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Author(s): Robert C. Solomon

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EMOTIONS AND CHOICE

ROBERT C. SOLOMON

I

Do we choose our emotions? Can we be held responsible for our anger? for feeling jealousy? for falling in love or succumbing to resentment or hatred? The suggestion sounds odd because emotions are typically considered occurrences that happen to (or "in") us: emotions are taken to be the hallmark of the irrational and the disruptive. Controlling one's emotion is supposed to be like the caging and taming of a wild beast, the suppression and sublimation of a Freudian "it."

Traditionally, emotions have been taken to be feelings or sensations. More recently, but also traditionally, emotions have been taken to be physiological disturbances. Accordingly, much of this century's literature on emotions is dedicated to mapping out the relationship between sensations and correlative occurrences. William James, for example, takes consciousness of emotions to be consciousness of physiological occurrences. Other philosophers and psychologists, for one reason or another, have tried to reduce the emotion to a physiological occurrence, or, alternatively, have focused on the feeling of emotion and denied any conceptual role to the physiological occurrence. But these traditional worries should be quite irrelevant to any analysis of the emotions, for an emotion is neither a sensation nor a physiological occurrence, nor an occurrence of any other kind. "Struck by jealousy," "driven by anger," "plagued by remorse," "paralyzed by fear," "felled by shame," like "the prick of Cupid's arrow," are all symptomatic metaphors betraying a faulty philosophical analysis. Emotions are not occurrences and do not happen to us. I would like to suggest that emotions are rational and purposive rather than irrational and disruptive, are very much like actions, and that we choose an emotion much as we choose a course of action.[1]

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[1] Perhaps we should distinguish getting into an emotional state and being in one (e.g., getting angry vs. being angry.) But nothing turns on

Emotions are intentional; that is, emotions are ''about'' something. For instance, ''I am angry *at John for stealing my car.*'' It is not necessary to press the claim that *all* emotions are ''about'' something. Kierkegaard's dread may be an emotion which is not ''about'' anything, or, conversely, may be ''about'' everything. Similarly, *moods,* which are much like emotions, do not have a specific object. Euphoria, melancholy, and depression are not ''about'' anything in particular, though they may be caused by some particular incident. We might wish to say that such emotions and moods are ''about'' the world rather than anything in particular. In fact, Heidegger has suggested that *all* emotions are ultimately ''about'' the world and never simply ''about'' something particular. But we will avoid debating these issues by simply focusing our attention on emotions that clearly seem to be ''about'' something specifiable.

''I am angry at John for stealing my car.'' It is true that I am angry. And it is also true that John stole my car. Thus we are tempted to distinguish two components of my being angry; my feeling of anger and what I am angry about. But this is doubly a mistake. It requires that a feeling (of anger) be (contingently) directed at something (at John's having stolen my car). But feelings are occurrences and cannot have a ''direction.'' They can be caused, but to say that I am angry ''about'' John's having stolen my car is very different from saying his stealing my car caused me to be angry. John's act might cause me to be angry ''about'' something else, e.g., my failure to renew my insurance. It might be false that John stole my car, though I believe that he did. Then it is false that John's stealing my car caused me to be angry, but still true that what I am angry ''about'' is John's stealing my car. One might suggest that it is not the alleged *fact* of John's stealing my car that is in question, but rather my *belief* that he did. But what I am angry ''about'' is clearly not that I believe that John stole my car, but rather *that John stole my car.*

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this, for being in a state as well as getting into a state, like God's maintenance of the Universe as well as his creation of it, requires devoted activity. Accordingly, I shall be arguing both that we choose an emotion and that we continuously choose our emotions. There is no need to separate these arguments.

Feelings do not have "directions."[2] But I am angry "about" something. The relationship between my being angry and what I am angry about is not the contingent relation between a feeling and an object. (Though it is surely contingent that I am angry at John for stealing my car.) An emotion cannot be identified apart from its object; "I am angry" is incomplete—not only in the weak sense that there is more information which may be available ("Are you angry about anything?") but "I am angry" requires that there *must* be more information available ("*What* are you angry about?"). But feelings have no such requirements. Anger is not a feeling; neither is anger a feeling plus anything else (e.g., what it is "about").

Neither can "what I am angry about" be separated from my being angry. Of course, it makes sense to say that John's having stolen my car is something different from my being angry at him for doing so. But it is not simply the *fact* that John stole my car that is what I am angry about; nor is it, as I said above, my *belief* that John stole my car about which I am angry. I am angry about the intentional object "that John stole my car." Unlike the *fact* that John stole my car, this intentional object is opaque; I am not angry that John stole a vehicle assembled in Youngstown, Ohio, with 287 h.p., though that is a true description of the fact that John stole my car. I am not angry that someone 5′7″ tall got his fingerprints on my steering column, yet that is a true description of the fact that John stole my car. Sartre attempts to point out this feature of what emotions are "about" by saying that their object is "transformed;" D. F. Pears points to this same feature by noting that it is always an "aspect" of the object that is the object of an emotion. What emotions are "about," as in beliefs, can only be identified under certain descriptions, and those descriptions are determined by the emotion itself. This does not mean that what emotions are about are beliefs—only that emotions share an important conceptual property of beliefs. "Being angry about . . ."

