

# Cognate Music Theories

The Past and the Other in Musicology  
(Essays in Honor of John Walter Hill)

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## 9 The language of emotions from Descartes to Metastasio

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## 9 The language of emotions from Descartes to Metastasio\*

*Álvaro Torrente and José María Domínguez*

### Introduction

John Walter Hill devotes several pages of his book *Baroque Music* to explaining in detail “the doctrine of the affections”, the eighteenth-century theory about the expression of emotions through music. In the section entitled the “Neoclassical reform of opera”, commonly known as *opera seria*, Hill points out that “arias were thought capable of suggesting one or two emotions chosen from a wide range of subtly varied passions”.<sup>1</sup> This theory departed from “the belief that music may inspire emotions . . . that certain musical details and characteristics may promote specific passions.”<sup>2</sup> This conviction was widespread, particularly among German composers and theorists, “drawing on a tradition in seventeenth-century philosophy and psychology that originates with *Les passions de l’âme* by René Descartes and continues through Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Hutcheson and Wolff”<sup>3</sup>

In the same direction, Carl Dahlhaus claims that the theory of affects was one of the most influential and enduring principles in the aesthetics of opera up to the twentieth century, to the point that, in his opinion, the emotions expressed musically onstage should be regarded as the true musical drama:

If we regard *the affects*, the emotions, and the emotional conflicts expressed musically onstage in the form of arias, duets, and ensembles as *the “true” musical drama* [italics added], dramaturgical analysis of an opera should not start with the way a narratable action is reflected in music. Rather, quite the reverse, it should try to show how an action constituted as a drama of affects, primarily by musical means, comes to be based on a story line in order to take shape on a stage.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the primary function of arias, duets and ensembles was to express in words and music—as well as in gesture—a character’s inner feelings and thoughts at a given point of the dramatic action. In Cartesian terms, the events in the plot are the actions that influence the soul of the characters to arouse specific passions. It is important to bear in mind that arias are music, but they are more than just music, as they have a poetic text and occur within a dramatic narrative. Both features have profound implications, since the emotional semantics of each aria are defined primarily by the libretto, by the personal circumstances of each character and by the dramatic sequence of actions. As expressed by de Van, the complication of actions in *opera seria* “evokes the game of billiards, where one ball pushes a second which moves a third; actions are thwarted, determining the reversal of affects and the *peripeteias* of the characters.”<sup>5</sup> This “emotional” planning is particularly clear in Metastasio’s works. For contemporary audiences, the attraction of his librettos rests not so much in the sequence of events but on the

emotions these events provoked in the characters and, even more so, on the mode in which each of the prompted emotions was set to music and performed on stage. There was no suspense in the plots, as the denouement was usually anticipated by the paratexts, while his dramas were known by heart, as they were endlessly repeated—and reprinted—for decades.

The question at this point emerges: If emotions are one of the main features of the most distinctive musical unit in opera, the aria; if emotions are “the true musical drama,” should not we, as opera scholars, be able to study them, to analyze them, to categorize them and to tabulate them in a systematic manner, as we can do with key, harmony, phrasing, texture, musical form, verse structure, line length and so many “objective” elements in musical dramaturgy? How can we discuss the meaning and function of aria in opera; how can we discuss musical drama at all without taking into account its emotional semantics? Indeed, understanding the emotions expressed in arias should be a precondition to studying opera.

Unfortunately, this aim faces a major challenge as there is no academic consensus, even within the realms of psychology, physiology, neuroscience and related disciplines, on the very concept of emotion, or on its categories, dynamics and signification.<sup>6</sup> The psychologist Robert Plutchik writes that “almost everyone agrees that the study of emotion is one of the most confused (and still open) chapters in the history of psychology”;<sup>7</sup> an appreciation confirmed by Criville and Fridlund, who claim that there is “no scientific consensus about how ‘emotion’ should be defined or measured.”<sup>8</sup> Along the same lines, Kleinginna & Kleinginna identify 92 different definitions of emotion in the English language.<sup>9</sup> Griffiths goes even further, as he claims that “there is no object of scientific knowledge which corresponds to ‘emotion.’”<sup>10</sup>

The obvious reason is that emotions are not clear and distinct objects that can be identified, measured, described and compared, in contrast with, for example, the five regular polyhedrons, the genome of a virus, the number of parts in a polyphonic composition, the shape and tuning of a trumpet or the physical properties of metals. Emotions cannot even be observed; we know of their existence indirectly through their reflection in the body—heart pulse, face color, breath, muscular tension, face gesture or neural stimulation—through individual behavior or through verbal description. On the contrary, emotion—as defined in a standard reference work—is “an agitation of mind . . . any strong mental or instinctive feeling”;<sup>11</sup> a subjective human inner affection that is experienced by man as a reaction to external or internal factors. Any attempt to describe emotions objectively is biased by their subjective-character nature and by the absence of a shared and accepted scientific language. Nevertheless, the necessity to understand emotions appears to be inescapable if we want to be able to explore and understand opera.

Studying the relationship of music and emotions affords two distinct approaches that require very different methodologies: the expression of emotions and the arousal of emotions.<sup>12</sup> In the first case, the music itself is the subject, and emotions are the reference. Any attempt to understand this connection needs to explore either the poietic level—the process of creation—the neutral level—the musical score—or the performative level—the actual act of music production. In the second approach, the subject is the listener whose emotions are eventually activated by music. This pertains to the aesthetic level, which is conditioned by multiple factors, including personality, musical education, performance, listening context, etc. In other words, exploring the causal connection between music and emotion in the first approach belongs to the domain of musicology, while such exploration in the second approach belongs to the domain of psychology.

As musicologists, our discussion in this chapter focuses on the neutral level, represented in opera by the libretto and the score. Following the concept of “cognate theory” coined by Hill,<sup>13</sup> we aim to critically consider the options to apply Descartes’ taxonomy of passions as a tool to analyze and classify *opera seria* arias as regards their emotional meaning. This will be done in three distinct sections. First, we will summarize the Western philosophical tradition

and current theories about human emotions to identify coincidences and discrepancies, as well as to understand Descartes' position in the general picture, although "we will not attempt to review all the *psychological* work undertaken because it is impossible to do this rich source of discussion justice here".<sup>14</sup> Second, we will review and analyze Descartes' taxonomy of passions in order to explain the singularities of his system and his definition of individual passions and the relationships established among them. Third, we will provide evidence for the profound influence of Descartes' theories in the most prominent agent in *opera seria*, the librettist Pietro Metastasio. This will allow us to settle the grounds for applying Descartes' taxonomy to the study of operatic emotions.

### Discrete emotions

The belief on the existence of discrete emotions has been an extended thought from Ancient Greece to modern times, yet most authors throughout history disagree about the number, nature, function, characteristics and effects of emotions. Although a majority of scholars recognize the existence of a reduced number of basic emotions from which all other emotions derive, the very idea of basic emotions is not always properly defined or agreed upon. Modern academic publications follow two main perspectives: "According to one, emotions are the products of natural selection. They are evolved adaptations, best understood using the explanatory tools of evolutionary psychology. According to the other, emotions are socially constructed, and they vary across cultural boundaries."<sup>15</sup> Table 9.1 summarizes the categories of basic emotions as defined by most authors discussed here, from early philosophers to modern psychologists.<sup>16</sup>

Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, defines emotions as states of consciousness accompanied by pleasure or pain. Such emotions include *desire, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendship, hatred, regret, jealousy* and *pity*.<sup>17</sup> The perspective of the Stoic school, which regarded all passions as a sickness of the soul that should be eradicated, is illustrated by Pseudo-Andronicos of Rhodes, who catalogues more 70 different passions organized in four main categories: *sadness, joy, fear* and *desire*. Augustine of Hippo mentions only five—*love, desire, fear, joy* and *sadness*<sup>18</sup>—while Thomas Aquinas discusses eleven passions, mostly organized by opposite pairs and divided into two categories: concupiscible passions—*love/hatred, desire/aversion* and *pleasure/sorrow*—and irascible passions—*hope/despair, fear/daring* and *anger*.<sup>19</sup> As we explore in more detail below, Descartes claims that there are six basic emotions—*wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy* and *sadness*—and further 43 derived ones, while Spinoza discusses around 35 emotions which are 90% coincident with Descartes' and include the same six basic passions.<sup>20</sup> Hobbes devotes several pages of his *Leviathan* to "the interior beginnings of voluntary motions commonly called passions". The discussion also reveals steady influence from Descartes, as he identifies seven simple passions—*appetite, desire, love, aversion, hate, joy* and *grief*—plus some 50 secondary ones.<sup>21</sup>

For Immanuel Kant, all human emotions derive from the faculty of desire, yet he makes a distinction between two types, affect ("Affecte") and passion ("Leidenschaft"):<sup>22</sup> affect is an intense and spontaneous but short-lived feeling, while passion is deeply rooted, takes time to develop and is difficult to eradicate: "Affect is like drunkenness that one sleeps off, although a headache follows afterward, but passion is regarded as a disease that derives from swallowing poison."<sup>23</sup> For Kant, following the Stoic school, the best state for a human being is the phlegm, the absence of any sort of emotion, since reason is opposed to both affect and passion. The same emotion, such as *desire, love* or *hatred*, can be both affect and passion, depending on the way in which the individual experiences them. Although he mentions several types of emotions, Kant does not make an open distinction between primary and secondary types. One distinct feature of his system is the identification of the dimensional character

of emotions in the polarities pleasure/displeasure—first proposed by Aristotle—and excitement/relaxation that we also find in modern psychology.<sup>24</sup>

Alexander Bain devoted an entire treatise in 1859 to the study of emotions, providing a classification in several categories that are quite different from those proposed by most other authors: *wonder, terror, tenderness, emotion of the self, emotion of power, irascible emotion, emotion of action, emotion of the intellect and sympathy*.<sup>25</sup>

A major turning point in the systematization of emotions was *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872),<sup>26</sup> in which Charles Darwin, from the perspective of evolutionary biology, claims that the physical expressions of discrete emotions is innate to humans and some animals. He discusses a large number of them, organized into seven families grouping related emotions, such as *low spirits, high spirits, reflection, hatred, disdain, surprise and self-attention*.

Modern scholarship follows two alternative and partially opposed paths to explain human emotions: the categorical model, which believes in the existence of discrete emotions that are qualitatively distinct from each other; and the dimensional model, where emotions are explained as part of a continuum defined by intensity and valence.<sup>27</sup> Most studies overlook earlier philosophical writings, particularly Descartes,<sup>28</sup> perhaps because his whole system is built on the duality of body and soul, a distinction that appears to be incompatible with modern science.<sup>29</sup>

The categorical model is more widespread. Silvan Tomkins identified eight basic emotions in 1962: *surprise, interest, joy, rage, fear, disgust, shame and anguish*.<sup>30</sup> In 1987, Oatley and Johnson started to develop their own theory of basic emotions from an evolutionary cognitive perspective, proposing a partially different list: *happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and desire*.<sup>31</sup> Paul Ekman coined in 1992 his Basic Emotion Theory (BET), grounded on the study of facial expressions among diverse cultures worldwide, where he identified six basic emotions—*anger, fear, sadness, enjoyment, disgust and surprise*—to which further five could be added—*contempt, shame, guilt, embarrassment and awe*.<sup>32</sup> Ekman's Big Six, as they are often referred to, “have become the mostly widely accepted candidates for basic emotions”,<sup>33</sup> but there are other players in the race. In 1993, Carroll Izard developed a Differential Emotions Theory (DET) which initially included twelve discrete emotions: *interest, enjoyment, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, guilty, shame, shyness, and hostility inward*.<sup>34</sup> In later works, Izard makes a further distinction: She identifies six basic emotions as natural kinds, implying that they are “categories or families of phenomena having common properties that are given by nature”, which differ from emotion schemas, more elaborate emotional categories that imply cognitive intervention.<sup>35</sup> In other words, Izard's basic emotions would be innate to human beings while emotional schemas would be social constructions. Her basic emotions are almost coincident with Ekman's, with the exception that she includes *interest* in place of *surprise*. Applying cladistic analysis borrowed from biology, philosopher Paul Griffiths discarded the validity of the term ‘emotion’ because it is used in “folk psychology” to refer to three separate categories: 1) the affect program theory (short-term responses generally equivalent to Ekman's or Izard's basic emotions); 2) irruptive emotional states (higher cognitive emotions sustained in time, such as loyalty); and 3) social constructed emotional responses (complex emotional constructions based on accepted cultural models within specific social communities, equivalent to Izard's emotional schemas).<sup>36</sup> Very much in the path of Darwin, Jaak Panksepp explored emotions from the perspective of neural mechanisms of mammals to propose a Psychoevolutionary Theory of Basic Emotions, defined as “discrete natural kinds that are qualitatively distinct from each other.” Panksepp identifies seven basic emotions, shared by humans and some animals, that “are the products of distinct neurophysiological systems that are rooted in subcortical structures and that predate human evolution”: *seeking, rage, fear, panic, play, lust and care*.<sup>37</sup>

One of the main experts in the relationship between music and emotions, Patrick N. Juslin, suggests that musical emotions differ depending on the perspective. In regards to the emotions that can be expressed in music, most studies based on the opinions of listeners show a tendency to highlight *happiness, sadness, anger, fear* and *love-tenderness*.<sup>38</sup> Conversely, Juslin proposes a quite different set of broad emotional categories that are aroused by music: *calm-relaxation, happiness-elation, nostalgia-longing, interest-expectancy, pleasure-enjoyment, sadness-melancholy, arousal-energy, love-tenderness, pride-confidence, admiration-awe* and *spirituality-transcendence*.<sup>39</sup>

