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Reading Roman emotions

Visual and textual interpretations

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ABSTRACT

This volume is a contribution to the study of culturally bound emotions and emotional response in ancient Rome. Approaches to the study of ancient emotions and how they were culturally specific, appreciated and understood have recently come to the centre of attention, but not so much in the visual as in the literary culture. When socially and affectively contextualized, the material culture of ancient Rome is a potential goldmine of information with regard to emotions. The chapters in the present volume take the reader on a tour through various cases that demonstrate how emotions were expressed through the arts. The tour starts with a fresh view of how emotion history can be used to recover feelings from the visual culture of the past. Visual culture includes animated performances, and the reader is invited to revel in Roman drama, oratory, and love poetry. Words are often clear, but can images reveal laughter and joy, sadness, grief and mourning, virtue and anger? This volume argues that yes, they can, and through the study of emotions it is also possible to obtain a deeper understanding of the Romans and their social and cultural codes.

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Abstract

Because of the kinds of sources available, any discussion of forms of visualization of emotions in ancient Rome will have to rely on what can be inferred from ancient texts; literary genres where display is at issue thus seem most promising as objects of study. Therefore, after some preliminary considerations, this article focusses on significant passages from Roman drama (mainly comedies by Plautus and Terence and tragedies by Seneca the Younger) as well as Roman oratory (mainly Cicero's speeches) in which speakers describe the appearance of others or their own reactions and interpret these as indications of emotional states: such comments reveal views on the ways in which bodily features and particular emotions were seen as linked. The importance of the visual display of emotions as an element of social communication, which can also be inferred for everyday life, goes hand in hand with scepticism as to the genuineness of the emotions shown. Interestingly, writers such as Horace and Cicero address the question of whether it is necessary for orators and actors to experience certain feelings to convey them plausibly. The analysis of relevant extracts demonstrates that strong emotions were assumed to be shown by changes in facial expression, tone of voice, and gestures, and that the display of genuine emotions was felt to be more effective for the purposes of the plot of plays or the argument of speeches.*

Introduction

As the title suggests, this contribution takes its starting point from a remark in one of the *Epistulae morales* by Seneca the Younger (*c.* 1 BC–AD 65). Seneca says (Sen. *Ep.* 11.7):

> Actors in the theatre, who imitate the emotions, who portray fear and nervousness, who depict sorrow, imitate bashfulness by hanging their heads, lowering their voices, and keeping their eyes fixed and rooted upon the ground. They cannot, however, muster a blush; for the blush cannot be prevented or acquired. Wisdom will not assure us of a remedy, or give us help against it; it comes or goes unbidden, and is a law unto itself.[1]

Seneca's comment on the actors' art of imitation is one of his arguments by which he intends to show that blushing, (in the context of this letter) on the basis of *verecundia*,[2] is a natural weakness, of which one cannot rid oneself by self-control or practice (Sen. *Ep.* 11.1). Seneca compares this behaviour to the reaction of those who, though particularly confident speakers, break into a perspiration when before the public, have their knees tremble, have their teeth chatter, or are unable to utter a word (Sen. *Ep.* 11.2). Such bodily reactions can be neither suppressed nor enforced (Sen. *Ep.* 11.2 and 11.6), though some of those (with the exception of blushing) may be feigned (Sen. *Ep.* 11.7).

Seneca's discussion raises a number of interesting questions with regard to the display of emotions in the ancient world. Apart from the fact that the Stoic Seneca accepts that some bodily reactions provoked by emotions cannot be controlled by willpower (in contrast to the otherwise negative attitude to emotions, which should be controlled, on the part of this philosophical school),[3] his argument shows that he sees a link

* I am grateful to Douglas Cairns for insightful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[1] *artifices scaenici, qui imitantur adfectus, qui metum et trepidationem exprimunt, qui tristitiam repraesentant, hoc indicio imitantur verecundiam: deiciunt enim vultum, verba submittunt, figunt in terram oculos et deprimunt. Ruborem sibi exprimere non possunt; nec prohibetur hic nec adducitur. Nihil adversus haec sapientia promittit, nihil proficit; sui iuris sunt, iniussa veniunt, iniussa discedunt.* Transl. Gummere 1917, 63.

[2] On *verecundia* see Kaster 2005, 13–27, esp. 15.

[3] See e.g. Krewet 2013, 62–83 on the role of emotions within Stoic doctrine, 133–140 on the views of the Stoic Seneca, returning to positions of the Old Stoa.

between emotions and generally intelligible signals. Cicero (106–43 BC) too acknowledges that strong emotions are not only felt, but also visible on one's face (Cic. *Att.* 12.14.3).[4]

Although emotions in the ancient world have recently received a good deal of attention, mostly from philosophical, ethical, or sociological points of view,[5] the visualization of emotions, i.e. how other people can know that someone is subject to a specific emotion from their outward appearance (also considering that the same physiological reaction may be caused by various feelings; see Sen. *Ep.* 11.4), has been studied less.[6] Since there are, obviously, no video clips from the ancient world in which people can be seen reacting to others displaying particular facial expressions, tones of voice, gestures, or types of behaviour,[7] ways of non-verbal expression of emotions have to be inferred from more indirect sources.[8]