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[2] I take this to be definitive of the difference between "emotion" and "feeling" as I am using those terms here. Emotions are intentional; feelings are not. I do not deny that the everyday use of "feeling" is broader than this and includes both of these concepts. I find this ambiguity less objectionable than others surrounding "sensation" and like terms.

is very much like "believing that . . . ." To be angry is to be angry "about" a peculiar sort of object, one that is distinguished by the fact that it is what I am angry "about." Husserl describes this peculiarity of mental acts in general by insisting that an intentional act and an intentional object are "*essentially* correlated." For our purposes, the point to be seen is that emotions cannot be discussed in terms of "components," by distinguishing feeling angry and what I am angry about. (Pears, e.g., begins by making this distinction.) In Heideggerian phrase, I am never simply angry, but there is always "my-being-angry-about- . . . ."

If there is no legitimate distinction between feeling angry and what I am angry "about," or, to put it in a different way, if the connection between my being angry and what I am angry "about" is a conceptual and not causal connection, then it is easy to explain a feature of emotions that has been pointed out by many analysts. A change in what I am angry "about" demands a change in my anger; if I no longer feel wronged by John, who only bought a car that looks like mine, I cannot be angry at John (for stealing my car) any longer. One cannot be angry if he is not angry "about" having been wronged. Similarly, one cannot be ashamed if he does not accept some responsibility for an awkward situation, nor can he be embarrassed if he does not find the situation awkward. If emotions were feelings, it would be a peculiar coincidence that the feelings were so faithful to our views of our situation, that they did not hold onto us with a momentum of their own after opinions had passed, that they were not so "irrational" as to pay no attention to our opinions at all. But emotions are not feelings, nor feelings plus what they are "about;" the format of an emotion is ". . . -about- . . . ." And so it is no surprise that emotions change with our opinions, and so are "rational" in a very important sense.

Emotions typically involve feelings. Perhaps they essentially involve feelings. But feelings are never sufficient to differentiate and identify emotions, and an emotion is never simply a feeling, not even a feeling plus anything. Moreover, it is clear that one can have an emotion without feeling anything. One can be angry without feeling angry: one can be angry for three days or five years and not feel anything identifiable as a feeling of anger continuously through that prolonged period. One might add that one must have a disposition to feel angry, and to this, there is no objection, so long as being angry is not thought to *mean* "having a disposition to feel angry." I do not know whether it makes sense to suppose that one can be angry without ever feeling angry. But I do know that it does not even make sense to say that one feels angry if one is not angry. This might seem mysterious, if we accept the traditional view that anger has an identifiable feeling attached to it (for then, why could one not have the feeling without whatever else is involved in anger?). And this might seem obvious on the traditional view that anger *is* a feeling (for then being angry is nothing but having the feeling of anger). But on our account, anger is not a feeling, nor does it involve any identifiable feeling (which is not to deny that one does feel angry—i.e., flushed, excited, etc., when he is angry). One can identify his feeling as feeling angry only if he is angry. It is true that I often feel something when I become angry. It is also true that I feel something after I cease to be angry. I am angry at John for stealing my car. Then I discover that John did not steal my car: I cease (immediately) to be angry. Yet the feeling remains: it is the same feeling I had while I was angry (flushing, etc.). The feeling subsides more slowly than the anger. But the feeling, even if it is the same feeling that I had while I was angry, is not a feeling of anger. Now it is just a feeling. Sometimes one claims to feel angry but not be angry. But here, I would argue that the correct description is rather that one does not know exactly what one is angry "about" (though one is surely angry "about" something); or perhaps one is angry but does not believe he ought to be. One cannot feel angry without being angry.

A familiar move in the analysis of emotions subsequent to the discovery that emotions are not feelings or occurrences, is the thesis that emotions are conceptually tied to behavior; i.e., the ascription of an emotion to a person is the ascription to him of various sorts of behavior. Thus, to be angry is necessarily to "anger-behave." Of course, it is evident that one can *pretend* to be angry, i.e., anger-behave without being angry, and so pretending has become a major topic in the analysis of emotions. (More on this in Part II.) What is generally agreed is that a single piece of behavior is never conceptually sufficient to identify an emotion, or to distinguish emotions from pretense. E. Bedford, for example, suggests that what is always needed is at least "more of the same."

Since Ryle's *Concept of Mind,* this "more of the same" is provided by the suggestion that ascribing an emotion to a person is not to simply describe one or more episodes of behavior but rather to ascribe to him a disposition to behave. But there is considerable confusion about the nature of such disposition-ascriptions, and the suggestion is clearly unsatisfactory as an analysis of *my* having an emotion. The behavioral analysis does maintain one important feature of emotions, their intentionality, though authors (e.g., Ryle, Armstrong) who favor this analysis are often intent to reject "intentionality" as well. But for our purposes, we can remain uninvolved in these issues which have become virtually definitive of "philosophy of mind." We can agree that it is undeniably true that if a person is angry he has a disposition to anger-behave and leave it entirely open whether this connection between emotions and behavior is conceptual, or causal or something else. The purpose of this essay is to show that emotions are very much like actions, and if it should turn out that emotions are actions in any such straightforward sense, this can only make our task easier. And so, we can simply say of the behavioral analysis: insofar as it is true, it supports our thesis.