The roots of the dimensional model can be traced back to Aristotle and Kant, and to a certain extent also to Descartes, which we will explain later. Its main exponent among modern psychologists is James A. Russell (1980), who, discarding the existence of discrete emotions, defined a Circumplex Model where emotions are explained in a bi-dimensional space defined by two axes representing the polarities of activation (arousal/sleepiness) and valence (misery/pleasure). Russell’s methodology diverges from most other authors, as he does not depart from evolutionary or neurophysiological features but from the study of language and the affective concepts reported by laymen—that is, the language of common people with no psychological training—giving particular emphasis to the fuzziness of emotional terminology. He claims that emotional labels cannot refer to discrete concepts since they lack sharp boundaries: “Each emotion word can thus be considered a label for a fuzzy set,<sup>40</sup> defined as a class without sharp boundaries, in which there is a gradual but specifiable transition from membership to non-membership.”<sup>41</sup> In the Circumplex Model, all emotions could be represented around a circle defined by two axes, where the labels used to identify each significant point in the circle are not to be understood as discrete emotions; in fact, Russell changed the labels from his original article in 1980 to a later exposition in 2012, as represented in Figure 9.1.<sup>42</sup>

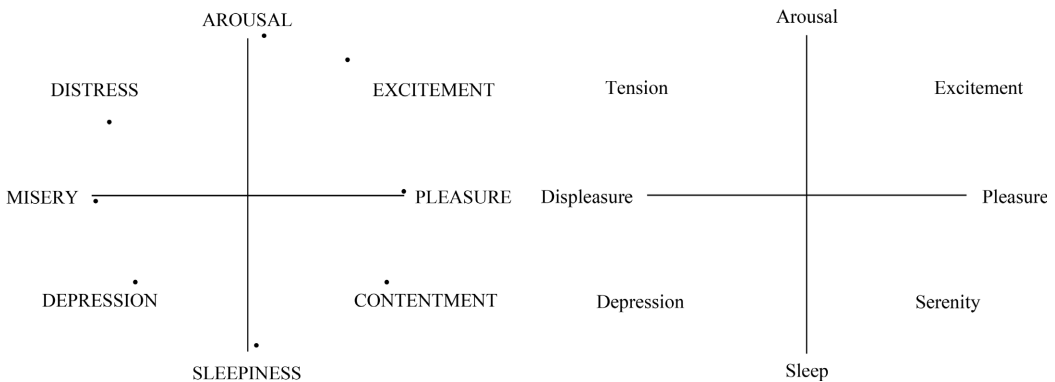


Figure 9.1 Russell Circumplex Model.

Source: Russell, “A Circumplex Model,” 1164; and Russell, “From a psychological,” 86.

Shaver et al. (1987) also further explored the implications of emotion categories from the perspective of language as fuzzy sets to define a hierarchical structure of the emotion domain that resulted in the categorization of emotion names in a tree organized in six major branches, partially coincident with other authors: *love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness* and *fear*. Each branch splits into further divisions resulting into 25 clusters or fuzzy sets of emotional labels that represent related emotional concepts (Figure 9.2).<sup>43</sup>

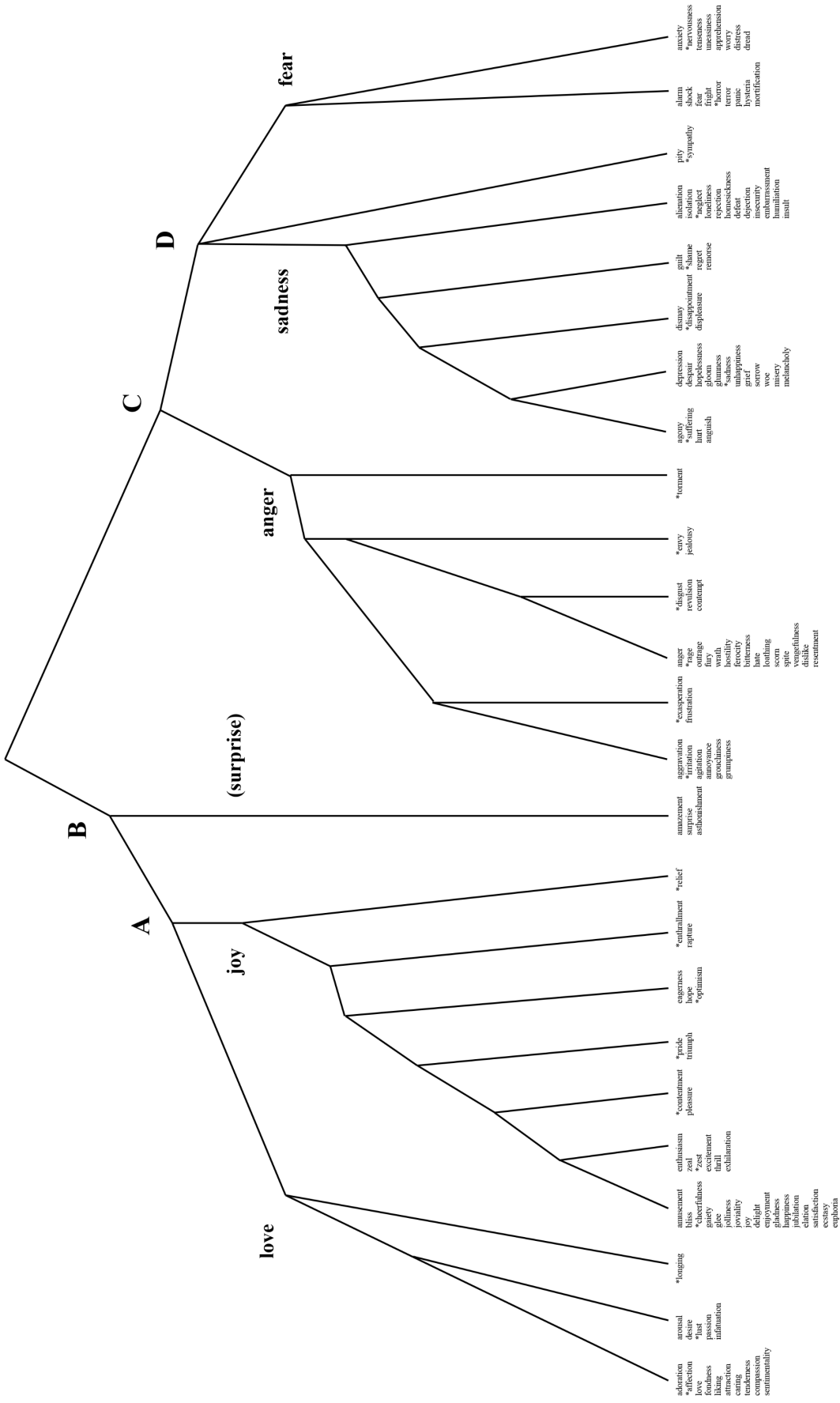


Figure 9.2 Shaver Tree of Emotions.

Source: Shaver et al., "Emotion Knowledge", 1067.



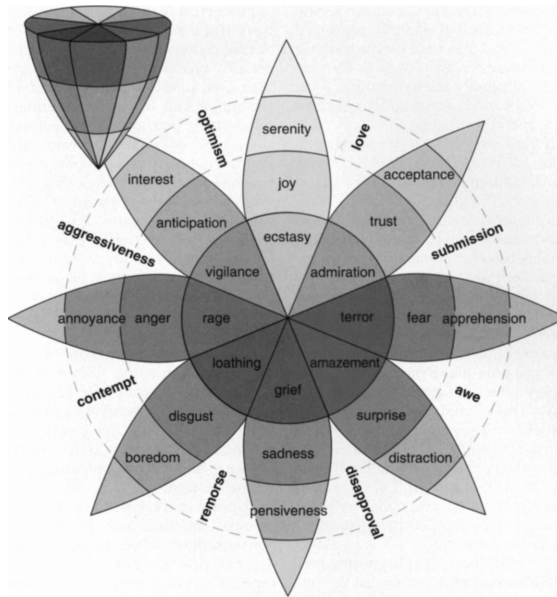


Figure 9.3 Plutchik’s wheel of emotions (a colored version of this figure is available in the electronic version of this volume).

Source: Plutchik, “The Nature of Emotions”, 349.

Robert Plutchik’s original exposition of a theory of eight bipolar emotions was published in 1958, presenting four pairs: *joy/sorrow*, *anger/fear*, *acceptance/disgust* and *surprise/expectancy*. In later writings, he explored the parallels with Russell’s Circumplex Model to define a wheel of emotions in 1980 (Figure 9.3), inspired in the theory of basic colors: The eight basic emotions are represented occupying the main axes in a circle, while other emotions derive from these, either in the degree of intensity or from the blending of basic emotions. In this model, *ecstasy* would then be an example of intense *joy*, while *love* would be an amalgam of *joy* and *trust*.<sup>44</sup>

The categories of basic emotions defined by most of the proponents of categorical models are represented in Table 9.1. This table also includes examples of secondary passions in Descartes’ taxonomy (in italics) when these are identified as basic emotions in any author (these do not sum in the total count). We also use italics for further basic emotions included by Ekman and Izard. It is interesting to note that Descartes does not consider at all many of the basic emotions later proposed by modern authors among his 49 passions.

Table 9.1 presents a challenging picture, even if we take into account that the matching of emotional labels among different authors is tentative and subject to the contingencies of language and translation. First, can we positively identify Aristotle’s *χαρά* with Panksepp’s *play*, Oatley’s *enjoyment* or Descartes’ *joie*? Furthermore, we have matched in the same category labels that are not exactly the same in English: In the category *sadness* we also include *ἔλεον* (*pity*), *λύπη* (sometimes translated as *pain*), *tristitia*, *grief* and *anguish*; in that of *curiosity* we



is also classified as a basic emotion by several authors, yet it is clear that the term does not have the same meaning for all of them: For Christian authors—Augustine and Aquinas—desire appears to be associated with erotic attraction, as their use of the words *cupiditas* and *concupiscentia* suggests, and this seems to be the sense in Oatley or Panksepp, too; however, *desire* appears to have a different meaning in Spinoza, where it is defined as an “inclination to obtain what is wanting,”<sup>46</sup> as well as in Kant, who builds his whole system of emotions as a part of the faculty of *desire* (it has even wider a meaning in Descartes, which we will discuss). Descartes is alone in selecting *wonder* as a basic emotion, yet his definition can be tentatively identified with *surprise*. Many modern theorists of emotions propose categories that are unique to them: Ekman includes *embarrassment* and *awe*, and Izard includes *hostility inward* and *shyness*, while both authors are the only ones to include *contempt* and *guilt* as basic emotions.

<i>Plutchik</i>	<i>Tomkins</i>	<i>Shaver</i>	<i>Oatley &amp; Johnson</i>	<i>Ekman (BET)</i>	<i>Izard (DET)</i>	<i>Panksepp</i>	<i>Juslin</i>	
1958/1980	1962	1987	1987/1990	1992	1992/2007	1998	2019	
Joy	Joy	Joy	Happiness	Enjoyment	Enjoyment	Play	Happiness	16
Sadness	Anguish	Sadness	Sadness	Sadness	Sadness		Sadness	15
Fear	Fear	Fear	Fear	Fear	Fear	Fear	Fear	12
Anger	Rage	Anger	Anger	Anger	Anger	Rage	Anger	10
		Love				Care	Love	9
			Desire			Lust		9
Disgust	Disgust		Disgust	Disgust	Disgust			8
Surprise	Surprise	Surprise		Surprise	<i>Surprise</i>			8
								6
Anticipation	Interest				Interest	Seeking		4
	Shame			<i>Shame</i>	<i>Shame</i>			4
Trust								3
				<i>Contempt</i>	<i>Contempt</i>			3
				<i>Guilt</i>	<i>Guilt</i>			2
								1
								1
								1
								1
								1
								1
								1
Trust				<i>Embarrassment</i>				1
				<i>Awe</i>				1
					<i>Hostility inward</i>			1
					<i>Shyness</i>			1
						Panic	1	1

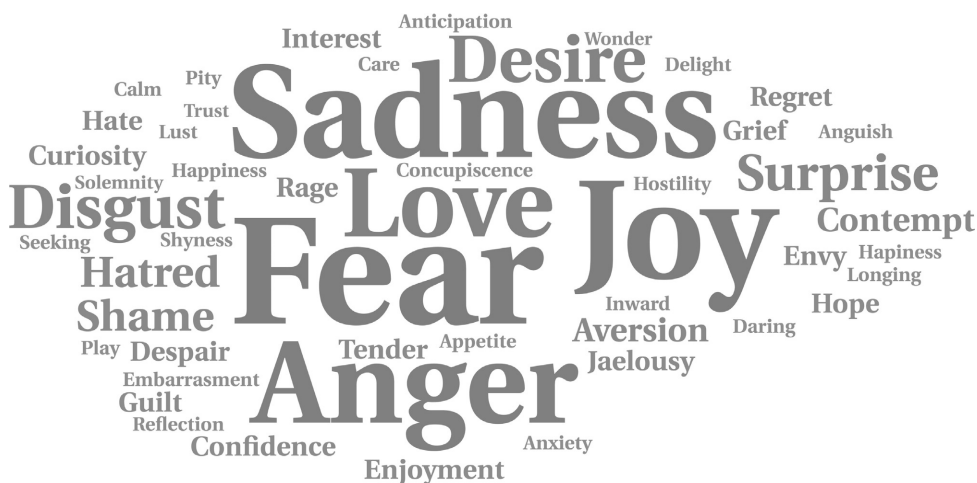


Figure 9.4 Word cloud of basic emotions through history.