Against this background it has been generally acknowledged that literature and art become more important in research on emotions and emotionality in periods of the past than in the contemporary world, where various scientific methods and experiments can be used.[9] When focussing on literary texts, one is faced with several methodological problems. These include the much-discussed question of terminology, since it has to be clarified in each instance what modern term matches the ancient one. When, for example, Seneca speaks of *verecundia*, it can be inferred from the context, namely the appearance of a young man, that the meaning of "sense of shame" or "modesty" is relevant, an emotion that actors demonstrate by hanging their heads, lowering their voices, and keeping their eyes fixed and rooted upon the ground (though not by blushing). The broader term *affectus*, translated as "emotions", is not identical with the modern word: the term "emotion" appears to be more focussed on strong feelings,[10] whereas *affectus* means "A mental or emotional state or reaction (esp. temporary), frame of mind, mood, feeling, emotion".[11] Nevertheless *affectus* (rather than e.g. *sensus*) seems to be the Classical Latin word closest to the notion expressed by the modern English term, though the focus on labels may be less helpful than an analysis of descriptions.[12]

As for the range of emotions, some modern scholars start from the view that there are basic emotions (including happiness, sadness, disgust, surprise, anger, and fear), regarded as physiologically determined and expressed broadly similarly across cultures,[13] and additionally emotion families, varieties, subcategories, and intermediate stages as well as secondary emotions depending on socio-cultural environments.[14] While there is undeniably a biological substratum of emotions, it has also been noted that the experiments on which this comparability has been assumed are not entirely similar and that the distinction between basic and other emotions might be

[4] See also Sen. *De Ira* 1.1.7. On ancient physiognomics see the material collected in Evans 1969.

[5] See for Rome, e.g., Braund & Gill 1997; Kaster 2005 (with an overview of bibliography on p. viii). On individual emotions see Cairns 1993 (shame); Harris 2001 (rage); Konstan 2001 (pity); Braund & Most 2003 (anger); Toohey 2004 (melancholy); Fulkerson 2013 (regret and remorse). On emotions in ancient Greece see Konstan 2006 (with an overview of bibliography on pp. ix–x); Chaniotis 2012; Chaniotis & Ducrey 2013a. For an overview of research on emotions in the ancient world see Cairns 2005, esp. xi–xii (with bibliography on pp. xvii–xxii).

[6] But see Cairns 2005. Schnell (2008, 81) defines such an approach as one aspect of research on emotions in historical periods (with respect to the Middle Ages). He (2008, 83) calls to mind that in literary texts emotions are shown within a fictional social network, and one has to ask for whom the signs indicating emotions are displayed and what the potential poetic implications are. Schnell (2008, 89) goes on to distinguish between three different linguistic levels in texts with respect to the description of emotions: exclamations directly indicating the emotions of a speaker; verbal descriptions of emotions by the speaker and others; the literary-rhetorical description of an emotion in the text. What is being explored here would probably count as a particular aspect of what is subsumed under items two and three.

[7] For attempts at "re-enactment" see Hall & Bond 2002; 2003; Goldberg 2003–2004.

[8] See also Konstan 2006, x. Looking at these literary sources can contribute a neglected aspect to the general study of emotions. See Hogan 2011, 1: "Yet verbal art is largely absent from this interdisciplinary study of emotion—despite the fact that millennia of storytelling present us with the largest body of works that systematically depict and provide emotion, and do so as a major part of human life."; for thoughts on the display of emotion in stories and the rousing of emotions in readers see Oatley 2002; Johnson-Laird & Oatley 2008.

[9] See e.g. Kasten 2005, 44–45. For theoretical and methodological considerations concerning the study of emotions in past periods, see Bremmer, Matt, and Prusac-Lindhagen in this volume; with reference to medieval literature, see e.g. Schnell 2004; 2008; 2014; Kasten 2005; with reference to antiquity, see Chaniotis & Ducrey 2013b, 10–11. On the development of research on the history of emotions see Stearns 2008; Plamper 2010; Matt 2011; for an overview of (mainly philosophical) theories on emotion see Scarantino & de Sousa 2018.

[10] The meaning of English "emotion", according to the *OED* (apart from obsolete senses), is (*OED* s.v. *emotion* 3): "a. Originally: an agitation of mind; an excited mental state. Subsequently: any strong mental or instinctive feeling, as pleasure, grief, hope, fear, etc., deriving esp. from one's circumstances, mood, or relationship with others.", "b. As a mass noun: strong feelings, passion; (more generally) instinctive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge." On the development of the English term see Dixon 2003, 4.

[11] *OLD* s.v. *affectus* 1a.

[12] For similar considerations with respect to the names of individual emotions in ancient Greek see Konstan 2006, ix–x.

[13] For a survey see e.g. Ekman 1999a (on these theories see also Matt in this volume). Modern experiments have suggested that basic emotions may be expressed in fairly similar ways, by facial expression and vocal intonation, across cultures and universally recognizable; differences exist as regards social rules on when and to what extent they may be displayed (see e.g. Ekman 1992; 1999b; Pell *et al.* 2009). For an overview of recent trends in the scientific study of emotions see e.g. Davidson & Cacciopo 1992; esp. Colombetti 2014 (with a critique of existing theories, including those on basic emotions).

[14] On emotional expression and intercultural communication see Porter & Samovar 1998.

problematic; therefore it has been pointed out that attention should also be paid to the feelings of the past and their distinctive characteristics within emotional communities as shaped by culture.[15]

Further, it is not always certain whether the views of writers are fully representative of their society, and in literary texts emotional situations may be exaggerated or interpreted for the benefit of the plot, the argument, or special effects.[16] Moreover, these texts will probably only mention some of the visual elements that combine to indicate an emotion, just so that audiences and/or figures in the literary work can recognize its distinctive characteristics. Still, features mentioned are likely to have a basis in what is common in society at the time since otherwise the descriptions would be incomprehensible to contemporary audiences or provoke unwanted associations. Hence, the approach to literary texts requires interpretation; but it has been pointed out that this need equally applies to scientific data.[17]