"Emotions are caused." The idea that emotions are occurrences naturally gave rise to the idea that emotions are caused. Many philosophers would argue that, if emotions are occurrences, then they must be caused, and conversely, that if emotions are caused they must be occurrences. But if, as I am arguing, emotions are not occurrences, then they cannot be caused.

But surely this is wrong. We do speak of the cause of anger, the cause for sadness, a cause for fear. And surely emotions, as intentional, are typically if not necessarily *reactions* to something that happens to us. Sometimes this cause is manifest in what the emotion is "about;" e.g., I am angry about your hitting me; your hitting me is the event which caused me to become angry. But sometimes the cause for an emotion is *not* what the emotion is "about." The cause of my anger might be too little sleep and too much coffee. The cause of my love might be sexual deprivation. But I am not angry "about" lack of sleep and hyperstimulation, and I am not in love with my sexual deprivation (nor is my love "about" a cure for my sexual deprivation).

The cause of an emotion is a function in a certain kind of explanation. The cause must in every case be distinguished from what my emotion is ''about'' (its ''object''). The cause is always an actual event (or state-of-affairs, etc.). The object of my emotion is always an intentional object. The cause is subject to certain law-like generalizations in a way that objects of emotions are not. If I claim to be angry because of a harsh review of my book, pointing out that I have not become angry at previous harsh reviews of my book is sufficient to show that the cause of my becoming angry is not (my reading of) the review of my book, but it is not sufficient to show that I am not angry ''about'' the harsh review. I am not in any special position to know the cause of my emotion (though only I know, as a matter of fact, that I did not sleep last night, that I have had four cups of coffee); I am always in a privileged position to identify the intentional object of my emotion. This is *not* to say that my knowledge of the object of my emotion is ''immediate'' or ''direct,'' nor is it to claim that my identification of the object of my emotion is ''incorrigible.'' It is possible and not unusual that I should mis-identify—sometimes in a gross way—what I am angry about, or whom I love, or why I am sad. I may identify the object of my anger as John's having stolen my car, but I am really angry at John for writing a harsh review of my book. I may think that I love Mary, when I really love my mother. And I may think that I love Mary when I am really angry about the harsh review of my book. The problem of ''unconscious emotions'' would take us far beyond our current argument. For now, it should suffice for us to insist that the difference between identification of the cause of an emotion and its object is not a difference between direct and indirect knowledge—as traditionally conceived—or a difference between corrigible and incorrigible identification. The cause of an emotion is an occurrence (state-of-affairs, etc.) of a type that stands in a law-like connection with emotions of that type. The object of an emotion is simply ''what the emotion is about,'' whether or not it is also the cause, whether or not it is even the case, and whether or not the subject himself knows it to be the object of his emotion.[3]

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[3] There is nothing in our analysis which is not compatible with an all-embracing causal theory. We might agree with writers like A. I. Goldman,

We have noted that emotions are interestingly similar to beliefs. We can now explain this similarity by claiming that emotions are judgments—normative and often moral judgments. "I am angry at John for taking ("stealing" begs the question) my car" *entails* that I believe that John has somehow wronged me. (This must be true even if, *all things considered,* I also believe that John was justified in taking my car.) The (moral) judgment entailed by my anger is not a judgment *about* my anger (although someone else might make such judgments to the effect that my anger is justified or unjustified, rational, prudent, foolish, self-indulgent, therapeutic, beneficial, unfortunate, pathological or amusing). My anger *is* that judgment. If I do not believe that I have somehow been wronged, I cannot be angry (though I might be upset, or sad). Similarly, if I cannot praise my lover, I cannot be in love (though I might want her or need her, which, traditional wisdom aside, is entirely different). If I do not find my situation awkward, I cannot be ashamed or embarrassed. If I do not judge that I have suffered a loss, I cannot be sad or jealous. I am not sure whether all emotions entail such judgments; moods (depression and euphoria) surely present special problems. But emotions in general do appear to require this feature: to have an emotion is to hold a normative judgment about one's situation.

The idea that an emotion is a normative judgment, perhaps even a moral judgment, wreaks havoc with several long cherished philosophical theses. Against those romantics and contemporary bourgeois therapists who would argue that emotions simply *are* and must be accepted without judgment, it appears that emotions themselves are already judgments. And against several generations of moral philosophers who would distinguish between morality based upon principle and morality based upon emotion or "sentiment," it appears that every "sentiment," every emotion is

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who argues that intentional characterizations of actions (in terms of "reasons") also function in causal explanations of a Hempelian variety. I do not wish to argue a similar thesis regarding emotions here, but I want to be careful not to preclude any such theory. Similarly, nothing I have said here bears on the so-called "free will problem;" I want to show that emotions should be viewed in the same categories as actions, whether or not there are further arguments that might lead us to conclude that not even actions are chosen freely.

already a matter of judgment, often moral judgment. An ethics of sentiment differs from ethics of principle only in the fact that its judgments are allowed to go unchallenged: it is an ethics of prejudice while the latter is typically an ethics of dogma.