### *The languages of emotions*

All the differences scrutinized in the previous section confirm our initial statement that there is no general consensus about the identification of basic emotions. And we should also emphasize that it is unclear whether sharing the same or a similar label implies that all authors refer to the same concept. In fact, the issue was noted by Descartes and Metastasio themselves. This challenge has not escaped the attention of modern scholars. Russell claims that every individual has an implicit theory of emotions or, in other words, “persons possess a cognitive structure capable of representing affect”, a theory that is directly related to language and therefore conditioned by the specific tongue of each individual’s thinking. Plutchik has expressed a similar problem:

Language itself introduces ambiguity and does not make it easy to describe mixed emotions in an unequivocal way. The meaning of emotion terms is often obscure. For example, many people are not sure about the differences between fear and anxiety, guilt and shame, or envy and jealousy. As a result, *we often resort to metaphor* to attempt to describe emotion.<sup>47</sup>

Griffiths entirely neglects any study of emotions based on terminology—what he calls conceptual analysis—because this approach does not study emotions themselves as natural kinds but how they are expressed in language.<sup>48</sup> His position is opposite to Wierzbicka, whose discussion of “emotional universals” is fundamentally based on empirical cross-linguistic investigations together with the analysis of facial gestures.<sup>49</sup>

This issue becomes even more complex when navigating between several tongues, which is our case here: We should not forget that Aristotle wrote in Ancient Greek; Augustine, Aquinas and Spinoza in quite different stages of Latin; Descartes in French; Kant in German; and the remaining authors in English, while the language of Metastasio and *opera seria* was Italian. Can we be sure we are adequately translating each emotional term?

The semantic variation of the vocabulary for emotions has been explored by Jackson, comparing the use of 24 emotional terms in 2,474 languages from 20 language families around the globe. The method was aimed at finding the degree of colexification, “instances in which multiple concepts are coexpressed by the same word form within a language”.<sup>50</sup> This concept implicitly accepts the fuzziness of emotional labels and demonstrates that language families differentiate emotions primarily on the basis of hedonic valence and physiological activation, thus embracing Russell’s dimensional theory. The concepts that exist in more languages are *good* (2,426) and *bad* (1,786), while the labels for some of the most common passions in the literature discussed so far reveal intriguing figures. For example, the word *joy* has equivalents in 102 languages only, yet this emotion may presumably be expressed with the word *happy* in 570 other languages; the same could be said about *sad* (167) and *grief* (562). *Desire*, one of the central concepts in Descartes’ system, has equivalents in 58 languages only, yet a similar concept is probably expressed with the word *want* in another 739 languages (this is actually the word with the largest number of colexifications).

Table 9.2 Emotions ranked by availability.

<i>Emotion</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Colexifications</i>
Good	2426	650
Bad	1786	417
Want	739	1008
Love	712	315
Hate	602	111
Happy	570	152
Grief	562	152
Fear	533	156
Shame	475	45
Anger	353	112
Envy	346	48
Surprise	308	26
Sad	167	15
Joy	102	6
Desire	58	89

(Source: Jackson et al., 2019; selection.)

If we look at the colexification of two significant emotions such as *love* and *hate* in several language families, we also observe interesting differences. Most families share colexifications of *love* with *want*, *good*, *proud* or *like*, yet Austronesian languages associate *love* with sad emotions such as *pity*, *grief*, *regret* and *anxiety*. *Hate*, on the other hand, does not show any colexification in Indo-European languages, implying that in these cultures it is a very distinct emotion, while it is associated with *proud* in Austronesian languages. This confirms that *proud* can have opposite nuances in different languages (as also happens with Descartes).

Table 9.3 Colexification of *love* and *hate* in major linguistic families.

<i>Love</i>					
<i>Universal</i>	<i>Austronesian</i>	<i>Austroasiatic</i>	<i>Indo-European</i>	<i>Tai-Kadai</i>	<i>Nakh-Daghestanian</i>
Want	Good	Want	Want	Proud	Want
Proud	Pity	Good	Good	Like	Good
Like	Grief	Proud	Like	Happy	Proud
Happy	Regret	Happy	Merry		Like
Hope	Anxiety	Hope			Hope
Desire					
Joy					
<i>Hate</i>					
<i>Universal</i>	<i>Austronesian</i>	<i>Austroasiatic</i>	<i>Indo-European</i>	<i>Tai-Kadai</i>	<i>Nakh-Daghestanian</i>
Bad	Bad		[no colexification]		[nonexistent]
Anger	Anger	Anger		Anger	
Envy	Proud	Envy		Envy	
				Anxiety	
				Fear	

(Source: Jackson et al. 2019.)<sup>51</sup>

### Descartes' passions

The aim of music “is to please and to arouse various emotions in us”, wrote Descartes at the beginning of his first book, *Musicae Compendium* (1618).<sup>52</sup> The focus of his very last book was precisely to define and to explain human emotions, what he called *The passions of the soul* (1649), “one of the most influential books of his time”,<sup>53</sup> where he defined passions as “perceptions, or sensations, or emotions of the soul”. There are several reasons to use Descartes' emotional categories as a foundation for a cognate theory that might be applied to the analytical study of the emotions in opera arias, in the style fostered by John Walter Hill:

1. It proposes a well-organized and systematic taxonomy of emotions.
2. It was translated into several languages from the decade after its publication, including a number of reprints of the Latin translation, which probably was the most widely disseminated around Europe.
3. It was Metastasio's conceptual framework for the study and the expression of passions, as we discuss.
4. It was also the main reference work on this matter for music theorists dealing with this subject, such as Johann Mattheson.<sup>54</sup>

The first part of *Les passions de l'âme* is devoted to explaining the mechanics of passions and the interaction between the body and the soul. It describes their physical manifestations regarding the movement of the heart, muscles, body organs and animal spirits,<sup>55</sup> as well as their reflection in the changes in face color and breathing. The second and third part of the treatise provide an exhaustive taxonomy of the individual passions, making a clear distinction between the six basic passions and 43 other passions derived from these. As observed by Brown, for most secondary passions this taxonomy is not primarily based on the physical

manifestations described in Part One, but rather on the formal object of each passion, as can be observed in the following summary.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, beyond the physical manifestations and the object, other parameters are important in Descartes' system of passions, such as their intensity (the difference between *contempt* and *disdain* or between *cowardice* and *terror* is just a matter of grade); their positive or negative value (when the individual perceives that any good or bad derives from the object of the passion); or their temporal reference (past, present or future).

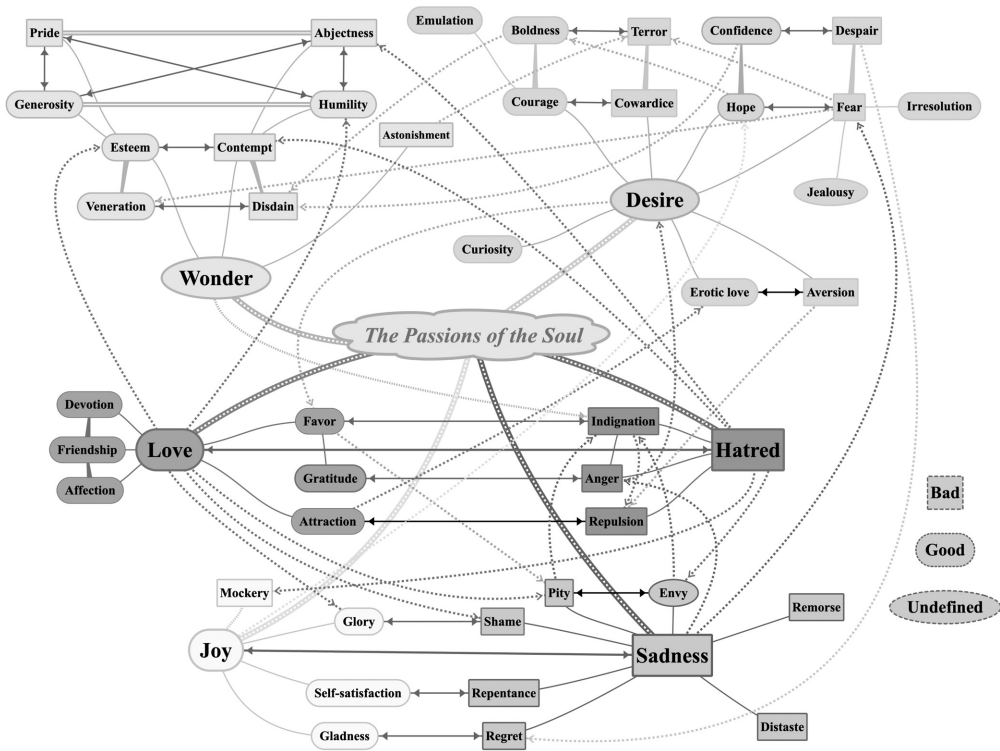


Figure 9.5 Visual representation of Descartes' system of passions with their relationships (a colored version of this figure is available in the electronic version of this volume).

Descartes' system of passions is represented in Figure 9.5, where the six basic passions generate branches with distinctive colors; all derived passions are presented as sub-branches. Passions related through degree of intensity are connected with thick lines, while contrary pairs of passions are connected with gray arrows. The mixture of passions is represented with dotted lines and arrows connecting the influencing passion to the resulting one. The shape of the label reveals the valence: positive passions have a round shape and negative ones have a square shape, while passions that can have positive or negative valence have an elliptical shape. The temporal reference is not visually represented, yet all passions deriving from *desire* refer to the future, and only very few passions can refer to the past: *remorse*, *self-satisfaction*, *repentance*, *regret*, *gladness* and *repulsion*.

Descartes' six basic passions are organized into two opposed pairs—*love/hatred* and *joy/sadness*—plus two independent passions that do not have an opposite: *wonder* and *desire*. John Walter Hill suggests that the first four passions can easily be placed in dimensional axes not very different from Russell's, based on the polarities expansion/contraction and pleasure/pain as represented in Figure 9.6. Hill explains that “a large number of emotions could be found between the extreme points marked by the four primary passions shown in the figure and would result in some mixture of two or more of them.”<sup>57</sup>

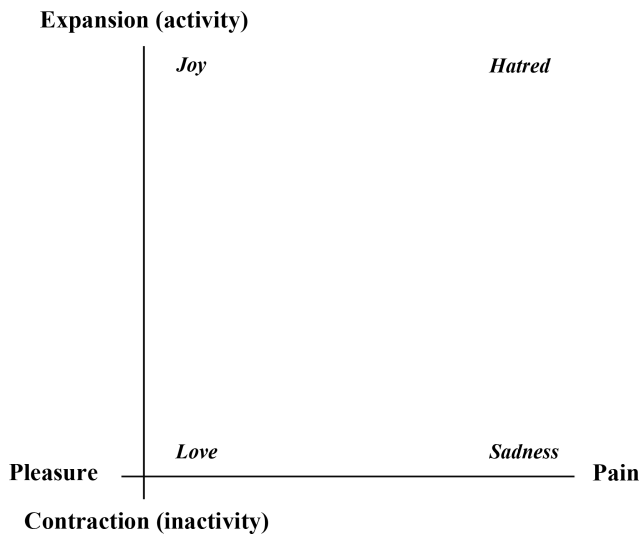


Figure 9.6 Spatial representation of four of Descartes' basic passions.

Source: Hill, *Baroque Music*, 390.

For Descartes, the other two passions, *wonder* and *desire*, refer to specific human features that usually appear combined with others. The subsequent derived passions are either varieties of one primary passion, depending on their object, their intensity, their perceived value for oneself (good or bad) or a combination of two or more primary passions. The description of the system is not completely consistent, but it is quite logical. Understanding the system requires comprehending the features of each of the basic passions.

### **Wonder (“*admiration*”)**

*Wonder* is the reaction to the sudden representation of an unexpected object that appears to be rare and extraordinary.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it is a very subjective passion, as it does not only depend on the nature of the object but also on how it is perceived. Descartes explains that *wonder* “can happen before we know whether the object is beneficial to us.” Therefore, the type of *wonder* depends on our perception of the object. *Esteem* (“*esteem*”) and *contempt*



(“mépris”) are forms of *wonder* “depending on whether it is the greatness or the littleness of the object that we marvel at”, and they are sometimes, but not always, aroused by *love* or *hatred* respectively. *Veneration* (“vénération”) and *disdain* (“dédain”) are forms of *wonder* for objects that we perceive as “capable of doing good or evil” to us; *veneration* is a form of *esteem* combined with certain *fear*, while *disdain* is a form of *contempt* mingled with *confidence* or *boldness*. When the object of *esteem* or *contempt* is oneself, these result in other species of passions. On the one hand, there are two kinds of *self-esteem* depending on whether one esteems oneself for good or bad reasons: *generosity* (“générosité”)—also referred to as *magnanimity* (“magnanimité”)—and *pride* (“orgueil”). There are only two good reasons for Descartes: the awareness that man’s only real possession is his capacity to direct his acts of will and his resolution to make good use of it, which results in Descartes’ supreme passion, *generosity*.<sup>59</sup> Conversely, *pride* is *self-esteem* for any other reason, and is always regarded by Descartes as a vicious passion, in the sense of vanity or arrogance.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, *self-contempt* leads to two forms of *humility*: *virtuous humility* (“humilité vertueuse”), when one is aware of his own limitations and defects and does not rate oneself above anyone else; and *vicious humility* (“humilité vicieuse”) or *abjectness* (“bassesse”), when one perceives oneself as weak and lacking in will, often resulting in negative behavior.<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, Descartes explains that *generosity* is often paired with *humility*, while *pride* usually goes together with *abjectness*. Finally, *astonishment* (“étonnement”) is just an excess of *wonder*.

### Desire (“désir”)

The basic passion of *desire* “is always related to the future” (§57)<sup>62</sup> and is defined as the willingness to acquire or avoid an object perceived as good or harmful for oneself.<sup>63</sup> Thus, it is more complex and instrumental in Descartes than in other authors, where *desire* is identified almost exclusively with sexual desire, as we have seen.