In the light of Seneca's references to the behaviour of actors, a promising approach, which should reduce the methodological problems mentioned, will be to look more closely at the display of emotions employed for particular purposes, on the part of actors or orators who mention emotions to make them obvious to audiences. Such passages can be found in literary genres characterized by the fact that individuals speaking or described do not necessarily experience the emotions they display or pretend to display.[18] As Seneca's comments on the actors' behaviour demonstrate, it was known in Rome that emotions could be insincere. In Ovid's (43 BC–AD 17/18) didactic poem *Ars amatoria*, for instance, the poet advises the would-be lover to show the signs of certain emotions in order to have an effect on the object of his love (e.g. Ov. *Ars am.* 1.723–738 and 2.319–336).[19] As Seneca's considerations also reveal, there are limits to the feigning of emotions. Ovid too shows awareness of these, when he says that tears cannot always be produced artificially when they are needed (Ov. *Ars am.* 1.661–662). This raises the question of whether the intensity of a sincere expression of feelings can be distinguished from a feigned one. Ancient writers already pursued this issue, particularly with reference to literary genres in which the display of emotions is exploited for the plot or the argument.

As a consequence of these considerations the following discussion will first review ways of showing the visual impact of emotions in Roman literature more generally (with the help of a few paradigmatic examples), to provide a sense of the emotions described and the means by which they can be indicated. On this basis a selection of passages from (completely preserved) dramas and speeches as well as comments on dramas and speeches in works of other literary genres will be investigated, so as to find out how the display of particular emotions may be indicated in the texts of these literary genres, where display is dominant, but where the description is supported by the representation of emotions through actors and orators; this will lead to the questions of what the function of these explicit descriptions in a performance context might have been and whether such portrayals of emotions were regarded as genuine.[20]

Survey of visualized emotions in Roman literature

Because of the way in which Roman literature has been transmitted, it does not provide a complete list of forms of visualization and the corresponding emotions, and the number of extant and identifiable references is not an indication of their general frequency or society's attitude to them. Owing to the topics covered and the potential of the respective literary genres, the most obvious comments on bodily signals (such as becoming pale or blushing, trembling, being unable to speak, shedding tears, or running around madly) appear in love poetry and epic narrative, where strong emotions are relevant for the plot, and their description, rather than their simple identification, agrees with the poetic style of presentation.

Pallor and trembling most frequently indicate fear.[21] This is demonstrated, for instance, by scenes in Ovid's mythical epic

[15] See Rosenwein 2010; also Colombetti 2014.

[16] Thus LaCourse Munteanu 2011, 5. However, the authors of another contribution in the same volume seem to see a closer relationship between some literary genres and real life (Dutsch & Konstan 2011, 57).

[17] See Hogan 2011, 3 and 38.

[18] Emotions of orators have been a topic of ancient rhetoric since Aristotle (*Rh.* 2.1–17), but it is difficult to infer the full exploitation of emotions for both orators and actors solely from the texts (for discussion of the effective use of emotions in Cicero's oratorical appearances see Hall 2014).

[19] That emotions can be "imitated", mainly for social reasons, is also well known in modern scientific research on emotions (see below).

[20] In view of this aim, this study is interested in the description of (fictional) emotions in literature and the function of these descriptions, not in aspects of psychological or social study and only marginally in the display of emotions in contemporary society. Therefore it is not affected by what Hogan (2011, 6) demands: "As this reference to interdisciplinarity suggests, an understanding of literature and emotion cannot be derived from the literary works alone. Thus a researcher should generally invoke features of a study or character insofar as they at least partially converge with broader research trends." For distinctions between different approaches to the study of emotions see Schnell 2014. The approach followed here comes close to what Schnell announces for his own study (Schnell 2014, 275, see also 281–283).

[21] Pallor as a sign of weakness because of lack of food is a "medicinal" issue rather than a sign of any emotion, even if this appearance may be faked for a specific character portrayal and the sake of a comic effect for

narrative *Metamorphoses*:[22] when Phaethon, son of the Sun god, realizes that he has lost control of the chariot borrowed from his father and is flying high up in the air, he becomes pale and trembles with fear (Ov. *Met.* 2.169 and 2.178–181). Philomela, whom Tereus has brought into his possession, is pale, trembling, and in tears, in fear of what Tereus will do (Ov. *Met.* 6.520–524). Medea, who has supported Jason with incantations, still becomes pale and cold with fear for him when he is attacked by a large number of enemies (Ov. *Met.* 7.134–136).[23] When Althaea is torn between killing her son and avenging her brother, the fight of the two emotions is indicated by her changing appearance from terrified pallor to reddish anger (Ov. *Met.* 8.465–474). Alcyone, informed that her husband Ceyx intends to go on a sea voyage to consult an oracle, becomes cold and pale out of fear, sheds tears, and is unable to speak (Ov. *Met.* 11.415–420).

In Ovid's love poetry, similar physical reactions can illustrate stages in the development of a (happy or, more frequently, unhappy) love relationship. Pallor and an unhealthy emaciated appearance are indications of lovers according to Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (Ov. *Ars am.* 1.723–738). A beloved may tremble, shed tears, and turn speechless in fear when the lover has become violent with rage (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.4, 20–22 and 51–58). She can become pale, speechless, and unconscious with grief when she thinks that her lover prefers another (Ov. *Ars am.* 3.701–706). The lover may inject fear and paleness into his beloved in uncertainty about his fidelity, only to reconfirm his love (Ov. *Ars am.* 2.445–462).

To illustrate pallor in human beings, Ovid employs various comparisons, such as "pale as boxwood" (Ov. *Met.* 11.417) and as pale "the late leaves upon clusters of the vine, hurt by the first breath of winter, and as ripe quinces that bend their boughs are pale, and cornel-berries not yet fit for human food" (Ov. *Ars am.* 3.703–706). Thus Ovid probably understands "pale" not in the sense of "white", but rather colourless, muted, and lifeless. With different words he elsewhere describes someone with "face bloodless and white as blocks of marble hewn from Parian cliffs" (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.51–52).[24] The opposite is blushing out of shame, which Ovid illustrates equally elaborately (Ov. *Am.* 2.5.33–46).

