Bringing the Passions Back In

Edited by Rebecca Kingston and Leonard Ferry

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The Emotions in Political Philosophy

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Foreword: Politics and Passion

Charles Taylor

The idea that democracy is threatened by passion is strange but, in a sense, true. We all know cases where populations carried away by collective passions have done or endorsed terrible things. For example, the sense of national grievance among Germans in the Weimar Republic was played upon by Hitler and other extreme-right demagogues with dreadful results. There are lots of other examples, perhaps not as dire in their consequences, but fearful nonetheless.

But how about positive passions? The way, for instance, in which the sight of suffering people on our television screens, in the wake of a tsunami or a famine, unleashes great waves of generosity and solidarity. Or the way in which thousands of people are ready to demonstrate for hours and days, often in very difficult conditions, to establish their right to vote, or to make their votes count, as in the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine.

These positive cases weigh less with us when we think of passions and politics in general because we have already fixed our basic categories. By "us" here, I mean the philosophy and common sense of our culture – or at least the major influences that set the tone for these. And this view places passion or emotion in another category from reason. It is one thing to be able to think out the best thing to do; it is another to feel strongly that something is good or bad, right or wrong. Everybody agrees that if your feelings are rightly directed, then things will go very much better – which is what happens when we contribute to Oxfam, or stay out in the cold in Kiev.

But the idea is that, if your emotions are aligned with your reason, this is a matter of luck or good management (especially good training); it's not because your feelings have contributed anything to your reasoning. Feeling and thinking are separate. To many people this view is just common sense. Thinking and feeling are different functions and belong to different "faculties," to use the traditional language.

But history shows that this dichotomy is an invention of modern Western culture. It doesn't exist elsewhere, not even in the deep philosophical sources

of our culture, among the Greeks. The contributors to this book make this point very clear. For Plato, for Aristotle, and for the Stoics, in different ways, feelings, passions, *pathē* were cognitive states. And there is something obviously right about this. When I'm angry at you for pushing me off the bus, the anger is inseparable from my knowing (or at least believing) that it was you who pushed me off, that you did it on purpose, that you meant harm to me; similarly, when I fear a stock market crash, the fear can't be separated from my apprehending great disadvantage to myself as my pension fund goes up in smoke; and so on.

We know with our feelings. But sometimes what we sense through our feelings clashes with what we know through dispassionate reason. I'm still mad at you, even after I learn that you were pushed from behind when you knocked me off that bus. And so perhaps we can disregard feeling as a source of knowing after all? But this would be a big mistake. In our dealings with others, a completely dispassionate perspective would fail to pick up the nuances, the ambivalences, the resentments, or the hidden sympathies of others. Persons without these emotional sensitivities would be terrible negotiators and bad political leaders, incapable of bringing people together in an important common enterprise.

In particular, we can see in our world how people whose sensitivities are narrow, and only operate within their own home culture, commit tremendous blunders in their dealings with others and remain blind to the damage they wreak in the world. The present world superpower offers daily examples of this kind of (largely involuntary) self-stultifying action, sowing stupefaction and horror in its wake. Knowing through feeling is perhaps even more important when it comes to moral matters. Someone whose view on genocide is only that, upon dispassionate reflection, he thinks it is not a very good idea, doesn't yet "know" what's really wrong with it.

All this clearly shows not just that you can't factor emotions out of politics, which we already knew. More importantly, it shows that we can't factor emotions out of what makes for good politics, grounded in reality and moral truth, nor out of what makes for democratic politics, in which people can be brought together.

The excellent papers in this collection bring these points home, partly in recovering ancient thinking on these matters (for instance, Chapters 2 and 3), partly in showing the ways in which the modern traditions of thought have oversimplified and flattened our understandings of reason and emotion (for instance, Chapters 5 and 9), and partly by reflecting on the nature of modern politics itself. This volume will help to deepen the discussion, and to recruit more people into the debate, on this range of issues, which is essential to our understanding of ourselves and our world.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank a number of individuals and organizations who have been important to the development of this project. The idea for this book was sparked by a panel we organized for a meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association. We also appreciate the support of colleagues and graduate students of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto; many vibrant discussions among us have furthered some of the reflections contained in this book. Thanks are also due to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which helped to make this book possible.

