when it is carried out by researchers in other fields. We aim to foster inspiring philosophical discussion amongst those passionate about emotions, from junior scholars at the start of their academic careers to experienced scholars able to draw on decades of careful study of the field. We also aim to be truly international, as reflected by our editorial board which consists of eight distinguished philosophers based in eight different countries.

After exploring various options with commercial presses, we decided instead to find a non-commercial, open access publisher to work with. This decision was largely motivated by the ever-growing and concerning controversy around profit-driven academic publishing and exorbitant open access publishing fees. These conditions place hard-working academic authors under increasing emotional and financial pressure, and effectively curtail the reach and impact of many writers’ work. With such burdens disproportionately affecting early career and precariously-employed researchers, our policy at Passion is to resist the normalization of such practices by making our journal freely accessible and tied to a non-profit platform. This commitment reflects the wishes of the EPSSE community and our continued pledge to provide a space for novel, creative, and cutting-edge emotion research for researchers at any stage of their career. Indeed, recent developments have made the establishment of non-profit journals even more relevant and urgent. We trust that our members and other people interested in the emotions will support this movement away from for-profit journal publishing.

Open Press TiU, an open access publisher at Tilburg University (the Netherlands), were the perfect fit for our vision for the journal. Started in 2020 as part of Tilburg University’s Open Science initiative, Open Press TiU aims to accelerate open access science by publishing high-quality open access academic publications. Going with Open Press TiU has the considerable advantage of being free of charge for EPSSE and of being fully open-access with no costs to the reader or the author. We are delighted to have found a publisher that shares our commitment to open access academic publishing and who have been so supportive in helping us set-up Passion. We are particularly grateful to Daan Rutten, Tilburg University’s Open Science Coordinator, for supporting and advising us at every step of the process, helping us take Passion from an idea to the journal you see before you now.

We are incredibly excited to share this first issue of Passion with you. We believe that it showcases the diverse and vibrant kind of work being done in this thriving field of research. You will find discussions of revenge that
draw on inspirational thinkers such as Adam Smith, W. E. B. Du Bois, James Baldwin and, of course, Taylor Swift. We have rich, detailed, illuminating discussions of the role of emotions and other affective experiences in transitional justice, mental health and our interactions with robots. We are grateful to these authors for showing faith in our journal and contributing such exciting work for our opening issue.

We begin, as all academic pursuits should, with a thirst for vengeance. Our opening paper is Alice MacLachlan’s ‘Hell Hath No Fury: The Place of Revenge in Moral Repair’. Philosophers have tended to have a very negative view of revenge, seeing the desire for revenge as something that stands in the way of moral repair. Drawing inspiration from two films exploring revenge as a response to sexual violence, MacLachlan makes a feminist case for revenge, arguing that revenge can function as a form of moral address that takes the target of revenge seriously as a moral interlocutor and is open to their ability to change for the better. As a result, revenge can actually play an important role in bringing about moral repair.

Myisha Cherry’s ‘Feeling Revengeful’ continues our focus on vengeance by arguing that our dominant conception of feeling revengeful lacks nuance. While people tend to assume that feeling revengeful and feelings of anger are equivalent, Cherry argues that either of these feelings can exist without the other. Moreover, acts of revenge need not involve putting the target of revenge down in some way. Instead, Cherry outlines a success model of revenge, inspired by W. E. B. Du Bois and James Baldwin, according to which being successful can be the best form of revenge against those who have tried to put you down.

Having explored the place of emotions in revenge, we turn to another important and increasingly active area of philosophical research: the role of emotions in mental health and illness. Several of our contributors have been at the forefront of this important work. Michelle Maiese’s ‘Are All Mental Disorders Affective Disorders?’ answers this question in the affirmative. Maise argues that all mental disorders are affective in an important etiological sense, and that even overtly cognitive symptoms (e.g., disruptions of thought, language, and executive control) at least partially result from affective disturbances. Focusing on two case studies — language disturbances in schizophrenia and so-called “context blindness” in autism — Maise demonstrates how difficulties with selective attention and contextual sensitivity are common to both, and that these difficulties arise from disruptions of what she terms “affective bodily attunement” to the world.

With Matthew Ratcliffe and Louise Richardson, we consider the bounds of grief. In ‘Grief over Non-Death Losses: A Phenomenological Perspective’, Ratcliffe and Richardson offer a phenomenological analysis of grief beyond the context of the death of a loved one. They defend a broad conception of grief that encompasses losses other than bereavement, including loss of a relationship, loss of a job, and illness. Taking as their core case study instances of grief over involuntary childlessness, they draw attention to the way in which grief over a bereavement and other experiences of loss can share an experienced rupture of possibilities that are significant, even central, to one’s identity and the structure of one’s world.

From thinking about cases of personal loss and tragedy, we turn towards the role of emotions at the societal level. Emanuela Ceva and Sara Protasi’s ‘Framing the Role of Envy in Transitional Justice’ examines the way that envy can impact upon attempts to bring about justice in the wake of large-scale human rights abuses. Through analyzing both the harmful and destructive role that envy can play and the potential fruitful and constructive effects of envy, Ceva and Protasi develop a conceptual framework for investigating the role of envy in intergroup conflict. This framework provides an important starting point for thinking about how to push these sites of conflict in more collaborative directions.
In ‘Affective Responses to Embodied Intelligence. The Test-Cases of Spot, Kaspar, and Zeno,’ Fussi examines the diversity of human affective reactions to robots using three different types of robots. Some robots elicit the famous Uncanny Valley effect, whereas others do not, but instead evoke fear due to concern about government overreach. It is especially intriguing for emotion researchers to follow the development of robots meant to improve the communication between children with autism spectrum disorder and neurotypical adults. These robots have been programmed with highly rote and simple emotional expressions in order to make it easier for such children to recognize emotion. However, as Fussi points out, given the remarkable variation in emotion expression in humans, wide use of such robots might actually have the opposite effect.

Both individually and together these authors showcase the exciting, cutting-edge, and engaged philosophical work on emotions that EPSSE aims to support and promote. We hope you enjoy this issue and feel inspired to contribute your own work in the future. By doing so you can help to make Passion a vibrant forum for philosophical work on emotions.