Even Aurora, the goddess of dawn, who normally colours the morning red, becomes pale out of grief upon the death of her son Memnon (Ov. *Met.* 13.578–582). Most frequently, grief manifests itself by tears, often accompanied by other reactions, and in more formal contexts by conventional gestures of grief. For instance, in Vergil's (70–19 BC) epic *Aeneid* grief is expressed by tears and lament (Verg. *Aen.* 9.450–454, 11.29, and 11.149–151); this can be accompanied by groaning, almost to the point that the person is unable to speak (Verg. *Aen.* 11.150–151). Particularly strong grief is evident when the individual becomes cold, tears their hair, sheds tears, and runs around madly (Verg. *Aen.* 9.473–502). Typical gestures include beating one's arms or breasts (Verg. *Aen.* 7.503 and 11.37–38), wearing one's hair loose (Verg. *Aen.* 11.35), and wailing (Verg. *Aen.* 11.37–38 and 11.146–147).

The strongest and most physical emotion is madness or *furor*, characterized by wild running around and irrational behaviour. Therefore it is probably understandable that such behaviour is often referred to supernatural influence: in the case of Queen Amata the Fury Allecto sends a snake that envelops her and causes her to rage through the city like a spinning top and to feign Bacchic celebrations (Verg. *Aen.* 7.341–405).

Moreover, emotions frequently appear in poetry as personifications, along with descriptions of sad or joyful states of mind (e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 6.273–281; Ov. *Met.* 2.760–832, 4.484–485, and 4.500–505; Sen. *Hercules furens* 96–99 and 689–696; Sen. *Oedipus* 590–594, 589, and 1059–1061; Stat. *Theb.* 7.40–54). In such contexts they might be given brief characterizations (e.g. "black Grief"; "savage Disloyalty, lapping its own blood"; "Rage, always armed against itself"; "gnashing Resentment"), which underscores their powerful forces, but such lists do not normally include details on the appearance of the humans affected by them.

Indications of visualized emotions in Roman drama

While in epic and love poetry narrators provide descriptions of emotions to illustrate the psychological state of characters, in performative genres, where there is no mediating voice and the characters themselves speak, it is more common for them to say how they are feeling rather than to describe their own appearance. Accordingly, in dramatic texts characters frequently indicate their feelings by phrases such as "I am in love", "I am terrified", "I am anxious", and other expressions of this kind (e.g. Plaut. *Amph.* 1053–1060; Plaut. *Mostell.* 348–353; Plaut. *Pseud.* 13; Ter. *Eun.* 305–307). Such remarks naming an emotion are sufficient as implied stage directions since actors would know how a particular emotion is typically visualized in their society and how to complement the statement

the audience (Plaut. *Curc.* 309–313). Fear may also manifest itself by sweat (Verg. *Aen.* 7.458–459).

[22] The examples considered exclude instances where pallor occurs as an element of a metamorphosis, when, for example, human beings lose colour while they turn into something else. See also Ov. *Met.* 9.111–112, 9.214–215, and 13.73–74; Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.129–130. On "nonverbal behaviour" in Ovid see Lateiner 1966; on emotions in Roman love poetry see Thorsen in this volume.

[23] For the use of temperature words to indicate emotions in Greek literature see Zink 1962.

[24] *albo et sine sanguine vultu,* | *caeduntur Pariis qualia saxa iugis.* Transl. Showerman & Goold 1977, 345.

of the emotion by the corresponding behaviour, without this being voiced.[25] For Seneca at any rate it is a matter of course that such emotions are visualized. To answer the question of how actors presented these emotions, one has to rely on circumstances where the plot requires that one person identify the emotions of another by describing their appearance, or at least the story benefits from such explicitness. Therefore the most common situation for descriptions of emotions in Roman drama is that one character sees another behaving in a particular way indicative of certain feelings and wonders what is going on; in reflecting on this, they describe the appearance of the other person or encourage them to change their mood and behaviour.[26] A person's appearance can sometimes even be more revealing than words (Sen. *Hercules Oetaeus* 704–705).

The literary critic Horace in Augustan Rome and the rhetorician Quintilian in the late first century AD seem to assume that well-known mythical figures in tragedies are associated with particular emotions (Hor. *Ars P.* 119–124; Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.73). In addition, Quintilian mentions that in comedy masks distinguish between different stock characters (and potentially different emotional states) and also refers to a bipartite mask of the *pater familias*, consisting of two sides depicting anger and calmness respectively by the shape of the eyebrows, which allows actors to show the audience whichever side represents the character's current emotional state (Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.74).[27] This suggests that masks were employed to express basic states of mind, but that anything more detailed would have to be conveyed verbally or by body language.[28]

Sketches in the Republican comedies of Plautus (*c.* 250–184 BC) and Terence (*c.* 195/4–159 BC) include remarks on frowning because of indignation, as a comment on audience reaction (Plaut. *Amph.* 52–53); grimacing due to unhappiness and indignation (Ter. *Eun.* 669–672); blushing (Ter. *Ad.* 642–643); using the appropriate facial expression to fake a situation and emotional state that do not apply (Ter. *Phorm.* 200–213); movements indicating thinking and devising a plan (Plaut. *Mil.* 196–218); and a description of a character showing a stern face (Plaut. *Asin.* 399–406).