Hope (“espérance”) derives from the belief that one will obtain something good in the future, while *fear* (“crainte”) is the belief that one will not obtain something good or will obtain something bad. Both passions usually exist together in some sort of balance when we perceive both options as possible. *Confidence* (“sécurité”)—also referred to as *assurance* (“assurance”)—and *despair* (“désespoir”) are just extreme examples of *hope* and *fear* respectively, and their intensity is so great that they can extinguish any *desire*. *Jealousy* (“jalousie”) is a type of *fear* that aims to “retain the possession of some good” (§167), yet in Descartes’ definition it can be a positive passion; for example, when a woman is jealous of her own honesty. *Irresolution* (“irrésolution”) is a species of fear holding the soul in suspense, unable to decide between several actions.

*Courage* (“courage”) disposes us to execute the tasks we want to perform, while *boldness* (“hardiesse”) is an extreme species of *courage* that moves us to execute the most dangerous tasks, thus also requiring the perception of *hope*. *Emulation* (“émulation”) is also a species of *courage* aiming at undertaking tasks we believe to be reachable. Opposite to *courage* is *cowardice* (“lâcheté”), a passion that prevents us from performing tasks. *Terror* (“peur”)—also referred to as *horror* (“épouvante”)—is the extreme manifestation of *cowardice*; it provokes paralysis and is the opposite to *boldness*. Because it has no positive use, Descartes concludes that *terror* is not a real passion but an excess of *cowardice*, *fear* and *astonishment*. Finally, *curiosity* (“curiosité”) is just the *desire* of knowledge, while *aversion* (“aversion”) is a variant of *desire* born of *repulsion* (itself a species of *hatred*, as we will explain), and not the contrary of *desire*, as claimed by Aquinas.

**Love (“*amour*”) and hatred (“*haine*”)**

*Love* is experienced when one perceives that an object is good for oneself and wants to be united with it.<sup>64</sup> On the contrary, *hatred* is experienced when we perceive that an object is bad and harmful and we want to be separated from it.<sup>65</sup> Descartes rejects the scholastic division between *love* of concupiscence and of benevolence, claiming that such a distinction only applies to the effects of *love*. He also discards the distinction between species of *love* depending on their object, claiming that certain uses of *love* do not refer to the object but to the possession of it, as would be the case of the *love* of glory or of money.

One of the subdivisions of *love* depends more on the value given to the beloved object as compared to oneself. For example, we experience *affection* (“affection”) when we love someone that we value less than ourselves, *friendship* (“amitié”) when we love someone valued as equal to us, and *devotion* (“dévotion”) when the object of our love is perceived as superior to us, such as the love of God or of the king.

Descartes makes a further distinction between species of *love* and *hatred* depending on whether the value of the object is perceived by the reason as good or bad, or by the senses as beautiful or ugly. In the latter cases, he classes the *love* toward beautiful objects as *attraction* (“agrément”) and the *hatred* for ugly objects as *repulsion* (“horreur”). The specific type of desire born out of attraction is commonly called *love*, “and it is the principal subject matter of the writers of romance and the poets” (§90, here referred to as *erotic love*).

Another distinction between species of *love* and *hatred* derives from the good or evil done by others and its relationship to us. We experience *favor* (“faveur”) for “the good done by others”, yet it becomes *gratitude* (“reconnaissance”) when “it is done for us” (§64). Conversely, we experience *indignation* (“indignation”) for the evil “done by others that does not refer to us in any way”, yet this becomes *anger* (“colère”) when this evil “refers to us” (§65). Descartes further divides *anger* into two types: the first is quick to arise and to vanish and shows more external signs because it is rooted in *aversion*, while the second type is more intense and long-lasting because it is rooted in *hatred* and *sadness*, a typical passion of proud, abject and weak people. Both *favor* and *gratitude* are accompanied by *desire*, while *indignation* is usually combined with *envy* or *pity* and accompanied by *wonder*. Interestingly, Descartes considers that the opposite of *gratitude* is not *ingratitude* (“ingratitude”), which he classifies as a vice and not as a passion, but *anger*.

**Joy (“*joie*”) and sadness (“*tristesse*”)**

The passions of *joy* and *sadness* refer to the good or evil perceived as belonging to oneself in the present moment; while *joy* is “an agreeable emotion” (§91),<sup>66</sup> *sadness* is “a disagreeable feeling of weakness (§92).”<sup>67</sup> The definition of these two passions clearly fits in the dimensional polarity pleasure/displeasure endorsed by Aristotle, Kant and Russell, as illustrated in Figure 9.6.

*Gladness* (“allégresse”) and *regret* (“regret”) are species of these two passions when we have memory of evils or goodness from the past, being *regret* mingled with some *despair*. *Distaste* (“dégout”), also called *boredom* (“ennui”), is experienced when we have enjoyed some good for too long and it becomes no longer agreeable.

The perception of good or evil toward others results in several species of *joy* and *sadness*. *Envy* (“envie”) is a species of *sadness* mingled with *hatred* resulting from seeing good things received by those who do not deserve them. It can be positive or negative, depending on whether or not the person envied deserves those good things. *Pity* (“pitié”) is a type of *sadness* mingled with *love* when we see someone suffering underserved evil. *Mockery* (“moquerie”) is

a peculiar passion that combines *joy* and *hatred*, derived from the perception of some trivial evil in a person who deserves it; it is often accompanied by laughter.

*Remorse* (“remords”) is a species of *sadness* arising when we feel that something we have done or are doing may be bad. It is different from *repentance* (“repentir”), a kind of *sadness* arising from the awareness—not just the suspicion—that we have done something bad. *Repentance* is opposed to *self-satisfaction* (“satisfaction de soi même”), a species of *joy* aroused from the awareness of having done something good: the sweetest of all passions for Descartes, because it only depends on oneself. Finally, Descartes makes a distinction between *glory* (“gloire”) and *shame* (“honte”). *Glory* is a species of *joy* based on the *love* we have for ourselves deriving from the belief or hope that others are praising or will praise us, yet it is different from *self-satisfaction* in that it depends on the opinion of others. Conversely, *shame* is a species of *sadness* combined with *love* of self that derives from the belief or *fear* that one is being, or will be, blamed by others.

It is clear from this description of Descartes’ taxonomy that the perception of goodness or badness in the object inciting the passion is essential to distinguish between the majority of emotions, including four of the basic passions. However, it would appear that the exact nuances of “good” and “bad” are not always the same, since sometimes they have a clear moral connotation—virtuous or vicious humility—while on other occasions they refer to the perception of potential benefit or damage to oneself—as in the division between *love* and *hatred*, *joy* and *sadness*, *attraction* and *repulsion* or *veneration* and *disdain*.

The distinctions between certain passions are usually clear in his logical explanation but do not seem to result in clearly distinct effects. The difference between *joy* and *sadness* on the one hand and *gladness* and *regret* on the other lies in the fact that the latter passions refer to the past, yet it would be extremely difficult to differentiate between the means to express any of the pairs. Furthermore, the differences between *remorse*, *regret* and *repentance*, all three varieties of *sadness*, are also subtle. The three refer to the past, although in different manners: while *regret* derives from the memory of missing goodness, *remorse* and *repentance* derive from the suspicion or awareness that our actions are evil. It is also difficult to understand the actual difference between *veneration* and *devotion*, as both words can be regarded as synonymous in modern usage.<sup>68</sup> For Descartes, *devotion* is a kind of *love* for something perceived as better than ourselves, while *veneration* is an inclination to *esteem*—a type of *wonder* combined with *love*—a great object capable of doing good or bad, and is therefore somehow associated with certain *fear*.

### *Traduttore, traditore*

Just one year after its publication, *Les passions de l’âme* was translated into Latin and English; the Latin translation was reprinted several times in the seventeenth century and appears to have been the most widely read through Europe in the following century or more. Two undated Italian translations were made around the early eighteenth century—one attributed to Niccolò Giuvo—and the first German one in 1727. All the editions and translations of the treatise used here are listed at the end of the chapter.

Descartes’ taxonomy is not lacking in obscurities or potential confusion, since his use of some terms does not seem to agree with their later usage, as confirmed by the divergent translations. This can be observed in Table 9.4, which compiles the 49 labels used by Descartes, as well as their translations into several languages—Latin, Italian, English, German and Spanish—together with the terminology used by Metastasio in his letters (column in gray); basic passions are presented in boldface.<sup>69</sup>

Table 9.4 Translations in Latin, Italian, English, German and Spanish of Descartes' taxonomy of passions (variants in color visible in the electronic version of this volume).

<i>Art.</i>	<i>Français</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Lomonaco</i>	<i>Giuvio?</i>	<i>Obinu</i>	<i>Metastasio</i>	<i>Anonymous</i>	<i>Voss</i>
<i>Y</i>	1649	1650	ca. 1700	1700–1750	2000		1650	1989
53	<b>admiration</b>	<b>admiratio</b>	<b>ammirazione</b>	<b>maraviglia</b>	<b>meraviglia</b>	<b>ammirazione</b>	<b>admiratio</b>	<b>wonder</b>
54	estime	existimatio	stima	stima	stima	stima	estimation	esteem
54	mespris	contemptus	disprezzo	disprezzo	disprezo	disprezzo	contempt	scorn
54	générosité	generositas	magnanimità	generosità	generosità	magnanimità/ generosità	generosity	generotisy
54	orgueil	superbia	orgoglio	superbia	orgoglio	orgoglio	pride	pride
54	humilité	humilitas	umiltà	umiltà	umiltà	umiltà	humility	humility
54	bassesse	abjectio	bassezza	vilezza	bassezza	bassezza	dejection	servility
55	vénération	veneratio	venerare	venerazione	venerazione	venerazione	eneration	eneration
55	dédain	despectus	sdegno	disprezamento	disdegno	sdegno	disdain	disdain
56	<b>amour</b>	<b>amor</b>	<b>amore</b>	<b>amore</b>	<b>amore</b>	<b>amore</b>	<b>love</b>	<b>love</b>
56	<b>haine</b>	<b>odium</b>	<b>odio</b>	<b>odio</b>	<b>odio</b>	<b>odio</b>	<b>hatred</b>	<b>hatred</b>
57	<b>désir</b>	<b>cupiditas</b>	<b>desiderio</b>	<b>desiderio</b>	<b>desiderio</b>	<b>desiderio</b>	<b>desire</b>	<b>desire</b>
58	espérance	spes	speranza	speranza	speranza	speranza	hope	hope
58	crainte	metus	timore	paura	timore	temore	fear	aprehension
58	jalousie	zelotypia	gelosia	gelosia	gelosia	gelosia	jealousy	jealousy
58	sécurité	securitas	sicurezza	sicurezza	sicurezza	sicurezza	security	confidence
58	désespoir	desperatio	disperazione	disperazione	disperazione	disperazione	dispaire	despair
59	irrésolution	animi fluctuatio	irrisoluzione	ondeggiamento dell'animo	irrisolutezza	irrisolutezza	irresolution	irresolution
59	courage	animositas	coraggio	animosità	coraggio	coraggio	courage	courage
59	hardiesse	audacia	ardire	audacia	ardimento	ardire	boldnesse	boldness
59	émulation	aemulatio	emulazione	emulazione	emulazione	emulazione	emulation	emulation
59	lâchéte	pusillanimitas	pusillanimità	pusillanimità	codardia	pusillanimità	cowardice	cowardice
59	épouvante	consternatio	spavento	sgomentamento	spavento	spavento	affright	terror
60	remords	synteresis	rimorso	rimordi- mento della coscienza	rimorso	rimorso	remorse	remorse
61	<b>joie</b>	<b>gaudium</b>	<b>gioia</b>	<b>allegrezza</b>	<b>gioia</b>	<b>gioia</b>	<b>joy</b>	<b>joy</b>
61	<b>tristesse</b>	<b>tristitia</b>	<b>tristezza</b>	<b>malinconia</b>	<b>tristezza</b>	<b>tristezza</b>	<b>sadness</b>	<b>sadness</b>
62	moquerie	irrisio	derisione	scherzo	motteggio	derisione	derision	mockery
62	envie	invidia	invidia	nvidia	invidia	invidia	envy	envy
62	pitié	commiseratio	pietà	commiserazione	pietà	compassione/ pietà	pity	pity
63	satisfaction de soi même	acquiescentia in se ipso	soddisfazione	chetanza in se stesso	soddisfazione di sé	soddisfazione	satisfaction of a man's self	self satisfaction
63	repentir	paenitentia	pentimento	pentimento	pentimento	pentimento	repentance	repentance
64	faveur	favor	favore	favore	benevolenza	favore	good-will	approval
64	reconnais- sance	gratitudo	riconoscenza	gratitudine	riconoscenza	riconoscenza	Gratitude	gratitude
65	indignation	indignatio	indignazione	sdegno	indignazione	indignazione	indignation	indignation
65	colère	ira	ira	ira	collera	collera	wrath	anger
66	glorie	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria	glory	vainglory
66	honte	pudor	vergogna	vergogna	vergogna	vergogna	shame	shame
67	dégoût	fastidium	disgusto	noia	disgusto	disgusto	distaste	distaste
67	regret	desiderium	dispiacimento	cordoglio	rimpianto	dispiacimento	sorrow	regret
67	allégresse	hilaritas	allegrezza	gioia	allegria	allegria	lighthearted- ness	lighthearted- ness
73	étonnement	stupore	stupore	stupore	stupore	stupore	astonishment	astonishment
83	affection	benevolentia	affezione	benevolgenza	affetto	affetto	affection	affection
83	amitié	amicitia	amicizia	amicizia	amicizia	amicizia	friendship	friendship
83	dévotion	devotio	divozione	divozione	devozione	devozione	devotion	devotion
85	agrément	complacentia	gradimento	gradimento	gradimento	gradimento	liking	delight
85	horreur	horrore	orrore	orrore	orrore	orrore	horror	abhorrence
88	curiosité	curiositas	curiosità	curiosità	curiosità	curiosità	Curiosity	curiosity
89	aversion	aversio	aversione	aversione	aversione	aversione	aversion	aversion