We can now see why "what an emotion is about" is not simply a fact; nor is it even a fact under certain descriptions. The object of an emotion is itself "affective" or normative. It is not an object *about* which one makes a judgment but is rather defined, in part, by that normative judgment. The peculiar emotional object, *that John stole my car,* can only be fully characterized as the object of my anger. "That John stole my car" is also the name of the object of my belief, of course, and perhaps of any number of other propositional attitudes I hold. But the object of my anger, that John stole my car, is an inseparable piece of my being angry. This sounds strange, no doubt, if the intentional object of the emotion is thought to be a fact or a proposition. But my anger-at-John-for-stealing-my-car is inseparable from my judgment that John in so doing wronged me, while it is clear that the *fact* that John stole my car is very different from my anger or my judgment. My anger *is* my judgment that John has wronged me.

It has always been recognized that there is some difference between our ascriptions of emotions to ourselves and our ascriptions of emotions to others. I know that I am angry and what I am angry about very differently than I know that John is angry and what he is angry about. (This first person privilege remains the presupposition of, and is not undermined by, either the Freudian concept of "unconscious emotions" or by recent philosophical attacks on "incorrigibility.") On the traditional view in which emotions are feelings, this difference has been explained by appeal to the peculiar "privacy" of sensation-like occurrences. But emotions are not feelings and not occurrences, we have argued, but rather judgments. Yet the difference between first and other-person cases can still be made out, and in a far more convincing way than on the feeling-analysis of emotions. *You* can say of me, "he is angry because he thinks John stole his car, which he did not." *You* can say of me, "he is angry about the review, which actually was favorable, but only because of his lack of sleep and his having drunk too much coffee." *You* can say of me, "he doesn't really love Mary, but rather a mother-surrogate." But *I* cannot say these things of *myself*. "I am angry at John because I think that he stole my car, which he didn't" is nonsense. If emotions are judgments, then the sorts of "pragmatic" paradoxes that have long been celebrated regarding judgments in general will apply to emotions also. "I am angry about x, but not x" raises the same problems as "P, but I do not believe P." No feeling-account of emotions can account for such paradoxes. But, if emotions are intentional, emotions must partake in conceptual relationships in a way that mere occurrences, feelings or facts do not. If I am angry about John's stealing my car, there are certain beliefs which I logically cannot hold, e.g., the belief that John did not steal my car.

The difference between first- and other-person ascriptions of emotions lies in the realm of the "pragmatic paradoxes." Given that I have a certain emotion, there are certain beliefs which you can have (including beliefs about me) but which *I* cannot have. The most interesting set of beliefs in this regard are those which pertain to the *cause* of an emotion. Earlier, we argued that the cause of an emotion is a fact (state of affairs, etc.) which can be variously ("transparently") described and occupies a role in law-like generalizations. The *object* of an emotion, however, is limited by certain judgments (is "opaque") which are determined in the subject's having that emotion. But this distinction, we can now add, breaks down in the first-person case. If I am angry *about* John's stealing my car (the object of my anger), then I cannot believe that the sufficient *cause* of my anger is anything other than John's stealing my car. *You* can attribute my unjust anger to my lack of sleep. *I* cannot. If I attribute my anger to lack of sleep, I cannot be angry at all. And this is not simply to say that my anger is "not reasonable." (I cannot say that of myself either, except perhaps in extremely peculiar circumstances, for example, following extensive psychoanalytic treatment, which here, as elsewhere, confuses all distinctions as well as the patient regarding first- vs. other-person ascriptions of emotions, motives, intentions, etc.) I can only be angry so long as I believe that what has caused me to be angry is what I am angry about. Where the cause is different from what I am angry about, I cannot know that it is.

One can argue that the person who is angry (or in love, or sad) is in the worst position to pick out the cause for his anger (or love or sadness) *as opposed to* its object.[4] We can only add that this thesis marks out a conceptual necessity. We earlier pointed out the familiar phenomenon that our emotions change with our opinions and argued that this was not a causal matter and not a coincidence, but a consequence of the thesis that emotions are themselves judgments. We can now add that our emotions change with our knowledge of the causes of those emotions. If I can discover the sufficient cause of my anger, in those cases in which the cause and the object are different (and in which the newly discovered cause is not itself a new object for anger, as often happens), I can undermine and abandon my anger. It is here that Freud's often debated notion that emotions are "defused" by bringing them to consciousness contains an important conceptual truth too often and too easily dismissed by philosophers. Once one becomes aware of the cause of his emotion as opposed to its intended object, he can indeed "defuse" his emotion. And in those familiar Freudian cases in which one mistakenly identifies the object of his emotion (he thinks he is angry at his teacher: he is "really" angry at his father), correcting this identification can, in those cases where the correctly identified object is also the cause of the emotion, also "defuse" it. Where Freud opened himself to unnecessary criticism, I believe, was in his construing this as a *causal* relationship, a "catharsis" of repressed emotional air bubbles in the mental digestive system. But it is not as if my recognition of the true cause of my anger *causes* the easing of my emotion. Rather, my recognition of the true cause of my emotion amounts to a denial of the judgment which is my emotion. When I see that my anger is wholly a result of my lack of sleep and overdose of coffee, I thereby abandon my anger. Of course, the flushing, pulsing, irritable *feelings* of anger may thus be *caused* to diminish by the disappearance of my anger, but these are, as we have argued, in no case my anger.