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We owe a tremendous thank you to Katherine Reilly, whose patience has rivalled that of any great Stoic. Whether from Guatemala or Mexico City (global citizen that she is), she has continually ensured that what at first appeared to be a gargantuan task became a manageable one. Great thanks also go to Emily Andrew, our editor at UBC Press, who has been extremely helpful and encouraging, and indeed the very form of what an editor should be.

We also wish to thank our family and friends. Kant suggests that his knowledge of the common man was revealed to him by reading Rousseau. In contrast, we recognize that our partners and close associates contribute most to our learning about the human condition. Rebecca thanks Ronnie, Gabriel, Zimra, and Pauline. Len thanks his grandparents (Leo, Sally, Willis, and Audrey), his parents (Leonard and Phyllis), his children (Lauren and Leonard), and for her patience and her love, his wife (Jenny).

We were greatly saddened to hear of the death of Robert C. Solomon, one

of our contributors, while this volume was in preparation. He is, of course, the man most responsible for putting the emotions at the top of our intellectual concerns today. In tribute to his tremendous contributions to our understanding of these issues, and indeed of ourselves, we dedicate this volume to him.

Bringing the Passions Back In

Introduction: The Emotions and the History of Political Thought

Leonard Ferry and Rebecca Kingston

We are well aware that political life is fraught with emotion. This is the case not only for political actors, whose ambitions, loyalties, pride, ideals, et cetera are often reinforced and undermined in quick succession in contemporary liberal democratic societies, but also for citizens whose hopes and fears for their country, as well as for their families and the world, ebb and flow in a complex set of reactions to the events unfolding around them, emotions and passions that can sometimes spur every one of us to political action.

Surprisingly, however, in the academic world and particularly in the normative models commonly debated among political theorists of contemporary liberalism and liberal democracy, there is little serious regard for the important and varied roles that emotion plays and should play within the political arena. The lack of close attention may stem from a deep suspicion of the dangers that unchecked passions have wrought in the political history of the West.[1] Indeed, those who trace the birth of modern liberal democracy to attempts to find a solid basis for social accommodation in the wake of the violence of the religious wars of the early modern period may see good historical cause to sideline emotion in politics.

Still, such sidelining has its costs. The relative lack of positive interest in human emotions in current liberal democratic thinking is deficient for two reasons. First, the traditional rational, normative approach to theory remains an overly ideal and utopian view of political life. Moreover, it risks holding no interest for – indeed, alienating – those citizens directly implicated in political life. Some theorists suggest that such rational, normative expectations increase political apathy and cynicism within our political communities.[2]

Second, and perhaps most importantly in theoretical terms, the rational, normative vision of politics so prevalent today can be said to harbour an incomplete, if not manifestly false, concept of the human subject. This vision is largely derived from Kantian inspiration in our intellectual tradition, and Kant notoriously likened passions to cancerous sores.[3] New developments in the fields of psychology and the philosophy of mind show, however, that we

cannot easily compartmentalize the faculties of reason and emotion within the human soul, nor indeed malign so severely our capacities for emotion and passion. While there is no clear consensus on how to understand and explain emotion, there is an acknowledgment that emotional capacities are more complex than previously thought and depend largely, if not wholly, on our cognitive abilities. Furthermore, our capacity for emotion is an essential and positive feature of humanity; our emotional lives, however intense, provide a necessary foundation for the possibility of meaning and human happiness. This recognition also raises the possibility of what we might call "rational emotion."

All the contributors to this volume are aware of these important developments and recognize their significance for the field of political theory. They also acknowledge that existing resources within our own theoretical traditions can help illuminate the consequences of these new understandings for politics.

The first section of this introduction provides an overview of recent developments in the literature devoted to the emotions and philosophy of mind, developments that form a backdrop to this volume. The second section offers some general reflections on the possible implications of these theories for our understanding of politics, as well as highlighting some of the more important themes and points of contention found in this collection.

What Is an Emotion?