<i>Bennett</i>	<i>Moriarty</i>	<i>Tilesio</i>	<i>Kirchmann</i>	<i>Martínez</i>	<i>Pacho</i>	<i>Onaindia</i>
2010	2015	1723	1870	1997	2005	2005
<b>wonder</b>	<b>wonderment</b>	<b>Verwunderung</b>	<b>Verwunderung</b>	<b>admiración</b>	<b>admiración</b>	<b>admiración</b>
esteem	esteem	Hochachtung	Achtung	aprecio	estimación	stima
contempt	contempt	Geringschätzung	Verachtung	menosprecio	desprecio	desprecio
generosity	nobility of the soul	Generosität	Edelmuth	generosidad	generosidad	generosidad
pride	pride	Hochmut	Stolz	orgullo	orgullo	orgullo
humility	humility	Demut	Demuth	humildad	humildad	humildad
abjectness	baseness of spirit	Niederträchtigkeit	Gemeinheit	bajeza	bajeza	bajeza
veneration	veneration	Ehrerbietigkeit	Verherung	veneración	veneración	veneración
scorn	disdain	Verachtung	Verachtung	desdén	desdén	desdén
<b>love</b>	<b>love</b>	<b>Liebe</b>	<b>Liebe</b>	<b>amor</b>	<b>amor</b>	<b>amor</b>
<b>hatred</b>	<b>hatred</b>	<b>Haß</b>	<b>Hass</b>	<b>odio</b>	<b>odio</b>	<b>odio</b>
<b>desire</b>	<b>desire</b>	<b>Begierde</b>	<b>Begheren</b>	<b>deseo</b>	<b>deseo</b>	<b>deseo</b>
hope	hope	Hoffnung	Hoffnung	esperanza	esperanza	esperanza
anxiety	fear	Furcht	Furcht	temor	temor	temor
jealousy	jealousy	Eifersucht	Eifersucht	celos	celotipia	celos
confidence	complacency	Sicherheit	Zuversicht	seguridad	seguridad	seguridad
despair	despair	Verzweiflung	Verzweiflung	desesperación	desesperación	desesperanza
indecision	indecision	Unschlüssiges Gemüt	Unentschlossenheit	irresolución	irresolución	irresolución
courage	courage	Kühnheit	Muth	valentía	valentía	valor
boldness	boldness	Herzhaftigkeit	Kühnheit	audacia	audacia	audacia
emulation	emulation	Aemulation	Wetteifer	emulación	emulación	emulación
shrinking	faint-heartedness	Kleinmütigkeit	Feigheit	cobardía	cobardía	cobardía
terror	horror	Bestürzung	Schrecken	espanto	terror	espanto, miedo
remorse	remorse	Gewissens-Biß	Gewissensbisse	remordimiento	remordimiento	remordimiento
<b>joy</b>	<b>joy</b>	<b>Freude</b>	<b>Freude</b>	<b>gozo</b>	<b>alegría</b>	<b>alegría</b>
<b>sadness</b>	<b>sadness</b>	<b>Traurigkeit</b>	<b>Traurigkeit</b>	<b>tristeza</b>	<b>tristeza</b>	<b>tristeza</b>
derision	derision	Verlachung	Spott	burla	burla	burla
envy	envy	Neid	Neid	envidia	envidia	envidia
pity	pity	Erbarmung	Mitleiden	piedad	piedad	compasión
self-satisfaction	self-satisfaction	Zufriedenheit	Selbstzufriedenheit	autosatisfacción	autosatisfacción	satisfacción en sí mismo
repentance	repentance	Reue	Reue	arrepentimiento	arrepentimiento	arrepentimiento
approval	favor	Gewogenheit	Gunst	estima	simpatía	simpatía
gratitude	gratitude	Dankbarkeit	Dankbarkeit	gratitud	agradecimiento	agradecimiento
indignation	indignation	Wiedervillen	Unwille	indignación	indignación	indignación
anger	anger	Zorn	Zorn	ira	ira	ira
vainglorie	glory	Ruhmrätigkeit	Ruhm	gloria	gloria	gloria
shame	shame	Schamhaftigkeit	Scham	vergüenza	vergüenza	vergüenza
distaste	distaste	Eckel	Ekel	hastío	hastío	hastío
regret	regret	Verlangen	Bedauern	pesar	añoranza	añoranza
lightheartedness	gladness	Fröhlichkeit	Fröhlichkeit	alegría	alivio	júbilo
astonishment	astonishment	Erstaunen	Staunen	asombro	asombro	asombro
affection	affection	Wohlwollen	Zuneigung	afecto	afecto	afecto
friendship	friendship	Freundschaft	Freundschaft	amistad	amistad	amistad
devotion	devotion	Andacht	Hingebung	devoción	devoción	devoción
attraction	attraction	Wohlgefallen	Wohlgefallen	agrado	complacencia	complacencia
revulsión	repulsion	Verabscheuung	Schrecken	horror	horror	horror
curiosity	curiosity	Curiositat	Neugierde	curiosidad	curiosidad	curiosidad
aversion	aversion	Verabscheuung	Verabscheuen	aversión	aversión	aversión, rechazo

Focusing on the English versions, more than half of the terms present the same wording in all four versions, yet the ones showing disagreement (highlighted in green) deserve some comment. The four authors use different words, all implying different nuances, to translate “bassese”—*dejection, servility, abjectness* and *baseness of spirit*—and “horreur”—*horror, abhorrence, revulsion* and *repulsion*. For seven further terms we find three different translations, as is the case of “admiration”, “crainte”, “irrésolution”, “lâcheté”, “faveur”, “gloire”, and “agrément.” Some of the divergences reveal the difficulty of finding the right equivalent. For example, while Voss translates “mépris” as *scorn*, Bennet uses the same word to translate “dédain.” Moriarty translates “épouvante” as *horror*, while “horreur” is translated as *repulsion*. In general, the 1650 anonymous English version and Moriarty’s 2005 translation show more unique renditions than Voss’ or Bennett’s.

The situation is not very different with the Italian translations, since more than half present divergent readings. Four terms show discrepancies in all three versions, although it does not seem to imply profound semantic differences: “dédain”, “moquerie”, “regret” and “affection.” However, the main differences are found between the two early translations, both compiled around or after 1700, since Obinu’s version is very close to the translation edited by Lomonaco. Many coincidences suggest that the one attributed to Giuvo could have been made from the Latin translation rather than from the French original: “orgueil”, “irrésolution”, “courage”, “hardiesse”, “pitié”, “satisfaction de soi même”, and so forth. More problematic is the disparity in translating the words “joie” and “allégresse”: while Lomonaco’s translates them as *gioia* and *alegrezza* respectively, Giuvo translates the opposite, as *allegrezza* and *gioia*.

In Spanish, the picture is milder (the disagreements are highlighted in blue). The three authors agree in most renditions, as there are only ten discrepancies in total. The only real issues are found in the words *estima*, a term used by Onaindía to translate “estime”, and by Martínez for “reconnaissance”, and in *alegría*, the translation of “joie” for Pacho and Onaindía that Martínez uses to translate “allégresse”.

Although we have revised only two German editions published 140 years apart, these present more differences than any other language, as they share only 40% of concurrent translations (discrepancies highlighted in orange).

All in all, Table 9.4 helps to visualize the challenges to use emotional categories in modern academic writing, particularly if one wants to apply this taxonomy originally written in French to write in English about an Italian music-dramatic genre. The fuzziness of the boundaries is not just a matter of concept but also of tongue.

### ***The Passions of the Soul* in the Neapolitan milieu of young Metastasio**

To fully assess the extent to which Descartes’ ideas influenced Metastasio’s world and his composers, we must go back to his very early training between Rome and Naples. In fact, shortly before Metastasio was born, the reception of *The Passions of the Soul* became particularly intense in Naples.<sup>70</sup> The authors involved in this reception included Metastasio’s mentors, who were later responsible for his education: Gian Vincenzo Gravina (1664–1718) and Gregorio Caloprese (1650–1715). Other men of letters who played a significant role in the reception of Cartesian philosophy had close links with them, particularly Pietro Giannone and Giambattista Vico.<sup>71</sup> The learned activity of all of them is rooted in the academic tradition of the seventeenth century, known as the *investiganti* (literally *the researchers*),<sup>72</sup> characterized by their pragmatism and original reading of Cartesian philosophy. The tradition was developed in a context of tensions for the monopoly of education that confronted Jesuits with an enlightened elite of lawyers and businessmen (the *ceto civile*), whose sign of identity

was their opposition to the Inquisition and their debates around Aristotle.<sup>73</sup> The academic trending of the *investiganti* was revived intensely between 1698 and 1702 in the Accademia Palatina of Viceroy Medinaceli,<sup>74</sup> where all the intellectuals who would later become the main references for young Metastasio were involved.

The texts that witness this peculiar Neapolitan reception of Descartes represent a reference corpus to formulate a cognate theory applied to the study of Metastasio's works, as they undoubtedly played a fundamental role in his education. This intellectual corpus can be grouped into four axes that nevertheless show straight connections:

- The translations and commentaries of *Les passions de l'âme*: it was another librettist of Metastasio's generation, Niccolò Giuvo, a Neapolitan scholar who belonged to Vico's intellectual milieu, who probably made his own Italian translation of the treatise.<sup>75</sup>
- Philological and scientific texts written under the influence of the *Passions*:<sup>76</sup> the most important ones are the "Spositioni" or commentaries by Gregorio Caloprese, included in the Neapolitan edition of the *Rime* by Giovanni della Casa,<sup>77</sup> and the letter "Come si possa l'uom preservar dai mali che cagionano le passioni dell'animo" by Luca Antonio Porzio.<sup>78</sup>
- The lectures of the Accademia Palatina that contain a large number of discussions about the passions that characterized individual Roman emperors.<sup>79</sup> According to Giarrizzo, the *Lezioni* of Medinaceli's Accademia "anticipate Metastasio's political philosophy . . . And Caloprese's pupil knows well that the foundation of the empire is the knowledge and domination of passions."<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, Giarrizzo claims that Metastasio is the channel carrying "the political reflection on the Empires, matured in the Neapolitan Academy of the Medinaceli" from Naples to Vienna.<sup>81</sup> It is true, however, that this thought, from the perspective of the history of opera, was already a well-established convention, cultivated in their plays by Metastasio's predecessors at the Imperial Court, Apostolo Zeno and Silvio Stampiglia.
- In this light, the fourth axis in Metastasio's Cartesian education was the actual dramas of Silvio Stampiglia, conceived under the influence of Gravina, that reflect the intellectual agenda of the Accademia Palatina.<sup>82</sup>

It should be remembered that this sort of education was by no means exclusive to Metastasio. Actually, similar nods to the theory of passions can be found in several writings about opera by librettists and composers of previous generations. For example, as early as 1636 Marin Mersenne wrote about how the Italians used to represent the passions of the soul and the spirit with strange violence.<sup>83</sup> However, it is in Alessandro Scarlatti (whom Metastasio probably met in Naples, and who was involved in Medinaceli's Accademia Palatina during his first period as chapel master of the Neapolitan Royal Chapel) that we find the most interesting analogy. Apropos the emotions he experienced reading *Il Gran Tamerlano* (A. Salvi, 1706), Scarlatti wrote to Ferdinando de' Medici: "it is almost impossible, just by reading it, not to feel the motions of the various passions it contains. I confess my weakness: at some points, while I was setting the music, I cried."<sup>84</sup> This image of the composer weeping to the reading of a libretto moved by action, in connection with Gravina's reflexions about the power of fantasy and "poesia filosofica", recalls the *didascalìa* of the famous sonnet "Sogni e favole io fingo". This poem explains how, astonished as he was that a fake and invented story could provoke such a real passion in himself, Metastasio "felt moved to tears in expressing the division of two tender friends" while writing his *Olimpiade* in Vienna, 1733.<sup>85</sup>

A final, long-lasting influence in Metastasio from his years of learning that is very relevant to this approach to his works from the perspective of "cognate theory" are the grammarians from Port-Royal. Metastasio's "portroyalist" interest in the study of words probably

derived from having studied music with Porpora, whose father was a libertine bookseller from Naples. The Italian language, its models and its renovation potential are a central issue in Gravina's thought at the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>86</sup>

*Cartesian interpretation of Metastasio's poetry and the problem of the terminology of passions*

The application of Cartesian theory of passions to art and literary debates goes back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>87</sup> John Walter Hill already stressed the importance of the engravings by Charles le Brun in the visual manifestation of the passions as codified by Descartes.<sup>88</sup> The Cartesian interpretation of Metastasio's poetry is actually traceable in Ranieri de' Calzabigi's "Dissertazione" for the complete edition of Metastasio's dramas published in Paris in 1755 (and repeated in the Turin edition two years later). Calzabigi claims that Metastasio's works are not only *drammi per musica* but also genuine tragedies, embellished with "a particular use of the passions: such that they alone, without any other artifice that insinuates them better in the soul and that deftly makes them penetrate, awaken, according to what they express, terror, compassion, love, pity."<sup>89</sup> Descartes' echoes are thus unmistakable.

This Cartesian interpretation resumed in twentieth-century literary studies such as those of Ezio Raimondi,<sup>90</sup> further developed by Cesare Galimberti (in his aim to justify the aesthetic autonomy of Metastasian poetry), Giuseppe Giarrizzo<sup>91</sup> and Giovanna Gronda, who has explained the origin and character of Metastasio's peculiar reading of *The Passions of the Soul*.<sup>92</sup> These authors are among the most outstanding figures in the study of the Italian *Settecento*, and their contributions had some reception in musicology;<sup>93</sup> however, this was without a coherent and systematic development to allow for the musical analysis of the arias.