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[4] Freud has a curious way of defending this thesis, which is surely central to much of his theory. Because he attempted to maintain a thesis of the intentionality of the "affects" within a strictly causal model, he obscured the distinction between object and cause. Without crucifying Freud on this point, as Peters, MacIntyre and others have attempted to do, it is important to see that Freud typically confuses first person and third person accounts, and the concept of the "unconscious" as an "assumption" (e.g., see the essay "The Unconscious," Collected Papers, Vol. VI) often depends upon the failure of the subject to be capable of applying third person ascriptions—notably, ascriptions of the cause as opposed to the object of an emotion—to himself. Without in the least detracting from Freud's overall conception of the unconscious, we must insist that the subject is never logically privileged with respect to the causes of his emotions, but that he does have some such authority (without infallible authority) with respect to what he is "affected about."

If emotions are judgments and can be ''defused'' (and also instigated) by considerations of other judgments, it is clear how our emotions are in a sense *our doing*, and how we are responsible for them. Normative judgments can themselves be criticized, argued against, and refuted. Now if *you* criticize my anger at John by maintaining that he has not wronged me, you may conclude that my anger is unreasonable, unfair, and perhaps unbecoming. But if you should convince *me* that John has not wronged me, I do not simply conclude that my anger is unreasonable, unfair, or unbecoming. *I cease to be angry.* Similarly, I can make myself angry at John by allowing myself to be convinced that he has wronged me. I can dwell on minor behavioral misdemeanors on John's part, building them into a pattern of overall deceit and abuse, and then become angry at any one or any number of these incidents.

Since normative judgments can be changed through influence, argument, and evidence, and since I can go about on my own seeking influence, provoking argument, and looking for evidence, I am as responsible for my emotions as I am for the judgments I make. My emotions *are* judgments I make. Now one might argue that all we have shown is that one can take steps to *cause* changes in his emotions, much as one can take steps to diminish a pain by pulling out a splinter or take steps to prevent being hit by a bus by crossing only on the proper signals. And it is true, of course, that one cannot *simply* choose to be angry or not to be angry, but can make himself angry or cease being angry only by performing other activities. But this is true of judgments in general: I cannot simply choose to judge a situation fortunate, awkward, or dangerous.[5] It is worth noting that I cannot *simply* perform most actions either: I cannot simply assassinate a dictator. I must do something else

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[5] Though perhaps I can simply *express* such a judgment.

(pull the trigger of a rifle, let slip the string of the bow, push the button activating the detonator). Yet, although it is also true that I cause the death of the dictator (I do not cause the killing of him), I kill the dictator. Similarly, making judgments is something *I do*, not something that happens to me and not something I simply cause, even though I cannot *simply* make a judgment in many cases. (Legal judgments by an appropriately empowered judge or judiciary should *not* be taken as paradigm cases here.)

I must be in appropriate circumstances to pass judgment, have some evidence, know something of what the judgment is about. Of course, one can make judgments rashly, with minimal evidence and with superficial knowledge of what the judgment is about. Emotions, we can now see, are rash judgments, something I do, but in haste. Accordingly, the evidence upon which I become emotional is typically (but not necessarily) incomplete, and my knowledge of what I am emotional about is often (but again not necessarily) superficial. I can take any number of positive steps to change what I believe and what judgments I hold and tend to make. By forcing myself to be scrupulous in the search for evidence and knowledge of circumstance, and by training myself in self-understanding regarding my prejudices and influences, and by placing myself in appropriate circumstances, I can determine the kinds of judgments I will tend to make. I can do the same for my emotions.

II

Against the near-platitude, ''emotions are irrational,'' we want to argue that emotions are rational. This is not only to say that they fit into one's overall behavior in a significant way, that they follow a regular pattern (one's ''personality''), that they can be explained in terms of a coherent set of causes. No doubt this is all true. But emotions, we have argued, are judgments, and so emotions can be rational in the same sense in which judgments can be rational. (Of course, judgments can be irrational, but only within the context of a rational activity.) Judgments are actions. Like all actions, they are aimed at changing the world. But, although the expression of a judgment may actually produce such a change, the judgment itself is more like the winding of the mainspring of an intention to change the world rather than the overt activity which will do so. But if emotions are judgments, and judgments are actions, though covert, emotions too are actions, aimed at changing the world (whether or not their expression actually does succeed in changing the world). In other words, emotions are purposive, serve the ends of the subject, and consequently can be explained by *reasons* or ''in-order-to'' explanations.