A particularly telling passage is a scene in Terence's *Phormio* in which one of the young men practises the appropriate facial expression with which to confront his father so that he would not suspect anything as regards his love affairs (Ter. *Phorm.* 200–213). From what he says it can be inferred that this young man tries out various facial expressions accompanied by comments of other characters, until an appearance is found that is judged to be promising and, combined with the corresponding behaviour and words, could be successful. Although there is mention of "expression" (*vultus*), one will have to assume, if masks were worn, that the different *miens* are represented by the overall bodily posture and the comments of the internal audience rather than by changes to the facial expression as a whole.

The famous description of the cunning slave (Palaestrio) in Plautus' *Miles gloriosus* developing an intrigue is based less on changes in facial expression, but rather on a series of gestures. Moreover, it is perhaps not a visualization of emotions in the strict sense, but it shows how both he and the character describing his movements, by considering various options, go from disappointment at potential plans that seem unworkable to the happiness at having found a promising plan. While it is a common element of Roman comedies that slaves devise intrigues, there is rarely so much emphasis on working it out as in Plautus' *Pseudolus* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 394–405, 562–572 575–591, 667–691, 759–766, and 1017–1036). In this play, apart from the metaliterary dimension, explicitly voiced in another drama (Plaut. *Mil.* 212: *comoedice*—"in the style of comedies"), it is to be highlighted that the intrigue is rather complicated and solely based on the activities of the slave who directs the other characters involved. Therefore emphasis is given to working it out, and since the person cannot be presented as thinking aloud and giving away the intrigue at this point, this is conveyed via a description of the slave deep in thought.

In tragedies of Seneca the Younger from the Imperial period, with their different plots and atmosphere, there seems to be more emphasis on grief, terror, and madness: shedding tears out of grief (Sen. *Hercules Furens* 640–642; [Sen.] *Octavia* 75–78);[29] grief shown through open lamenting and fiery wrath not engaging in discussion ([Sen.] *Octavia* 46–54); running around, tears and pallor to indicate agitation and worry ([Sen.] *Octavia* 690–711); madness displayed by fiery eyes and raging against oneself (Sen. *Hercules furens* 1022–1023 and 1219–1221);[30] frightening look (Sen. *Med.* 186–190); tyranny obvious by facial expression, terrible to look at ([Sen.] *Octavia* 108–114); and dire facial expression foreboding terrible events ([Sen.] *Octavia* 435–436). If a character describes the effect of their own emotions, they

[25] On "nonverbal behaviour" in Roman comedy see Panayotakis 2005.
[26] On the role of descriptions of facial or bodily expression in Seneca and New Comedy see Evans 1969, 28–33 and 35–38.
[27] For the range of tragic and comic masks known in the later Imperial period see the list in Pollux' *Onomastikon* from the 2nd century AD (Poll. 4.133–142 and 4.142–154).
[28] Some of Cicero's comments (Cic. *Div.* 1.80; Cic. *De or.* 1.18 and 2.193) suggest that in his day at least part of an actor's face could be seen behind the mask and that an actor's facial expression contributed to visualizing emotions.
[29] See also Valerius Flaccus 3.362–371.
[30] For blazing eyes indicating *furor* and *ira* see e.g. Hom. *Od.* 4.662; Plaut. *Capt.* 594; Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.148; Sen. *De Ira* 1.1.4 and 2.35.5. For *furor* see also Kolrud this volume.

can also mention bodily reactions not visible to others (e.g. Sen. *Hercules Oetaeus* 706–709).

In particular, there are extensive descriptions of anger, madness, and fury in Seneca's *Medea*. Again, this has been connected with performance conventions, since it is not certain whether Seneca's tragedies were designed for full staging, and it has been assumed that such descriptions replace what would have been visible on stage or are incompatible with presenting the described actions on stage.[31] However, as shown by comments on emotions in Roman comedy, which was certainly performed, description and portrayal are not mutually exclusive if the sketches have a function in the plot. The first description of Medea's anger and aggression by the Nurse, who describes her as running around like a Maenad, with face ablaze, breathing deeply, crying, and weeping (Sen. *Med.* 380–396), enables the Nurse to voice fears for the future and thus to introduce forebodings for the audience, and it gives Medea a starting point for asserting her determination. Interestingly, this state of mind is said to assume the aspect of every passion; this presumably indicates that it is fluctuating and that the outcome is unclear and unpredictable (Sen. *Med.* 380–396). Later the Nurse sketches Medea's mad frenzy in preparing the poisons for Jason's new bride, where she is again said to be running around madly and is characterized as an expert in crimes; the Nurse thus expresses her fear of what might happen (Sen. *Med.* 670–739). The first passage in particular agrees in part with Seneca's description of anger in his philosophical works (Sen. *De Ira* 1.1.3–7), for instance as regards hurried steps, violent breathing, and blazing eyes or face. This shows that it is not a random description, but based on what the author regards as recognizable signs of passion.

In all these examples (which could be multiplied) the descriptions underscore the plot and can therefore complement a (masked or unmasked) production. They highlight particular manifestations of strong emotions and thus encourage the audience to focus on key emotional states of the protagonists and their consequences. The fact that these emotions are not passing, illustrative states of mind, but essential movers of the action explains why (sometimes considerable) space is given to their description. In many cases characters on stage sketch the appearance of someone approaching, either to themselves (and to the audience) as a way of anticipating their response or to another character as a means of starting a conversation and enquiring into their state of mind. If playwrights want to avoid that characters explicitly identify their own feelings, this is an efficient way of conveying key features, especially in a performance in an open-air theatre, where not all spectators may have had full view of the protagonists and masks are likely to have been worn, indicating stereotypical characteristics and feelings.[32] These scenes reveal insights into the social role of emotions: the public was expected to accept the connection between visual signals and a particular emotion; this indicates that such a behaviour was regarded as "normal" even if protagonists in drama are shown in unusual situations.