The Cartesian reading of Metastasio's works prevalent in academic works is rooted in his *Estratto dell'Arte poetica d'Aristotile* and in his correspondence. The *Estratto* is an extended commentary of Aristotle's *Poetic* that contains an actual paraphrasing of Descartes's statement that passions are "either compounds of some of them [of the six basic ones] or species of one of them".<sup>94</sup> The essay also presents the idea of passion as a wind that can be controlled by the pilot. In fact, it is itself a metaphoric representation of Descartes' own idea of human passions that can be controlled by reason and human will.<sup>95</sup> Regarding Metastasio's correspondence, scholars have particularly focused on those letters where the poet explains the weight of Descartes in his education with Gravina and specially with Caloprese. According to Galimberti, Ezio Raimondi tried to explain Metastasio's intellectual view of the world, underlining

the consonances between his way of interpreting feelings and the analysis of the treatise *Les passions de l'âme*, especially where Descartes judges emotions capable of arousing intellectual joy in those who lucidly consider them, both by feeling them in themselves and by observing their literary or theatrical representation.<sup>96</sup>

This statement recalls the parallel between the tears of Scarlatti and Metastasio mentioned earlier. Galimberti goes further by explaining that not only the influence of *Les passions* but also traces of the Cartesian *forma mentis* can be found in any aspect of the structure of Metastasian theatre, stressing how the difference between true and false is complemented by the constant division between "le opposte potenze del cuore e della ragione, dell'apparenza e della sostanza", a contrast that, in addition, recalls the tragedies of Corneille and Racine.<sup>97</sup>

This perspective can be taken a bit further, adding other sources generally overlooked to endorse this particular synthesis of the Cartesian theory of the passions in Metastasio. Due to



their amount, breadth and consistency, these sources support the formulation of a cognate theory applicable to the study of the musical dramaturgy of the poet's plays and of the symbolic dimension of the music composed for them. In other words, as for the objective of this article—to propose a theory that allows the application of Cartesian terminology to musical analysis—we could add to the Metastasian corpus of texts canonized by the historiographic tradition of the Italian *Settecento*: (1) the aforementioned texts from the Neapolitan intellectual circles in which the poet was trained during the first decades of the eighteenth century; and (2) several more texts by Metastasio himself, especially letters, but also fragments of his dramas, until now overlooked or neglected from this perspective.

The most obvious examples of (2) are the many letters in which Metastasio refers to the body as a machine or “*macchinetta*”, almost always in missives sent to highly trusted recipients with whom he displays his proverbial irony. Perhaps for this reason, these letters have been little considered from a Cartesian viewpoint. In January 1731, during his first winter in Vienna, he wrote a letter to Marianna Bulgarelli in which he explained how he had to request shrouding his boots with felt in order to prevent from falling solemnly with “*il cul per terra*” during the only necessary step on snow to board his chariot. And immediately he adds: “*senza danno però della macchina*”; that is, without hurting his body.<sup>98</sup> The anecdote and this ironic nod to the body as *res extensa* acquires all its meaning when read in the light of references such as “*Oh Dio buono! quanto può la macchina su lo spirito!*” (to his brother Leopoldo).<sup>99</sup> But even more enlightening are the letters to Bulgarelli herself, where he acknowledges his pleasure in philosophizing with her on December 6, 1732, which begins with another Cartesian wink: “*mi accorgo veramente ch'io sono qualche cosa di distinto nel mondo*”,<sup>100</sup> and where he defines himself as doubt personified, due to his difficulties when creating a new work. This also occurs in the famous letter of July 4, 1733, which belongs in its own right to canonical Metastasian Cartesianism, where it says “*e quindi è assai chiaro, che gli uomini per lo più non operano per ragione, ma per impulso meccanico.*”<sup>101</sup> References to the “*macchinetta*” are also found in his correspondence with Farinelli, which shares with the letters to Bulgarelli the tone of confidence and fanciful irony, in addition to the erudite references.<sup>102</sup> The Cartesian clue is again revealed in thoroughly understand statements such as:

you are the most effective antidote against the acids, the flates, the stretching of the nerves of my poor stomach and head, and against all the other very kind curses that have lodged themselves in this scrambled machine of mine, which by the way still does not want to give any outward sign of its internal persecutions.<sup>103</sup>

This passage vividly recalls Caloprese's interest in the practice of medicine.<sup>104</sup> Finally, the letters to Anna Francesca Pignatelli di Belmonte stand out for their more erudite tone, with a more contained irony, but with a wider-reaching philosophical density than those to Bulgarelli and Farinelli. This can be seen, for example, in the letter dated June 18, 1749, which begins by referring to the “*moti di vanagloria e di compiacenza*”: that the letters he receives from her awaken the “*spirit*” of the poet. He goes on to describe the earthquake that happened in Vienna and how the inhabitants of the city were entirely unimpressed due to “*quella superiorità alla violenza delle passioni*”, to add that, on the contrary, Italians have among their diseases the fear attached to the soul “*come lo sono fra quelli del corpo il vaiuolo o le petecchie (smallpox).*”<sup>105</sup> The Cartesian reminiscences are evident as well, even though they are modulated in another key.

Another group of letters where we find this type of Cartesian references invites us to think about the challenge of verbalizing passions, an issue already evident in Descartes' own

treatise.<sup>106</sup> This “challenge” is actually part of the Metastasian method, one based on logocentrism; this is to say, his meticulous philological attention to each word chosen.<sup>107</sup> Not by chance, Metastasio considered the “lingua canora” as the raw material for the poet, in the same way that marble is for the sculptor and color for the painter.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the letters on which we are going to comment next are useful sources to explore the lexicographical dimension of the problem of objectifying the emotions. For example, on December 1, 1746, he wrote to Algarotti his opinion on a poem by the latter:

and I do not find the two meanings of the word ingenuity obscure; nevertheless, as I already know what do you mean, it is no wonder if I recognize it immediately: to be sure, I would test it by reading the passage to an unprejudiced person, and I would observe if the word moves the idea that you want, with the necessary solicitude.<sup>109</sup>

The word arouses the emotion, in the same way as for Gravina and Scarlatti the images of such thoughts could move them to tears. Other letters reveal the poet’s uneasiness about the exact word to name certain movements of the spirits. He wrote to Giovanni Claudio Pasquini on March 22, 1749, about the reaction of the electoral prince when he received *Attilio Regolo*, and explained that he felt “a certain internal movement that I would call love, if I knew how to adjust this expression with respect in my letters as well as I know how to do in my heart.”<sup>110</sup> Four days later, he reiterates the hyperbole underlining how the praise of the Saxon sovereign “has put my soul into a tumult that I cannot fully describe”, adding that it has “such a mixture of vainglory, confusion, gratitude, reverence and many other affections of which I felt the effectiveness on this occasion, although ignoring their name.”<sup>111</sup>

This tumult of affects not easily labeled is frequently found in the characters of his operas at points of great emotional intensity. For example, in scene 5 of act I of *Demofonte*,<sup>112</sup> Creusa, destined wife of Timante, has met Cherinto, who has fallen in love with her. After a long recitative full of references to the passions, Metastasio makes Cherinto express hesitation turning to the topos *non so che*,<sup>113</sup> that adds uncertainty, perhaps with Cartesian connotations:

### **Cherinto**

E pure  
talor mi lusingai che *l'alme* nostre  
s'intendesser fra loro  
senza parlar. *Certi sospiri intesi;*  
*un non so che* di languido *osservai*  
*spesso negli occhi tuoi* che mi pareo  
*molto più che amicizia.*

### **Cherintus**

And yet sometimes I felt a flatt'ring hope  
that secret sympathy inspir'd our souls.  
Methought I oft observ'd a tender sigh  
steal from thy breast, view'd in thy eyes a softness  
that seem'd much more than friendship.

To this, Creusa, who has no doubt about the name that corresponds to such an outward expression of affect, responds with the following verses that, because of the security expressed by her, reinforce Cherinto’s previous confusion against evidence:

### **Creusa**

Or su, Cherinto,  
della mia tolleranza  
cominci ad abusar. Mai più d'amore  
guarda di non parlarmi.

### **Creusa**

Hold, Cherintus:  
thou dost begin t'abuse my easy nature:  
but let me find thee speak no more of love.

The same expression, “non so che”, is found twice again in the opera: the first of these occasions is Cherinto’s soliloquy during scene 8 of the same act; that is, in the recitative about the fierceness of Creusa that so ignites his love. Creusa has commanded Cherinto to kill his (supposed) brother Timante. Here, as in the letter to Algarotti of December 1, 1746, mentioned earlier, Cherinto emphasizes that what freezes him with horror are Creusa’s words and way of delivering them. Yet at the same time, she makes him fall in love, increasing his confusion and inability to verbalize his own feelings:

**Cherinto**

Oh dei perché *tanto furor!* Che mai  
 le avrà detto il german! Voler ch’io stesso  
 nelle fraterne vene . . . Ah che *in pensarlo*  
*gelo d’orror. Ma con qual fasto il disse!*  
 Con qual *fierezza!* E pur quel fasto e  
 quella  
 sua *fierezza* m’alletta. *In essa io trovo*  
*un non so che di grande*  
 che in mezzo al suo furore  
*stupir* mi fa, mi fa *languir d’amore.*

**Cherintus**

Ye pow’rs! what means this storm! How could  
 Thimantes  
 excite her anger thus?—To bid me steep  
 this hand in brother’s blood! the thought alone  
 chills me with horror!—with what fix’d  
 resentment  
 and pride she spoke! yet ev’n her rage can please;  
 I find still something claim my admiration  
 and soften ev’ry passion in to love.

Only at the end of his speech does Cherinto find the right words (“languir d’amore”), as if he had finally been influenced by Creusa’s clairvoyance. But this happens only after a time when, Cartesianly, he had been dominated by the turmoil of his own passions. Finally, the eponymous character, King Demofonte, again uses the expression “un non so che” in scene 10 of act II, at a key moment that synthesizes the fundamental dilemma of the play between public duty and private passion:

**Demofonte**

Tacete. (Un non so che mi serpe  
 di tenero nel cor che in mezzo all’ira  
 vorrebbe indebolirmi. Ah troppo grandi  
 sono i lor falli; e debitor son io  
 d’un grand’esempio al mondo  
 di virtù, di giustizia). Olà. Costoro  
 in carcere distinto  
 si serbino al castigo.

**Demophon**

Be silent both. (I find an unknown something  
 creep thro’ my heart, that ’midst my just  
 resentment  
 would soften me to tenderness and pity:  
 but, O! it must not be, their guilt’s too great;  
 ’tis mine to give the world a bright example  
 of steady virtue and impartial justice)  
 What, ho!—let these be kept apart in prison  
 Till we decree their fate.

Demofonte, like Cherinto, is subject to the necessity of walking the distance that separates doubt—the confusion of his individual, private passions—from the clarity and reason that sustain his public actions. To do so, he needs the time required by the Cartesian method of doubting everything, the only guarantee to find the rational foundation of civilized action and the control of the own passions. Within an *opera in musica*, this is the time delayed during the arias in order to provide all the characters with the pace for reflection and rational (enlightened) reaction.

**Conclusions**

To understand the role of music in opera requires understanding that it is part of a complex system of conventions that go well beyond the realm of the composer. And, in turn, understanding this system using the concepts of the period itself (according to the approach of a cognate theory) requires a critical reflection on the history of the concepts

and the language used to express them from the eighteenth century through the present day. The lack of academic consensus, even in the fields of psychology and physiology, on the very concept of emotion is a problem found in all historical periods. For some scholars—such as Russell—emotions are part of a continuum and cannot be discriminated, yet the majority of modern experts endorse, like Descartes, the opposite pole; that is, the existence of distinct states of the mind called passions or emotions. Beyond this essential agreement, most authors define a wide spectrum of basic emotions, of which only a handful are more or less accepted by the majority, as in the case of *joy* and *sadness*, and to a lesser extent, *fear*, *anger*, *love* and *desire*. To this already-intricate picture we should add the subtle complexities of language and the specific terminology in different tongues. Comparing the numerous translations of Descartes' treatise and analyzing their discrepancies reveals the extent of this challenge. From this perspective, language represents a limit to the sophistication of concepts experienced during the Enlightenment. Remarkably, *opera seria*, which had Italian as its own *lingua franca*, is not entirely subjected to this limit. In this sense, the plays of Metastasio consolidated, if only in theatrical practice, the Cartesian ideology around the passions, although at the same time they opened it to the freedom of the language of music.

Metastasian opera does not escape the problems of a historical analysis of the definition of the passions, being the product of a particular cultural elaboration of the Cartesian model in a very specific environment: Naples between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus, the emotions expressed in Metastasio's arias are neither clear and distinct objects—they are not universal—nor do they even appear isolated in a pure, decanted state. And yet, instead of being an obstacle, this is an enrichment in the face of setting to music of each libretto that, in each composer and in each place, finds an original musical realization on the basis of a shared code. The Cartesian explanation of the passions is therefore useful to understand that code better, while the subsequent history helps to understand the nuances, the multiple meanings and, in turn, as if it were a genealogy, to value the differences between the affective world of the time and our own.

If understanding opera implies understanding the subtle game of emotions, scholars need a cognate theory. It may be true that Descartes' system is not entirely endorsed by modern research on human emotions, yet the divergences are not more significant than those between any of the contemporary proposals by Ekman, Izard, Plutchnik, Pankseep *e tutti quanti*. And Descartes' taxonomy of emotions has the advantage of being the intellectual foundation for Metastasio and his contemporaries. If we want to understand the creative and performative sides of *opera seria*, we should begin trying to comprehend their conceptual framework.

### **Editions and translations of *Les passions de l'âme***

#### **French.:**

*Les passions de l'âme* (Paris: Henry Le Gras, 1649).

"Les passions de l'âme", in *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Leopold Cerf, 1909), vol. XI, 291–497.