Most of the major philosophers in the Western tradition have furnished us with an answer to the question of what is an emotion. Given the diversity and richness of the tradition, of course these answers differ. Some theories of emotion stand in conceptual opposition to one another: compare Chrysippus' identification of the emotions with mental judgments and William James' identification of them with physical feelings, for instance.[4] Other theories, theories with broad family resemblances, still differ over details. Among cognitive accounts of the emotions, for example, there is significant disagreement over the nature of and role played by judgment in the make-up of an emotion: some identify emotions with judgments; some keep them distinct but claim that judgments are components in, causally responsible for, or constitutive of emotions.

Over the last fifty years, there has been an explosion of interest in and a growing consensus around a new[5] family of theories of the emotions.[6] That the emotions are in some manner related to cognition or are themselves cognitive has become a commonplace of contemporary philosophical psychology.[7] Even those who do not accept this as a fully satisfactory explanatory theory find themselves adopting it if only as a temporary measure, thereby acceding to its dominant position. Take the reflections of Robert Nozick as an example:

> A large part of how we feel about life is shaped by the emotions we have had and expect to have, and that feeling too (probably) is an emotion or a combination

> of them. What emotions should we desire – indeed, why should we desire *any* – and how should we think about the emotions we do have? The recent philosophical literature describes the structure of emotions in a way that is somewhat illuminating – I am not completely happy with it, but I have nothing better at present to offer. Emotions, these philosophers say, have a common structure of three components: a belief, an evaluation, and a feeling.[8]

Despite his tentativeness about the theory, Nozick asks us to accept the messy interconnectedness both of human life with the emotions and of the emotions with mental phenomena. To speak of beliefs and evaluations as "components" of an emotion is to indicate that some relation holds between the emotions and the mind. Here the psychophysical "feeling" of an emotion is only one part of a larger whole, incomplete on its own. In addition, for an emotion to be experienced seems to require that the agent make judgments about the facts of the situation or event to which the emotion stands as response. Such judgments must be accompanied by a further relation of the agent to the situation or event with a decidedly normative cast. The supposition of a three-part structure, therefore, introduces into discussions of the emotions several questions about the precise nature of and role played by cognition (we look at some of these more closely below).

Conceiving of emotions in this way also requires that we take a particular normative stance in relation to the importance of emotion in the living of a life. For those who accept even a limited cognitivist account of the emotions, an account that makes beliefs or evaluations integral to the experience of an emotion, emotions cannot be dismissed as an instinct or other natural activity (like digestion) that stands outside of moral concern.[9] So Nozick asks why we should desire to experience emotion and leaves open the question of how the emotions we do have should be assessed. One reason Nozick gives for thinking the emotions not merely ineliminable from normative philosophy but positively contributing to the same is that they model values: they "provide a kind of picture of value … They are our internal psychophysical response to the external value, a response … not only due to that value but an analog representation of it."[10]

Interest continues to grow, not only in these theories themselves, which belong chiefly to the philosophies of mind and action, but also in the avenues that these have opened for other branches of philosophy, including especially political and moral philosophy. The papers in this collection explore some of the themes raised by and about this recent philosophical work on the emotions.

Feelings, Beliefs, and Evaluations

What follows is a brief characterization of some of the topics that remain central to conceptualizations of the emotions in some form of cognitive

frame, focusing primarily on the insights that cognitive theories have generated. What we do say of noncognitivist accounts amounts to mentioning their criticisms of their cognitivist counterparts. Still, we hope that even by doing so little we manage to convey some of the resources that theories of the emotions have made available to the understanding of human action, individually and collectively, and to suggest some of the paths future work will have to tread. Let's begin with an example of a specific emotion, pride, which will enable us to point to some important distinctions and issues:

At a small campus coffee shop, Bill and a few friends discuss what they've accomplished during the past week. As all are graduate students, a common theme is that they have not done enough – they have neither read nor written what they had hoped, indeed planned, to do. But Bill announces that he has had a great week. He has so managed his time as to be able to read three large nineteenth-century novels: Dickens' *Bleak House*, Eliot's *Middlemarch*, and James' *A Portrait of a Lady*. Unlike his friends, Bill feels good about his work and about himself. He feels a certain swelling, a sense of accomplishment, as his friends acknowledge his achievement. The impression of his own distinction in this regard fills him with confidence, and this self-assurance reveals itself to his friends in his speech and his mannerisms. He doesn't hide his feeling of superiority. He feels flush with energy, and he lets everyone know.[11]