Indications of visualized emotions in Roman oratory

A similar need to display emotions existed for orators, another type of performers, since, according to oratorical practice in Rome, they built their persuasiveness in politics or law courts not only on factual arguments and pieces of evidence, but also on exploiting a psychological element.[33] Therefore there was a greater need to deploy emotions successfully than in drama and a more direct interaction with the audience. Even though in Cicero's view this element is merely one aspect of the qualities of a good orator, he stresses the importance of emotions in everyday oratorical practice. In his rhetorical dialogue *De oratore* he has one of the speakers explain how important it is to arouse emotions in the audience (such as hatred, love, jealousy, fear, hope, desire, joy, sadness, pity) and that this is best achieved when the orator acts in an emotional way, displays these emotions himself and thus makes the audience adopt them too (Cic. *De or.* 2.185–216). As the interlocutor goes on to explain, look of the eyes, facial expression, body language, passion, tone of voice or shedding tears can contribute to displaying emotions (Cic. *De or*. 2.188, 2.193, 2.196, and 2.200). Therefore it is not a surprise that the activities of an orator are compared with that of actors in this context (Cic. *De or.* 2.193).

When, elsewhere, Cicero says that he is surprised and disappointed that part of the accusation against Caelius was given to a decent young man (Cic. *Cael.* 7) or claims, in his invective against Piso, that he is happy that the audience has a strong negative view of Piso and Gabinius just as of enemies (Cic. *Pis.* 45–46), it is unclear from the text how Cicero would have displayed these feelings. Obviously, orators speaking about their own feelings do not need to indicate verbally how these are visualized since they would support the statement of their emotions with the appropriate conventional appearance as part of

[31] For a summarizing discussion (with further references) with respect to Seneca's *Medea* see Hine 2000, 39–43, 154–155, and *passim*.

[32] Whether and when masks were worn in the Roman theatre is controversial because of the ambiguous and limited evidence. It is now generally assumed that the use of masks from an early point in time onwards is likely (on masks in the Roman theatre see e.g. Wiles 1991, 129–149; Marshall 2006, 126–158, with further references).

[33] For a survey of emotions (with references to sample passages) displayed in Cicero's time see Kroll 1933, 96–116.

the performance. Then they may act like actors, showing their emotions in exaggerated fashion. On other occasions the orator's aim is to move the judges to feel pity with the accused or the victim by a display of emotions: for instance, supporters of the defendant could appear in mourning clothes to illustrate their distress (Cic. *Sest.* 144);[34] or judges could be influenced by the shedding of tears at appropriate places (e.g. Cic. *Planc.* 76 and 104; Cic. *Mil.* 105).[35] While in one of Seneca's dramas showing emotions by visible signs such as tears is regarded as a sign of weakness for the hero Hercules (Sen. *Hercules Oetaeus* 1265–1277), in Roman society shedding tears on particular occasions, especially as a sign of compassion and in moderation, was regarded as acceptable; extended weeping or crying as a result of personal fear, however, was seen as inappropriate.[36]

In the treatise *De oratore* Cicero has one of the interlocutors explain that each emotion has a characteristic appearance in facial expression, tone of voice, and gestures. For the tone of voice there are different shades for anger, grief, fear or joy. Gestures have to agree with these feelings, but these should be different for orators and actors: an actor's gestures would replay what is being said in pantomime fashion, whereas an orator's gestures underline what is being said in a powerful and virile manner. The most important instrument for displaying emotions is the face and particularly the expression of the eyes. By an austere, relaxed, frowning or happy look the relevant atmosphere can be conveyed. A delivery displaying the feelings of the orator affects everybody since all humans have the same feelings and therefore the audience can identify its manifestations in others since they know them from themselves (Cic. *De or.* 3.214–223). Cicero even provides a list of emotions to be aroused in the hearts of judges (Cic. *De or.* 2.206). This extensive discussion contrasts with Aristotle's (384–322 BC) *Rhetoric*, which has a description of various emotions and mention of the fact that in delivery the voice adapts to convey various emotions (Arist. *Rh.* 2.1–11), but no discussion of their visualization or the feelings of orators.

In order to strengthen their argument or its persuasive force, orators can describe the behaviour and emotions of others, be it that these people are not present, be it that these emotions were experienced in the past, be it even that the existence of such emotions is merely being claimed. The corpus of Cicero's *Catilinarian Speeches*, for instance, does not include a record of any utterances that Cicero may have made during a Senate meeting in early December 63 BC during his consular year, but rather his report of the events at the session to a meeting of the People slightly later (Cic. *Cat.* 3). In this narrative of the proceedings he highlights the emotional reactions of those who were revealed as guilty at the Senate meeting: Cicero outlines that the surest indications of guilt, when the accused Roman citizens were confronted with factual proof of their deeds, did not consist in physical evidence (letters, seals, handwriting, confessions), but in their reactions: the looks in their eyes, the colour and expression of their faces, their silence, their staring at the ground, which in Cicero's presentation amounts to them convicting themselves (Cic. *Cat.* 3.13). For this argument Cicero builds on shared experiences of the audience, who would also read these signs as an expression of guilt. When Cicero goes on to report that the Senate decreed that these men should be punished, it is assumed that the audience would approve of this decision on the basis that the accused have shown their guilt themselves.