Because emotions are usually thought to be occurrences that we suffer, the idea that emotions are purposive actions has not been given sufficient attention. But consider the following very familiar sort of case:

Joanie wants to go to a party: her husband does not. She begins to act bored and frustrated; he watches television. She resigns herself to reading, sighing occasionally. He asks if she has picked up some shirts from the laundry: she says ''no.'' He flies into a rage. He needs shirts (he has hundreds). He needs one of *those* (they are all the same). She is negligent (she was busy). She takes advantage of him (she stays with him). Naturally, she rebels, but she is upset, with mixed guilt and anger. She thinks him unreasonable, impossible, and slightly neurotic. Their encounter is short-lived. She goes off to read; he settles back before the television. The party is out of the question.

What are we to say of this familiar sort of case? It appears to be given that the husband's anger is inappropriate to the incident. His being angry about his wife's failure to pick up his shirts seems unreasonable; and the *intensity* of his anger is most surely unwarranted. To this, the standard response, since well before Freud, has been to suppose that the husband is really angry about something else; perhaps he is redirecting anger from his day at his office—anger which could not be expressed as safely towards his superiors as it could to his wife. Or perhaps the anger is accumulated anger from weeks or months of minor marital frictions. Or perhaps, it might be suggested, the anger is caused by the fact that the husband is tired.

But, in this case—and many other cases—there is an alternative sort of explanation that is available and persuasive. The anger can be explained, not in terms of what it is ''about'' or what causes it, but in terms of its *purpose.* The husband, in this case, has *used* his anger to manipulate his wife. He has become angry ''about'' the shirts *in order to* get his wife's mind off the party and in order to stop her irritating reminders. His anger is not a disruption of his activities (watching television, refusing to go to the party) but a part of it, its winning strategy. The best explanation of his anger is not that it was caused by anything (although that is not precluded) and not that it was ''about'' anything in particular (although that is surely true), but that he got angry at his wife *in order to* continue watching television and in order to insure that his refusal to go to the party would be successful.

But if emotions are rational and purposive, why is it that emotions are so often counter-productive and embarrassing to us, detours away from our aspirations and obstacles blocking our ambitions? Why do emotions so often appear as disruptions in our lives, threats to our successes, aberrations in our rational behavior? We can outline three distinct accounts of the apparent ''irrationality'' of emotions.

First, it is the situation in which one becomes emotional that is disruptive, a detour, an obstacle, a threat, and not the emotional response. Emotions are urgent judgments; emotional responses are emergency behavior. An emotional response occurs in a situation in which usual intentions are perverted or frustrated; an unusual response is necessary. The normative judgments involved in having an emotion are inseparable from the overall network of our motives, beliefs and intentions. The fact that emotions typically lead to apparently ''pointless'' behavior is not a consequence of emotions being irrational, but a natural consequence of the fact that emotions are responses to unusual situations in which usual behavior patterns seem inappropriate. The intentions of an emotional reaction are not infrequently impossible. The angry or sad man may wish to undo the past; the lover may want to possess, and be possessed by, his loved one. This is why Sartre calls the emotions ''magical transformations of the world.'' One can always reduce the range of his emotional behavior by developing stereotyped responses, by avoiding all unusual situations or by treating every situation as ''usual.'' These are common but perhaps pathological ways of choosing our emotions. But such common ''control'' is not the avoidance or the suppression of a wild psychic beast; it is simply the avoidance of situations (or recognition of situations) where one's usual behavior patterns will not suffice. Emotions are rational responses to unusual situations. They differ from ''cool'' judgments and normal rational deliberate action in that they are prompted in urgency and in contexts in which one's usual repétoire of actions and considered judgments will not suffice. An emotion is a necessarily hasty judgment in response to a difficult situation.

It must be added that the ''hastiness'' of a judgment does not entail that it is made quickly. For example, one can make a hasty judgment after weeks of half-hearted deliberation. Similarly, although emotions are typically urgent and immediate responses, one can become increasingly angry over a period of time, or one finds that an emotion which is formed in urgency is then maintained in full force for weeks or even years. But what distinguishes emotions from ordinary judgments is their lack of ''cool,'' their seeming urgency, even after weeks of simmering and stewing. There are no cold emotions, no cool anger, no deliberate love. Emotions are always urgent, even desperate, responses to situations in which one finds oneself unprepared, helpless, frustrated, impotent, ''caught.'' It is the situation, not the emotion, that is disruptive and ''irrational.''

Second, and consequently, emotions are short-term responses. Emotions are rational in that they fit into a person's overall purposive behavior. But this is not to say that a person's various purposes are always consistent or coherent. Short-term purposes are often in conflict with rather than a means toward the fulfillment of long-term purposes. My desire to drink at the reception may tend towards disaster regarding my meeting of the celebrity who is my reason for going to the reception. My desire to visit Peking may undermine my ambition to become an FBI agent. Similarly, emotions often serve short-term purposes that are in conflict with longer-term purposes. I may be angry with John because I feel I have been wronged, but this may be inconsistent with my desire to keep a close, unblemished friendship with John. I may love Mary, but this might be totally inconsistent with my intention to preserve my marriage, to remain celibate, or to concentrate on my writing. Thus, the husband in our example might succeed in staying home from the party by becoming angry, but break up his marriage in so doing. It is in this sense that emotions are ''blind;'' more accurately, they are *myopic*. Emotions serve purposes and are rational; but because the purposes emotions serve are often shortsighted, they appear to be non-purposive and irrational on a larger view. For the sake of a passion, we destroy careers, marriages, lives. Emotions are not irrational; people are irrational.

