Louis Charland (1958–2021)

News of the sudden death of Louis Charland from a heart attack on 9 May 2021 was a real shock for many members of the Australian Centre for the History of Emotions (CHE). Louis was an International Partner Investigator of CHE 2012–17, had visited CHE three times (2012, 2013 and 2016), and was creating a collaborative partnership, and also friendship, with some of its members. An extraordinary scholar working across multiple fields and disciplines, Louis was a tenured professor at the Department of Philosophy at Western (formerly Western Ontario) University, with joint academic appointments in the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Department of Psychiatry in the Faculty of Medicine. He was also a member of the Rotman Institute of Philosophy at Western, which is especially concerned with interdisciplinary applications of philosophy, was on the Executive Committee of the Association for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry, and sat on the boards of various journals, such as *Emotion Review* and this journal.

Prior to his appointment at Western University in 1998, Louis taught and practised as a bioethicist: at the Biomedical Ethics Unit of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University, at the Joint Centre for Bioethics at the University of Toronto, and at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children, and had also acted as a public health consultant in government departments. His research and publications covered the history and philosophy of psychiatry and ethics, informed consent and decisional capacity, pain and addiction, and increasingly over the last fifteen years the history and philosophy of the affective sciences – more especially the relationship between emotion and passion. From that research emerged the claims he was possibly best known for beyond the Academy, that anorexia nervosa was best conceptualised affectively as a passion and that the common clinical treatment for it, cognitive behavioural therapy, would likely be ineffective.

The lectures and workshops Louis delivered at the Perth, Melbourne and Sydney nodes during his three trips to Australia as a Partner Investigator of CHE focused primarily on the history of emotions, and in particular the relationship between emotions and passions. The titles of a number of those sessions made clear his argument: that contemporary psychology, philosophy and psychopathology needed to resurrect and reinstate the idea of the passions, which had

completely disappeared from Western psychiatry. While very admiring of the work of the historian Thomas Dixon, who had shown how the term 'emotion' had trumped 'passion' in exploring affective experience over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Louis argued that this was only so in the Anglo-Saxon world. There was also a French tradition, in which passion survived beside emotion. As he argued very directly and also forcefully, there are two histories we need to explore in unravelling the history of emotion and passion: the history of passion *to* emotion and the history of passion *and* emotion.

Much of Louis' intellectual work over the last decade and more had been devoted to uncovering and explicating that French tradition of the passions. As he outlined in his article 'Reinstating the Passions: Lessons from the History of Psychopathology' (in *The Oxford Handbook for the Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie, Oxford University Press, 2010), and followed up in a number of articles since, we need to explore what thinkers as Philippe Pinel, Jean-Étienne Esquirol, Alexander Crichton, William James and especially Théodule Armand Ribot, had to say about the passions, emotions and sentiments. Ribot, in particular, became a key figure for Louis in delineating passions – such as jealousy or guilt – as more stable, more complex and longer-lasting affective states with a fixed ideational focus, compared to less stable, shorter-lasting and biologically driven emotions. Especially critical for Louis was the way that passions were able to organise, shape and direct emotions towards particular ends. Louis' ongoing intellectual journey in disentangling the complex interrelationship of passion and emotion is clearly exemplified by his masterly analysis of Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*, published in this number of *Emotions*.

There is little doubt that one of the reasons Louis was so welcome among historians of emotion was that he was unusually keen to explore what science and psychiatry could learn from history. But he gave more than he received. Louis Charland was a wonderful scholar, highly innovative and wide-ranging in his scholarship, amazing for his disciplinary breadth, yet always intensely curious, as well as humble and generous. He had few pretensions and in his friendly and instructive workshops took the questions of outsiders as seriously as those from scholars familiar with his subject. Most of us were unaware of how well travelled he was as the son of a Canadian ambassador, even if there were hints of a cosmopolitan flair, that he'd been a fine guitarist and had a passion for cooking. But we certainly did experience those qualities that appear over and over in the tributes of family, friends and long-term colleagues: his warmth, generosity, empathy, gentleness, care – and also his passion. At the age of 62 it seems far too early for Louis' life to have been cut short, and he is

clearly very much missed by friends and colleagues alike. For those working in the history of emotions field, it is also very sad that his innovative research on the history of passions has now been cut short as well.

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We all have rare ‘light bulb’ moments which suddenly change the way we conceptualise our own subject. My most recent came in 2012 attending Louis’ first lecture as Distinguished Visitor to CHE. It was intensely engrossing though relaxed in delivery, analysing the distinction between a fixed, internal ‘passion’ (of long duration, like an addiction or *idée fixe*) and ‘[é]motions’ as ‘moving’, affective responses to fluctuating, external experiences. His analysis proceeded with breathtaking scope, from antiquity, through medieval, Renaissance and Enlightenment philosophers down to Pinel, Ribot and William James. Louis concluded with comments based on his own observations regarding anorexia as a passion rather than a physical disorder. In the lecture’s inter-disciplinary approach and scope, he managed lucidly to synthesise medical history, philosophy, psychology and the art of healing hurt minds. The lecture caused me instantly to rethink my own field of literary history, especially Shakespeare’s plays. At tea I plucked up courage to tell him so. This led on to many excited exchanges during that visit to CHE and two more in 2013 and 2016, and a published, co-written essay for a CHE book, on *The Winter’s Tale*, a play filled with medical imagery which fits like a hand in a glove Louis’ analysis of healing a dangerously destructive passion. We planned another essay on jealousy in *Othello*, and even envisaged a future set of psychological ‘case studies’ of Shakespearean characters. Louis included this in his applications for future travel grants to return to Western Australia, a place he seemed to have fallen in love with. News of Louis’ death came as a terrible shock, and brought to a brutal terminus a delightful, compelling conversation. I miss his infectious intellectual excitement, his kindness and scholarly generosity, as I’m sure do many around the world. But his gift of being an inspirational teacher means that the many conversations he started will continue.

Louis’ distinctive, unique emails resembled a sequence of haiku poems, encompassing the tumbling immediacy of all experience – like this one, which was among his latest:

Dear Bob
I found my way through the maze of comments.
One way.
Two papers.
All good.
Beautiful sunny fall day here.
Magical.
Resting then swimming.
Reenergizing.
Online teaching is so fast paced.
Tech issues etc
But on the whole going great
Just very demanding
Free style lectures to power point
Take care
Louis

Thank you for the gift of your company and thoughts, Louis. And 'Take care'.

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