Operating with the display of emotions of others can be effective since it seems to prove that what the orator argues is based on what everyone can see and on evidence rather than on insinuation. This is evident when Cicero uses this argumentative structure in a "speech" that was only written up, but never delivered. In this speech, the *Second Philippic Oration*, in which Cicero reacts to accusations made by Mark Antony against him in autumn 44 BC, he reviews Mark Antony's entire career and lists all his appalling deeds (in his view). Having introduced the report of what Mark Antony did at the festival of the Lupercalia in 44 BC, he moves on to describe the (fictional) emotions of Mark Antony, who is said to appear moved, sweating, and turning pale; by hoping that Mark Antony will not be sick, Cicero exploits this also to remind the audience of another disgraceful incident in public, when Mark Antony vomited (Cic. *Phil.* 2.84). Since Cicero feels that he can present this as a possible next step from the agitation shown by Mark Antony, the bodily signs ascribed to Mark Antony as such evidently are polysemous. Only because of the context, presenting them as a reaction to Cicero's allegations, do they appear as visualizations of the feelings of a man who feels pressurized, caught, and forced to admit his guilt. The fact that this does not describe Mark Antony's real behaviour, but rather indicates how a reaction would be envisaged shows that agitation and embarrassment were thought to be displayed in this way and that the appearance of undisguised feelings could be exploited as part of the argument.

In the *Third Agrarian Speech*, delivered towards the start of his consular year in 63 BC, Cicero begins by noting that the feelings of parts of the audience towards him have changed,

[34] See also Cic. *Sest.* 26 and 32; Cic. *Red. sen.* 12.

[35] Cicero claims to be overwhelmed by tears in his letters as well (e.g. Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.1; Cic. *Att.* 11.2.3); while the mention of this detail may be used to effect in this literary genre too, visualization is not an issue there.

[36] On tears in Roman society (with examples) see Hall 2014, 100–109, on the exploitation of tears as a functional device in speeches in court see Hall 2014, 99–128; on Cicero's use of tears in his orations see Heckenkamp 2010. On tears in the Greco-Roman world, though with little attention to oratory and drama, see Fögen 2009; on "Trajan's tears" see Vekselius in this volume.

as indicated by noises they are making and their altered facial expressions (Cic. *Leg. agr.* 3.2). Cicero senses that the People are less favourably disposed towards him than when he last addressed them (Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2), and he aims to demonstrate that this alteration, allegedly based on the influence of other players in the dispute (mainly one of the Tribunes of the People of that year), is unfounded and they should revert to their earlier feelings. Cicero does not specify the facial expression he is referring to, since it would be obvious to the addressees, but it must denote indignation and hostility. Cicero thereby gives a seemingly objective reason for delivering another speech and presents it as provoked by the audience he is addressing. References to the feelings of the masses may be exploited rhetorically, but these examples show that recourse to the display of emotions, whose interpretation may have been dependent on the context, was an accepted method of influencing audiences.

Genuineness of emotions displayed by orators and actors

In contrast to Aristotle, who starts by criticizing the arousing of emotions in appeals to audiences, rather than focussing on proper arguments (Arist. *Rh.* 1.1: 1354a11–31), although he has a long discussion of *pathē* as elements of convincing oratory later (Arist. *Rh.* 2), the issue of how emotions can be conveyed convincingly is an important question for Cicero. Although he deploys the mention of emotions to great effect in his speeches, he is aware that oratory, like drama, is a performance and that performers might not experience the emotions they display.[37]

In the discussion in the rhetorical dialogue *De oratore* (Cic. *De or.* 2.188–201) Cicero has the interlocutor Antonius, the great orator, claim that he experienced grief and sympathy for his client when he shed tears or tore up the client's tunica to reveal his scars (Cic. *De or.* 2.194–196).[38] Antonius states that only by the sincerity of the emotion underlying the speech did it have an impact on the audience. He compares this approach with that of dramatic actors, who also have to experience the emotions they display, and that of poets writing their plays in an ecstatic disposition, even if, in the case of actors, they have to show these emotions repeatedly (Cic. *De or.* 2.193). As for his own strategy in delivering speeches Cicero says in *Orator*, a later rhetorical work, that he frequently used the tactic of provoking pity; on the one hand he seems to be well aware of the effect of staging (when, for instance, he notes that he once lifted up a small child), on the other hand he regards the power of his own passion as decisive (Cic. *Orat.* 130–132; cf. also *Rhet. Her.* 3.27).

The concept in the dialogue *Tusculan Disputations* is different: in a refutation of the view ascribed to the Peripatetics that anger is useful for an orator and therefore should be feigned when not genuinely felt, anger is qualified from a Stoic perspective as a bad passion, and it is said that an orator should not be angry, but may feign anger; in fact an orator might be able to feign anger better than an actor (Cic. *Tusc.* 4.43 and 4.55). That the question of the authenticity of feelings displayed by orators is included in the philosophical discussion and that different views are being debated suggests the conclusion that this was not seen as a minor problem only relevant to individual orators, but rather that the authenticity of visualized emotions was significant for the development of views in public life. Presumably the public or the opponent will have watched the ostentatious display of emotions critically. At any rate, in one of his speeches Cicero refutes the reproach that he had only shed "one poor tear" and insists that instead it was a flood of tears (Cic. *Planc.* 76).

The view that an orator should experience the emotions displayed to increase his persuasiveness can also be found in the writings of the rhetorician Quintilian. He confirms that an orator's voice must be appropriate to the emotions expressed as it is an indicator of the mind, and such a manifestation is the way to arouse the same emotions among the audience. He stresses that orators must experience the emotions they represent, but also that, if they are allowed to burst out naturally, they lack art and therefore have to be disciplined by training.[39] This is perhaps implied in Cicero's distinction between orators and actors, but in Quintilian it is more obvious that, although emotions are a prerequisite, an orator's performance is not a natural expression of feelings and these therefore have to be channelled through art (Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.61–65, also 6.2.26–35).[40] For Quintilian effective delivery is a complex and acquired art; he therefore provides detailed rules on the kind of gestures to be used and their timing (Quint. *Inst.* 11.3).[41]

Cicero's considerations on the genuineness of emotions include references to parallels between orators and actors or

[37] On Cicero's discussions of feeling genuine emotions and the possible philosophical or rhetorical background see e.g. Schryvers 1982; Leeman *et al.* 1989, 118–133; Wisse 1989, 257–269; Narducci 1997, 77–96; Cavarzere 2004; Hall 2007, 232–234. See esp. Wisse 1989, 264–265: "The genuineness of the emotions to be displayed, however, is not discussed, neither by Aristotle nor by school rhetoric. None of the surviving material until Quintilian shows any awareness of the problem."