Third, there is an anthropological response to the idea that emotions are irrational. In a society that places taboos on emotional behavior—condemns it in men and belittles it in women—it is only to be expected that emotions will be counter to ambitions. A society which applauds "cool" behavior will naturally require strategies which are similarly "cool." In such a society, emotional behavior appears as "irrational" because it is bad strategy, not because it is not purposive. Perhaps it is not at all difficult to envision a society in which *only* emotional behavior would appear rational—where only short term emotional responses had any meaning at all. But it is surely not Anglo-American society in which "reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions."

Against our view that emotions, as actions, are purposive and that a person chooses his emotions rather than being victimized by them, there is a uniquely powerful objection. A person cannot identify at the time the purpose of his emotion. The husband who uses his anger to manipulate his wife cannot identify the purpose as opposed to the object-cause of his anger. If he were to identify the manipulative function of his anger, the effect would be the destruction of his anger. One cannot be angry and know that his anger has a purpose.

This is much more, of course, than a mere pragmatic claim. It is certainly true that the husband cannot tell his wife that his anger is purposive, for the very purpose of the anger is to distract his wife from that purpose. But the claim here is that the husband cannot even think to himself, "I am being angry in order to . . . ." If the husband is unusually self-aware, he may know that he, in general, uses his anger to manipulate people; but he still cannot entertain that thought at the time of his anger and remain angry. If he does, he ceases to be angry and continues, at most, only to act angry—to feign anger.

One's inability to see the purpose of his emotion is a conceptual matter, just as before we pointed out that one cannot (conceptually) make certain judgments, such as the judgment that what he is angry about is not the case, or that the cause of his anger, where this is different from the object of his anger, is a sufficient explanation of his anger. We can now add to this list of conceptual inabilities the inability of one to suspect the *purpose* of his emotion. Now many philosophers would argue that, regarding intentional actions in general, one cannot fail to be aware of his motives and intentions at the time of acting. It would take us too far astray to argue against this view here, but notice that this inability to notice one's *purpose* is not limited to emotions. Consider, for example, Nietzsche's account of belief in God as a belief whose function is to serve certain purposes (achievement of salvation; a basis for "slave-morality" and self-righteousness; to seek power). Yet, even if a purposive analysis of belief in God is true, this neither denies that people do in fact believe in God nor need it suggest that believers could state these purposes. To the contrary, we can add, if they were to think seriously that their belief was held to serve a purpose rather than because it was true, we would have to conclude that they did not believe at all. (A conclusion that Nietzsche too easily comes to on the basis of an argument from the third person to the first person case.) To believe is not to believe for a purpose; yet beliefs can still be purposive.

Judgments in general, not only emotions, can be purposive but cannot be recognized (by the person who makes them at the time that he makes them) as purposive. If I judge, calmly and deliberately, without a hint of that urgency and intensity that characterizes anger, that John has wronged me by stealing my car again (he does it all the time), I may be rationalizing an opportunity to take out John's wife. In fact, I may even say to myself, "since he has wronged me so, I feel justified in taking out his wife." But I cannot believe that my judgment that John has wronged me has been made for this purpose. I can at most believe that since he has wronged me, I am justified . . . . Similarly, I may judge, calmly and deliberately, that Mary is a magnificent woman, attractive and intelligent, strong-willed and sensitive, but without the slightest hint of that urgency and intensity that characterizes love. But, knowing that Mary is John's wife, I may be so judging as a way of rationalizing an opportunity to run off with John's mistress. Now I may openly judge that John does not need his mistress, since his wife is so magnificent, and so I can feel justified in running off with his mistress. But I cannot believe that my judging that Mary is magnificent is made for this purpose. In other words, judgements, no matter how calm and deliberate, when they are made for some purpose (leaving open the question whether all are so made), cannot be recognized as having been made for a purpose. In this sense, all judgments are ''blind.'' To recognize the purpose for which a judgment is made is to undermine the judgment. One cannot judge that he has been wronged and at the same time recognize that he has judged that he has been wronged only in order to . . . .

One must also consider apparently ''unintentional'' actions, to which emotions bear a striking resemblance. Some act-types allow for only intentional acts, e.g., murder, fishing. Others allow for only unintentional acts, e.g., forgetting, slipping, stumbling, tripping, losing, in short, most of those actions that make up the subject matter of what Freud calls the ''psychopathology of everyday life.'' Yet Freud demonstrated that such ''unintentional'' actions function in a remarkable accordance with a subject's overall purposes and intentions. Freud surely does not want to say that these simply *appear* to be intentional (as some authors have argued, e.g., R. S. Peters, A. MacIntyre), but rather that they truly are intentional, the difference being, in his terms, the ''inaccessibility'' of the intention to the subject. The status of such actions remains a matter of controversy, but we feel reasonably confident that most philosophers and most everybody else would agree that such ''actions'' are indeed actions and can be demonstrated in at least some cases to be done for a purpose; yet the subject cannot state their purpose. And once again, the ''cannot'' is a *logical* ''cannot,'' since a man who knows that he is losing his wedding ring in order to show his opinion of his marriage is making a gesture, not losing his ring. And a man who knows he is forgetting to call his office in order to avoid extra work is not forgetting but refusing to call his office. Thus we can see in what senses such actions may appear to be both intentional and ''unintentional.'' They are intentional insofar as they clearly fit into the purposes and intentions of the subject; they appear to be unintentional insofar as they cannot be stated as purposive or intentional by the subject. Similarly, anger is purposive and intentional insofar as it can be clearly shown to fit into the structure of the subjects purposes and intentions; it appears to be ''unintentional'' and thus differs from many straightforward actions, in that these purposes and intentions cannot be known by the subject at the time. Emotions, when they are purposive and intentional, are essentially devious.