#### **Latin:**

*Passiones Animae* (Amsterdam: Elzevier, 1650).

**Italian:**

*Le passioni dell'anima*, trans. Salvatore Obinu (Milan: Bompiani, 2000).

*Cartesio a Napoli: le passioni dell'anima: traduzione e lettere tra '600 e '700*, manuscript compiled around 1700, ed. Fabrizio Lomonaco (Roma: Aracne, 2020).

*Le passioni, ovvero Gli affetti dell'anima*, trans. attributed to Niccolò Giuvo (1st half of the 18th century), I-Rc, Ms. 220, ff. 122r–144r.

**English:**

*The Passions of the Soule* (London: J. Marin, 1650).

*The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen H. Voss (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989).

*The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Michael Moriarty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

*The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Jonathan Bennett (2010–2015). [www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1649.pdf](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1649.pdf).

**German:**

*Tractat von den Leidenschaften der Seele*, trans. Balthasar Heinrich Tilesio (Frankfurt: Ernst Gottlieb Krugen, 1723).

*Ueber die Leidenschaften der Seele*, trans. J. H. von Kirchmann (Berlin: Heimann, 1870).

**Spanish:**

*Las pasiones del alma*, trans. José Antonio Martínez Martínez and Pilar Andrade Boué (Madrid: Tecnos, 1997).

*Las pasiones del alma*, trans. Julián Pacho (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2005).

*Las pasiones del alma*, trans. Tomás Onandia (Madrid: Edef, 2005).

**Notes**

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1. John Walter Hill, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe 1580–1750* (New York: Norton, 2005), 385.
2. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 389–96.
3. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 390.
4. Carl Dahlhaus, “The Dramaturgy of Italian Opera,” in *Opera on Theory and Practice, Image and Myth*, The History of Italian Opera, 6, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 73–150; quote in 73–74.
5. Gilles de Van, “Les jeux d’action. La construction de l’intrigue dans les drames de Metastasio,” *Paragone. Rivista mensile di arte figurativa e letteratura* 19–20:584–86 (1998), 3–57; quote in 30.
6. Carroll E. Izard, “Basic Emotions, Natural Kinds, Emotion Schemas, and a New Paradigm,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 2, no. 3 (2007), 260–80.
7. Robert Plutchik, “The Nature of Emotions,” *American Scientist* 89, no. 4 (2001), 344–50.
8. Carlos Crivelli and Alan J. Fridlund, “Inside-Out: From Basic Emotions Theory to the Behavioral Ecology View,” *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 43 (2019), 161–94.
9. P. R. Kleinginna and A. M. Kleinginna, “A Categorized List of Emotion Definitions, with Suggestions for a Consensual Definition,” *Motivation and Emotion* 5, no. 4 (1981), 345–79.

10. P. E. Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are: The Problem of Psychological Categories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 14.
11. “Passion,” in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford University Press). [www.oed.com/view/Entry/138504](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138504) (accessed 6 November 2020).
12. For a synthesis of these two approaches, see Stephen Davies, *Musical Meaning and Expression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). Sherer and Zentner have proposed certain “production rules” for the emotional effects of music, referring specifically to “the affective changes that music is supposed to produce in the listener”, identifying four main features: structural, performance, listener and context features. Juslin makes a further distinction between emotions expressed, perceived and aroused by music. See Marcel Zentner, Didier Grandjean and Klaus R. Scherer, “Emotions Evoked by the Sound of Music: Characterization, Classification, and Measurement,” *Emotion* 8 (2008), 494–521; and Patrik N. Juslin, *Music Emotions Explained: Unlocking the Secrets of Musical Affect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).
13. Hill coined the concept of “cognate music theory”, defined as a theory “which shares its fundamental basis, assumptions, and vocabulary with the theory of the period and which would thus be comprehensible to the musical participants of the past”. First published in John Walter Hill, “Cognate Music Theory,” in *Music in the Mirror. Reflections on the History of Music Theory and Literature for the 21st Century*, ed. Andreas Giger and Thomas J. Mathiesen (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 117–41; quote in 112. Reprinted as Chapter 2 in this volume.
14. See Juslin, *Music Emotions Explained*, 12. We have only replaced the word “philosophical” with “psychological”.
15. Jesse Prinz, “Which Emotions Are Basic?” in *Emotion, Evolution, and Rationality*, ed. Dylan Evans and Pierre Cruse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69–87.
16. Our point of departure for early philosophers of emotions has been Catherine Newmark, *Passion—Affect—Gefühl: Philosophische Theorien der Emotionen zwischen Aristoteles und Kant* (Hamburg: Felix Mainer Verlag, 2008). For a more comprehensive review of Medieval ideas about emotions, see Christian Schäfer and Martin Thurner, eds., *Passiones Animae: Die Leidenschaften der Seele in der Mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013). See also Susan James, *Passion and Action. The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
17. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1105b.20–24, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926). Some authors translate φίλια as *love* instead of *friendship* and ζήλος as *emulation* or *zeal* instead of *jealousy*.
18. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, Book XIV, mentions five emotions: *amor*, *cupiditas*, *laetitia*, *timor* and *tristitia*.
19. Thomas Aquinas, “Treatise on Passions,” *Summa Theologica*, II, Questions 22–46. For a detailed study and discussion see Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae: 1a2ae 22–48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
20. Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatu de Deo et homine*, trans. A. Wolf, *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (London: Black, 1910).
21. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Green Dragon, 1651), Part I, Chapter 6.
22. Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (Königsberg, 1798), III, §74–79, trans. Robert B. Loudon, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
23. Kant, *Anthropology*, §74.
24. Kant, *Anthropology*, §78, uses the terms sthenic and asthenic, coined in John Brown, *Elementa Medicinae* (Edinburgh: C. Elliot, 1780).
25. Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will* (London: John W. Parker, 1859).
26. Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, 3rd ed. with an introduction and commentaries by Paul Ekman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
27. For further discussion see Peter Zachar and Ralph D. Ellis, eds., *Categorical versus Dimensional Models of Affect: A Seminar on the Theories of Panksepp and Russell* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012).
28. Perhaps with the exception of Aristotle, as discussed by Konstantin Kafesios and Eric LaRock, “Cognition and Emotion. Aristotelian Affinities with Contemporary Emotion Research,” *Theory & Psychology* 15, no. 5 (2005), 639–57.

29. This is one of the underlying objections of Antonio Damasio, who nevertheless overlooks entirely Descartes's *Passions of the Soul*. See Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error* (New York: Putnam Publishing, 1994). The same can be said about Jan Plamper, who virtually ignores Descartes in his *Geschichte und Gefühl. Grundlagen der Emotionsgeschichte* (Munich: Siedler Verlag, 2012), English translation by Keith Tribe as *The History of Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
30. Silvan Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (London: Tavistock, 1962–63).
31. Keith Oatley and Philip N. Johnson-Laird, "Towards a Cognitive Theory of Emotions," *Cognition and Emotion* 1 (1987), 29–50; Philip N. Johnson-Laird and Keith Oatley, "Basic Emotions, Rationality, and Folk Theory," *Cognition and Emotion* 6, no. 3–4 (1992), 201–23.
32. Paul Ekman, "An Argument for Basic Emotions," *Cognition and Emotion* 6, no. 314 (1992), 169–200.
33. Prinz, "Which Emotions Are Basic?" 69.
34. Carroll E. Izard, Deborah Z. Libero, Priscilla Putnam and O. Maurice Haynes, "Stability of Emotion Experiences and Their Relations to Traits of Personality," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64, no. 5 (1993), 847–60.
35. Carroll E. Izard, "Basic Emotions, Natural Kinds, Emotion Schemas, and a New Paradigm," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 2, no. 3 (2007), 260–80; quote in 260.
36. Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are*.
37. Jaak Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Quoted passages are taken from Peter Zachar, "Categories, Dimensions, and the Problem of Progress in Affective Science," in Zachar and Ellis, *Categorical versus Dimensional Models of Affect*, 2.
38. These were first analyzed by Patrik N. Juslin and Petri Laukka, "Communication of Emotions in Vocal Expression and Music Performance: Different Channels, Same Code?" *Psychological Bulletin* 129, no. 5 (2003), 770–814. In a more recent publication, Juslin endorses this perspective comparing his own study with others by Kreuzt (2000) and Lindström et al. (2003), all of them based in the opinion expressed by different groups of listeners. See Juslin, *Music Emotions Explained*, 85.
39. Juslin, *Music Emotions Explained*, 236ff. We do not include this list of emotions in Table 9.2 because they refer to a different dimension of emotions and music.
40. "A fuzzy set is a class of objects with a continuum of grades of membership. Such a set is characterized by a membership (characteristic) function which assigns to each object a grade of membership ranging between zero and one." Lotfi A. Zadeh, "Fuzzy Sets," *Information and Control* 8, no. 3 (1965), 338–53; quote in 338.
41. James A. Russell, "A Circumplex Model of Affect," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39, no. 6 (1980), 1161–78; quote in 1165.
42. The second representation comes from James A. Russell, "From a Psychological Constructionist Perspective," in Zachar and Ellis, *Categorical versus Dimensional Models of Affect*, 78.
43. Phillip Shaver, Judith Schwartz, Donald Kirson and Gary O'Connor, "Emotion Knowledge: Further Exploration of a Prototype Approach," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52, no. 6 (1987), 1061–86.
44. Robert Plutchik, "Outlines of a New Theory of Emotion," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* 20 (1958), 394–403; R. Plutchik, *Emotion: A Psychoevolutionary Synthesis* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Robert Plutchik, "The Nature of Emotions: Human Emotions Have Deep Evolutionary Roots, a Fact that May Explain Their Complexity and Provide Tools for Clinical Practice," *American Scientist* 89, no. 4 (2001), 344–50.
45. The difficulties to conciliate these two perspectives is addressed in Zachar and Ralph, *Categorical versus Dimensional Models of Affect*.
46. Spinoza, *Short Treatise on God*, 73.
47. Plutchik, "The Nature of Emotions," 344, our emphasis. This recurrence to metaphor can also be observed in operatic arias "de paragone".
48. Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are*, chap. 2.
49. Anna Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
50. Joshua Conrad Jackson et al., "Emotion and Language: Emotion Semantics Show Both Cultural Variation and Universal Structure," *Science* 366 (2019), 1517–22.

51. We keep the labels used by Jackson—*hate* or *proud* instead of *hatred* or *pride*—despite they differ with the ones used in the body of the article.
52. “Finis ut delectet variosque in nobis moveat affectus.” The treatise was published posthumously in 1650: René Descartes, *Musicae Compendium* (Utrecht: Trajectum ad Rhenum, 1650), trans. Walter Robert (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1961), 11.
53. See Peter Kivy, *Osmin’s Rage. Philosophical Reflections on Opera, Drama and Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 100.
54. Full discussion in Kivy, *Osmin’s Rage*, particularly ch. VI, “Philosophy and Psychology (in early modern dress),” 97–132.
55. The “animal spirits” play a critical role in Descartes’ understanding of the mechanics of the human body. They are a metaphorical way to describe the communication in the human body through the nervous system, centuries before the discovery of neurons and neuronal synapses: “The nerves are like little filaments or pipes all coming from the brain; and, like the brain, they contain a highly subtle air or wind known as the animal spirits”, Art. 7.
56. Deborah J. Brown, *Descartes and the Passionate Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 11–12.
57. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 390.
58. *Wonder* and its derived passions are discussed in articles 53–55, 70–78 and 149–64.
59. Moriarty translates “générosité” as “nobility of the soul,” closer in its meaning to “magnanimité” (§54). All editions and translations are quoted at the end of the article.
60. Both the 1650 Latin version and the early Italian translation attributed to Giuvo render the French “orgueil” as “superbia,” the same word used by Spinoza, who writes in Latin.
61. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to the *vicious humility* as *abjectness* and to the *virtuous* type as *humility* alone.
62. All quotes from *The passions of the Soul* in this chapter come from Moriarty’s translation and are referred to with article number §.
63. *Desire* and its derived passions are discussed in articles 57–59, 87–90 and 165–76.
64. *Love* and its related passions are discussed in articles 56, 80–85, 97, 103, 107, 139 and 192–94.
65. *Hatred* and its related passions are discussed in articles 56, 98, 104, 108, 140 and 195–202.
66. Joy and its related passions are discussed in articles 61, 93–96, 96, 99, 104, 109, 115, 178–81, 190, 204 and 210.
67. *Sadness* and its related passions are discussed in articles 61, 92, 93–96, 96, 100, 105, 110, 116, 185–89, 191 and 205–09.
68. The historical thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary presents both terms as forms of reverence related to fear. [www.oed.com/view/th/class/132042](http://www.oed.com/view/th/class/132042) and [www.oed.com/view/th/class/132062](http://www.oed.com/view/th/class/132062) (accessed 12 February 2021).
69. The list of translations used can be found at the end of this chapter.
70. A complete overview of the reception of the philosopher in Naples during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be found in the catalogue of the exhibition *Dalla scienza mirabile alla scienza nuova. Napoli e Cartesio* (Naples: Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli and Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1997).
71. Studies on Vico have focused their attention on the Neapolitan culture of the late seventeenth century and on the relevance of Descartes to the intellectuals of Vichian circles. The reference work for Metastasio studies is the volume Mario Valente, ed., *Legge, poesia e mito. Giannone, Metastasio e Vico, fra “tradizione” e “trasgressione” nella Napoli degli anni venti del Settecento* (Rome: Aracne, 2001). Among the articles in this volume, the one by Giuseppe Giarrizzo studying the relationship between Metastasio and Vico is particularly interesting: “Da Napoli a Vienna: il circolo meridionale della filosofia del Metastasio,” 99–124. It discusses Vico’s particular reading of Descartes and the points in common between Vico and Metastasio in this regard, highlighting the knowledge and care of the Neapolitan Metastasio towards “il *Diritto universale* di Vico, e la prima *Scienza nuova*” (112n14).
72. The link between the Cartesianism of Vico and Gravina and that of previous generations in pursuit of “libertà di pensiero” (freedom of thought) is underlined by Fulvio Tuccillo, “L’eredità cartesiana in Gravina e Vico: immagini dell’antico e forme nuove della ragione,” in *Dalla scienza mirabile alla scienza nuova*, 191–213.
73. Luciano Osbat, *L’inquisizione a Napoli. Il processo agli ateisti 1688–1697* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1974).