[38] On this incident see Hall 2014, 18–20 and 143.

[39] In the light of this, modern scholars have noted that genuineness and tactical application do not necessarily contradict each other, since, once it is accepted that emotions will be exploited, it is more effective to display them as real feelings (see Hall 2007, 233–234).

[40] On Quintilian's advice on the "art of emotional appeal" see Katula 2003.

[41] See Aldrete 1999, esp. 6–17.

poets. That emotions will be presented most convincingly if the poet is able to envisage them fully and convey an authentic representation was already noted by Aristotle (Arist. *Poet.* 17: 1455a 29–34).[42] Horace reveals a similar view, though looking at the finished product rather than the process of its creation: he emphasizes that in poetry the characters must speak in a way that mirrors their emotions since the words indicating an emotion are typically determined by its experience (Hor. *Ars P.* 99–113). Therefore one can conclude that the poet must be familiar with the emotions displayed to depict them authentically and give the appropriate words to the characters. Here, too, it emerges therefore that emotions genuinely felt and displayed are more convincing.

Conclusion

In one of his philosophical treatises Cicero says (Cic. *Off.* 1.146; see also Sen. *Ep.* 52.12):

> We shall readily be able to judge what is done fittingly, and what discords with duty and nature, from a glance of the eyes, from the relaxation or contraction of an eyebrow, from sadness, cheerfulness or laughter, from speech or from silence, from a raising or lowering of the voice, and so on. Here it can be advantageous to judge by looking at others the nature of each of these things, so that we ourselves may avoid anything that is unseemly about them. For somehow it is the case that we can detect failings better in others than in ourselves.[43]

This comment shows that Cicero places considerable emphasis on the precise observation of bodily appearance as an expression of feelings. Accordingly, particular bodily features and changes (specific forms of outward appearance, facial expression, tone of voice, gestures, body language or behaviour) caused by the onset of emotions would be noted, as the sample of significant passages from Roman oratory has shown. Although specific descriptions of individual visualizations of emotions (such as paleness or blushing) can only be found in drama and in epic or love poetry, it can be inferred from the various recommendations for an orator's behaviour that emotions such as joy, grief, sadness, fear or anger were being differentiated. These emotions were clearly associated with particular forms of visualizations in ancient Rome.

When the display of such emotions is mentioned in extant texts, non-verbal ways of showing emotional states are transferred into verbal accounts; they can thus be put on record (and preserved) and employed to create an effect on larger audiences. Moreover, these descriptions tend to be not merely ways of illustrating emotions: in the performative genres of Roman drama and oratory descriptions of emotional appearances typically do not simply consist of comments by narrators (as in epic or love poetry); instead, references to the visual display of emotions are exploited for the plot or the argument.

At the same time it was clear to ancient literary critics and rhetoricians that orators and actors may "imitate" emotions as part of their role without being subject to these feelings; yet it was thought that experiencing them genuinely increases the effectiveness of raising the same feelings in the audience. Since sketches of emotions in performative genres are meant to have an impact on audiences, there was an awareness that the display of emotions might be manipulated and is important for influencing the response to information presented. Even though there are natural bodily reactions, like blushing, which are almost impossible to control, other bodily manifestations can serve as signs with a conventional meaning and thus acquire a communicative function. "Visualization" also works if the envisaged visual display is described rather than viewed; *vice versa*, this information about potential visualizations in the ancient world helps to illustrate passages naming emotions not only for contemporary, but also for modern readers.

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[42] Arist. *Poet.* 17: 1455a29–34: ὅσα δὲ δυνατὸν καὶ τοῖς σχήμασιν συναπεργαζόμενον· πιθανώτατοι γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως οἱ ἐν τοῖς πάθεσίν εἰσιν, καὶ χειμαίνει ὁ χειμαζόμενος καὶ χαλεπαίνει ὁ ὀργιζόμενος ἀληθινώτατα. διὸ εὐφυοῦς ἡ ποιητικὴ ἐστιν ἢ μανικοῦ· τούτων γὰρ οἱ μὲν εὔπλασιοι οἱ δὲ ἐκστατικοί εἰσιν. "So far as possible, one should work out the plot in gestures, since a natural affinity makes those in the grip of emotions the most convincing, and the truest distress or anger is conveyed by one who actually feels these things. Hence poetry is the work of a gifted person, or of a maniac: of these types, the former have versatile imaginations, the latter get carried away." Transl. Halliwell 1995, 89.

[43] *ex oculorum optutu, superciliorum aut remissione aut contractione, ex maestitia, ex hilaritate, ex risu, ex locutione, ex reticentia, ex contentione vocis, ex summissione, ex ceteris similibus facile iudicabimus, quid eorum apte fiat, quid ab officio naturaque discrepet. quo in genere non est incommodum, quale quidque eorum sit, ex aliis iudicare, ut, si quid dedeceat in illis, vitemus ipsi; fit enim nescio quomodo ut magis in aliis cernamus, quam in nobismet ipsis, si quid delinquitur.* Transl. Griffin & Atkins 1991, 56–57.

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