Can one feign anger? One might think, ''Of course, act angry when you are not angry.'' But what is it that constitutes the anger apart from acting angry? The traditional answer to this is simple enough: a feeling. To feign anger is to act angry but not feel angry. To feign love is to act lovingly but not feel love. To feign an emotion would be, in general, to pretend one has a feeling which one does not have, as a child pretends—usually badly—to have a cramp in order to stay away from school. But we have seen that an emotion is not a feeling. This traditional analysis does lend support to our contention that to have an emotion in order to . . ., is not to have that emotion. But, on our account, the difference is not due to the presence or lack of a feeling. Rather, to have an emotion is to make certain judgments; to feign an emotion, then, is to pretend that one holds certain judgments which one does not hold.

But this makes the notion of feigning emotion much more difficult than has been supposed on the simple ''feeling'' analysis. André Gide has written that feigned emotion and ''vital'' emotion are indistinguishable, and in this there is an often unseen giant of a truth, one that would appear absurd on the thesis that emotions are feelings. Miss Anscombe, replying to J. L. Austin, has distinguished between mock performances and real pretences. The most obvious difference between the two is that one is intended to mislead others, the other not. Accordingly, the one should be more cautiously consistent and prolonged than the other: a successful mock performance may be announced as lasting only 35 seconds, a real pretence must go on as long as it must go on. But the most important difference between mock performances and real pretences is the *context* (what we have been calling ''the situation''). A mock performance may be performed on a stage, in any context in which it can be announced or in which it is evident that this is a *mere* pretence. A real pretence, however, requires that the context of performance be appropriate; anger can only be feigned in real pretence if the situation is one in which anger is appropriate. One can only pretend to be in love with someone whom it is plausible that he should love. But the appropriateness of the situation is not a causal determinant of a feeling of love or anger. Rather it is the context in which judgments of the requisite kinds make sense and are plausible. But if to feign anger is to act angry in a context in which the anger-related judgments are plausible, it is easy to see how one could, upon prolonged pretence, come to accept those very judgments. If, over a protracted period of time, I pretend to love a woman whom I have married for her father's wealth, it is more than likely that I shall grow to love her (if I do not first come to openly despise her). And if I pretend to be angry about a political issue in order to be accepted by my friends, it is not at all unlikely that I shall come to be really angry about that same issue. Perhaps there is no better way to choose to have an emotion than to decide to pretend that one has it. As Sartre has said, the best way to fall asleep is to pretend that you are asleep. And here, I think we may say that Gide's theory has a plausibility which cannot be explained on the idea that what one pretends to have is a feeling.

Emotions are intentional and rational, not disruptive and "irrational." Emotions are judgments and actions, not occurrences or happenings that we suffer. Accordingly, I want to say that emotions are choices and our responsibility. Yet I am never aware of making such a choice. Emotions, we argued, are hasty and typically dogmatic judgments. Accordingly, they cannot be made together with the recognition that they are dogmatic and not absolutely correct. What distinguishes emotions from other judgments is the fact that the former can never be deliberate and carefully considered. Emotions are essentially non-deliberate choices. Emotions, in this sense, are indeed "blind" as well as myopic; an emotion cannot see itself. Few things are more disconcerting than suddenly watching one's angry reflection in the mirror, or reflecting on one's anger to see its absurdity *in media res.*

If emotions are judgments or actions, we can be held responsible for them. We cannot simply have an emotion or stop having an emotion, but we can open ourselves to argument, persuasion and evidence. We can force ourselves to be self-reflective, to make just those judgments regarding the causes and purposes of our emotions, and also to make the judgment that we are all the while *choosing* our emotions, which will "defuse" our emotions. This is not to opt for a life without emotions: it is to argue for a conception of emotions which will make clear that emotions are our choice. In a sense, our thesis here is self-confirming: to think of our emotions as chosen is to *make* them our choices. Emotional control is not learning to employ rational techniques to force into submission a brutal ''it'' which has victimized us but rather the willingness to become self-aware, to search out, and challenge the normative judgments embedded in every emotional response. To come to believe that one has this power *is* to have this power.

In response to our argument, one might conclude that we have only argued that one can choose and is responsible for his *interpretation* of his situation and his emotions. But then I simply want to end by once again drawing Nietzsche to my side and quipping, with regard to emotions, ''there are only interpretations . . . .''

University of Texas, Austin.