74. The *investiganti* and the Medinaceli Academy have generated a rich historiography in the realms of History of Thought and Law. Among the most relevant contributions we find Silvio Suppa, *L'Accademia di Medinacoeli. Fra tradizione investigante e nuova scienza civile* (Naples: Il Mulino, 1971); Enrico Nuzzo, *Verso la "vita civile". Antropologia e politica nelle lezioni accademiche di Gregorio Caloprese e Paolo Mattia Doria* (Naples: Guida editori, 1984). A modern edition of the lectures of the Medinaceli Academy was published by Michele Rak, *Lezioni dell'Accademia di Palazzo del duca di Medinaceli (Napoli 1698–1701)* (Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 2000–2005).
75. Luigi Guerrini, "Cartesianismo e meccanicismo nella Roma del Primo Settecento," *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* 2 (1996), 154–61; Luigi Guerrini, "Note su traduzioni manoscritte delle opere cartesiane," *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 75, no. 3 (1996), 500–07. The translation, attributed to Giuvo by Guerrini, is preserved in manuscript 220 at the Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome.
76. These texts have been collected and commented thoroughly in Nuzzo, *Verso la "vita civile"*, 78–79, n. 8.
77. Giovanni della Casa, *Rime di M. Gio. Della Casa sposte per M. Aurelio Severino* (Naples: Antonio Bulifon, 1694). In addition to the pages pointed out by Nuzzo, see as an example at page 69: "a voler dunque aprir con piena contezza la natura et la forza di alcuna passione, è d'uopo por mente e far chiaro prima il senso et il moto della passione che si genera nel cuore, e per mezzo del sangue per tutto il corpo si spande." (Therefore, if we wanted to fully understand the nature and strength of some passion, it would be essential to focus and clarify first of all the meaning and motion of the passion that is generated in the heart, and that spreads throughout the body through the blood). The most complete study of this work, with sharp observations on Caloprese's Cartesianism, is found in Rena A. Syska Lamparska, *Letteratura e scienza. Gregorio Caloprese teorico e critico della letteratura* (Naples: Guida editori, 2005), especially on pages 111–205, with important considerations on *joie intellectuelles* at pages 196–97.
78. It can be read in Luca Antonio Porzio, *Lettere e discorsi accademici* (Naples: Muzio, 1711), 26–37.
79. Maria Conforti, "Potere e passioni: gli imperatori in un'Accademia del tardo Seicento," in *Il mondo delle passioni nell'immaginario utopico*, ed. Bruna Consarelli and Nicola Di Penta (Milan: Dott. A. Giuffrè Editore, 1997), 13–26.
80. "anticipano la filosofia politica di Metastasio . . . E l'allievo del Caloprese sa bene che a fondamento dell'impero stanno la conoscenza e il dominio delle passioni". Giarrizzo, "Da Napoli a Vienna: il circolo meridionale della filosofia del Metastasio," 113–15.
81. "la riflessione politica sugli Imperi, maturata nell'Accademia napoletana del Medinaceli."
82. José María Domínguez, "Cinco óperas para el príncipe: el ciclo de Stampiglia para el teatro de San Bartolomeo en Nápoles," *Il Saggiatore musicale* 19, no. 1 (2012), 5–40; on *Il Giustino* by Metastasio as an opera based on Gravina see Fabrizio Lomonaco, "Tra 'ragion poetica' e vita civile: Metastasio discepolo di Gravina e Caloprese," in *Legge, poesia e mito*, 165–202: 169.
83. Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (Paris: Pierre Ballard, 1636), vol. 2, 371, an opinion that is picked up and somehow qualified by Saint-Évremond in the 1670s in his essay *Sur les opéras* and by François Ragueneau, *Parallèle des Italiens et des Français en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras* (Paris: Jean Moreau, 1702), 42, modern edition in François Ragueneau et Jean-Laurent Le Cerf de la Viéville, *La Première Querelle de la musique italienne 1702-1706*, ed. Laura Naudeix (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018), 118–152: 129.
84. "è quasi impossibile, al solo leggerlo, non sentirne i moti delle varie passioni che racchiude. Confesso il mio debole: in alcune cose, mentre stavo addattandovi le note, ho pianto", in Mario Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti e il principe Ferdinando de' Medici* (Florence: Olschki, 1961), 73–74. See also Hill, *Baroque Music*, 386.
85. "si sentì commosso fino alle lacrime nell'esprimere la divisione di due teneri amici." Pietro Metastasio, *Tutte le opere*, ed. Bruno Brunelli (Milan: Mondadori, 1943–1954, 5 vols.; hereafter cited simply as Brunelli), vol. II, 939. On this issue, see Cesare Galimberti, "La finzione del Metastasio," *Lettere italiane* 21, no. 2 (1969), 155–70; Lomonaco, "Tra 'ragion poetica' e vita civile," 169n8.
86. *Port-Royal grammar*, deeply influenced by Descartes philosophy, claims that grammar is universal as it is based on mental processes that do not depend on a particular language. Therefore, any language can translate any cultural value without depending on its own cultural tradition. Regarding

- Gravina's portroyalist perspective and the relationship that Italian culture and language should have with their own Latin roots and the proximity of Latin to Greek as opposed to French, see Annalisa Nacinovich, "*Nel laberinto delle idee confuse*". *La riforma letteraria di Gianvincenzo Gravina* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012), 93–100. On the influence of Porpora's father and his intellectual milieu, as well as on the reflection on music of the portroyalists trend towards simplification of language and logic, see Cecilia Campa, "Metastasio, Napoli e l'Europa: omologazione del melodramma tra estetica dell'imitazione e modelli riformistici," in *Legge, poesia e mito*, 363–96: 363–66.
87. Among the French literati who developed the philosophy of Descartes from this perspective are Bernard Lamy, René Rapin, Nicolas Malebranche and Jean Le Clerc, according to Elisabetta Selmi, in the "Introduzione" to her edition to Pietro Metastasio, *Estratto dell'Arte poetica d'Aristotile* (Palermo: Novecento editrice, 1998), XXIXn72.
  88. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 390–92.
  89. "maneggio singular di passioni: e tali che per se sole, senz'altro artificio che nell'animo meglio le insinui e penetrare destramente le faccia, risvegliano, a seconda di ciò che esprimono, il terrore, la compassione, l'amore, la pietà". Rainieri de' Calzabigi, "Dissertazione," in *Poesie del Signor Abate Pietro Metastasio* (Paris: Quillau, 1755), I, xvii—cciv; quote in xxii—xxiii. A few pages later Calzabigi insists within the same idea: "per ragione della maggior nobiltà della poesia mirabilmente servono ad esprimere l'amore, la tenerezza, il furore, il terrore e la pietà", p. xxxiii. A modern edition of this essay is to be found in Ranieri Calzabigi, *Scritti teatrali e letterari*, ed. Anna Laura Bellina (Rome: Salerno editrice, 1994), I, 22–146: 24, 32.
  90. Ezio Raimondi, "'Ragione' e 'sensibilità' nel teatro del Metastasio," in *Sensibilità e razionalità nel Settecento*, ed. V. Branca (Florence: Sansoni, 1967), 249–67, revised and updated in Ezio Raimondi, *Il concerto interrotto* (Pisa: Pacini, 1979), 23–44.
  91. Giuseppe Giarrizzo, "L'ideologia di Metastasio tra Cartesianismo e Illuminismo," in *Convegno indetto in occasione del 2. centenario della morte di Metastasio d'intesa con Arcadia* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei), 43–77.
  92. Giovanna Gronda, *Le passioni della ragione. Studi sul Settecento* (Pisa: Pacini, 1984), 11–52. In "Da Cartesio a Metastasio", she explains how French culture, at the opposite pole of Metastasian sensibility, developed the Cartesian treatise in the direction of simulation and lies, while, on the contrary, "la 'scienza degli affetti' calopresiana non insegna a mentire," 51–52.
  93. Lorenzo Bianconi, "La forma musicale come scuola dei sentimenti," in *Educazione musicale e formazione*, ed. Giuseppina La Face Bianconi and Franco Frabboni (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2008), 85–120: 87.
  94. Descartes, *Passions*, article 79; Metastasio, *Estratto*, chap. VI, 78.
  95. For an extended discussion of the Cartesian echoes in the *Estratto*, see Álvaro Torrente and Ana Llorens, "'Misero pargoletto': Kinship, Taboo and Passion in Metastasio's *Demofonte*," in *Demofonte come soggetto per il dramma per musica: Johann Adolf Hasse ed altri compositori del Settecento*, ed. Milada Jonášová and Tomislav Volek (Prague: Academia, 2020), 57–86, where Metastasio's ideas on passions are applied to the analysis of the plot of an actual opera: *Demofonte*.
  96. "le consonanze tra il suo modo d'interpretare i sentimenti e le analisi del trattato *Les passions de l'âme*, specialmente dove Descartes giudica le emozioni capaci di suscitare gioia intellettuale in chi lucidamente le consideri, sia soffrendole in sé sia osservandone la rappresentazione letteraria o teatrale". Galimberti, "La finzione del Metastasio," 158; quoting Raimondi, *Ragione e sensibilità*, 256–57.
  97. To support his reading, Galimberti ("La finzione del Metastasio," 159n12 and 13) quotes letter 11–1–1770 (Brunelli, vol. IV, no. 1831), in addition to the famous letter to Saverio Mattei on Caloprese 1–4–1776 (Brunelli, V, no. 2235), with a brilliant reflection in a dramaturgical key.
  98. Brunelli, III, no. 31 (27–1–1731).
  99. Brunelli, III, no. 112 (29–9–1736).
  100. Brunelli, III, no. 50, our emphasis.
  101. Brunelli, III, no. 55.
  102. For instance, letter 26–8–1747 (Brunelli, III, no. 264) which in addition to a quotation from Dante's *Divina Commedia*, 313, contains several sentences in Latin. In addition, Metastasio underlines "quale agitazione, qual tumulto, qual tempesta mi avete risvegliata nell'animo" due to Farinelli's description of Spanish monarchs after having listened to *Nice*, a cantata that the poet had sent from Vienna, 314.

103. “Voi siete l’antidoto più efficace contro gli acidi i flati gli stiramenti de’ nervi del mio povero stomaco e della mia testa, e contro tutte le altre gentilissime maledizioni che si sono alloggiate in questa mia strapazzata macchinetta, la quale per altro non vuole dare ancora alcun segno esteriore delle interne persecuzioni”. Brunelli, III, no. 351 (11–2–1750).
104. On the importance of medicine in the training of Caloprese and his studies with Tommaso Cornelio and Leonardo Di Capua, maximum exponents of the Neapolitan *investiganti* tradition, see Syska-Lamparska, *Letteratura e scienza*, 83–93. On the physiological obsessions in Metastasio’s work, see Giovani Morelli, *Paradosso del farmacista. Il Metastasio nella morsa del tranquillante* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998), with interesting reflections on the obsessive repetition of the word “cancherini” and “cancheretti” in the letters with Farinelli, 59–60.
105. Brunelli, III, no. 315.
106. In *Passions*, article 89, about what is the desire that is born of horror: “et c’est cette espèce de désir, qu’on appelle communément la fuite ou l’aversion”. Other articles referring to lack of precision in language are 149, 161, 184.
107. This can be seen, for example, in the response to the comments that Giuseppe Riva had sent him about *Adriano*, where he dedicates three paragraphs to justify, dictionary in hand, the choice of various terms. Metastasio’s letter is dated 9–20–1731 (Brunelli, III, no. 48).
108. Metastasio, *Estratto dell’Arte poetica d’Aristotile*, 15.
109. “ed io non trovo che facciano oscurità i due significati della parola ingegno; nulladimeno, come io so già il vostro sentimento, non è meraviglia se lo riconosco immediatamente: per assicurarmi io ne farei pruova leggendo il passo a persona non prevenuta, ed osserverei se la parola muove l’idea che si vuole, con la necessaria sollecitudine.” Brunelli, III, no. 247.
110. “un certo moto interno che chiamerei amore, se io sapessi accordare questa voce col rispetto così bene nelle mie lettere come lo so fare nel mio cuore”. Brunelli, III, no. 305.
111. “ha messo l’animo mio in un tumulto che non cape in tutta la mia facoltà di descrivere . . . vanagloria, di confusione, di gratitudine, di riverenza e di tanti altri affetti de’ quali ho provata in questa occasione l’efficacia, *ignorandone il nome*” Brunelli, III, no. 306, our emphasis.
112. The following quotations from this libretto are made according to the critical edition of the *princeps* (Vienna: van Ghelen, 1733) by Anna Laura Bellina in [www.progettometastasio.it/testi/DEMOFOON|P](http://www.progettometastasio.it/testi/DEMOFOON|P) [Consulted 12–2–2021], with emphasis added. Translations into English are taken from *The Works of Metastasio. Translated from the Italian by John Hoole*, vol. II (London: T. Davies, 1767).
113. For an overview of the history of this *topos*, see the article «Nonsoché», *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, ed. Salvatore Battaglia, vol. XI (Torino: UTET, 1999, 1st ed. 1981), 545–46. For its importance in the philosophical and critical tradition, see Paolo D’Angelo and Stefano Velotti, eds., *Il non so che: storia di una idea estetica* (Palermo: Aesthetica, 1997).