This example suggests several questions that continue to engage philosophers exploring the emotions. We've already said that our example is an instance of the emotion pride. But what is pride? The answer depends on the answer to the often-asked question of what an emotion is. How will we recognize it? "The best signs of passions present," Thomas Hobbes advises, "are either in the countenance, motions of the body, actions, and ends, or aims, which we otherwise know the man to have."[12] Hobbes' list is extensive, but not obviously helpful beyond suggesting some more questions that we might want to ask. Is Bill's emotional experience identical with the physiological changes that he experiences, as William James held? Are these changes unique to this emotion? René Descartes thought that even if they were not unique they were helpful signs: "It is easy to understand that Pride and Servility are not only vices but also Passions, because their excitation is very noticeable externally in those who are suddenly puffed up or cast down by some new occasion."[13] Can we use these occurrences to identify one emotion as distinct from another? And if the physiological changes Bill experiences are not adequate to account for the nature of this emotion, to what must appeal be made? In appealing to something else, are we free to jettison the physical feelings Bill experiences altogether from our descriptions of the emotion – that is, are the feelings associated with an emotion necessary, if

not sufficient, conditions of an emotion? Are we compelled to shift our focus from the physical to the mental? Does such an analysis make of the physical expression of Bill's emotion merely a contingent event? Peter Goldie has recently objected to the reductive treatment of many of the feelings of an emotion in the hands of cognitive theories, whether those theories treat the feelings as something added to an emotion experience or as unnecessary.[14]

Uncomfortable with the inability of physiological explanations to account for the specification of discrete emotions, philosophers since Anthony Kenny have indeed turned to the mental (without denying that the same is embedded in physical brain states).[15] Here too questions arise. Just what is required for the experience of an emotion? Is the emotion of pride identical to Bill's belief that he has read three novels last week? Benedict de Spinoza defined pride as consisting in "thinking too much of ourselves, through self-love … pride is an effect or property of self-love, and it may therefore be defined as love of ourselves or self-satisfaction, in so far as it affects us so that we think too highly of ourselves."[16] To experience pride, then, we need to make a judgment or hold some belief about ourselves and our accomplishments. Bill believes that he has read three books, and his emotion has for its object at least this belief. Talk about emotions having objects, however, introduces into the discussion what is generally referred to as the "intentionality" of an emotion. Emotions are about something. We perceive ourselves threatened *by* some person, thing, or event and experience fear. Someone treats us in a manner we judge as slighting and we become angry *at* the person and the supposed slight. Does Bill's belief that he has read three books cause his emotion? Is this factual belief sufficient to account for the judgment that Spinoza identifies as central to pride?

The mere description – Bill read three books – doesn't seem sufficient. Recall Nozick's three-part structure: belief, evaluation, and feeling. It would seem possible for Bill to have such a belief without experiencing any emotion. Surely Bill can believe that he has eaten three meals on the day in question without feeling proud of it. What else is needed? Many of those who have taken up the cognitive approach to explaining emotions claim that the factual description of a given situation must be attached to a normative or evaluative judgment. Having read three books, or at least these three books, is significant and something to feel proud about. Something like this kind of evaluation seems necessary to the overall claim Bill makes in feeling proud. And, as Charles Taylor has argued, the relevant "import-ascription" cannot merely be subjective, because the import-ascription of an emotion involves "a judgment about the way things are, which cannot simply be reduced to the way we feel about them."[17] Although it may prove difficult to agree on what standard is being deployed, we must agree that this second feature of an emotion requires the invocation of some evaluative standard. Does this mean that the emotion is equivalent to the factual description plus

the evaluative judgment? If not, how are they related to the emotion? Are they causal factors, or components? What role do these two mental aspects, factual description and evaluative judgment, play in the experience of an emotion?

That both are necessary conditions of the intelligibility of an emotion is suggested by an argument Nozick makes in *The Examined Life*: "Suppose you say you feel proud that you read three books last week, and I say that you're misremembering; I counted and you read only one book last week. You grant the correction and reply that nevertheless you feel proud that you read three. This is bewildering."[18] The source of the bewilderment is that without the belief that caused or accompanied the emotion, the emotion itself should no longer obtain. A similar conclusion follows, Nozick argues, if the evaluation that goes with the belief fails. If, for example, Bill can be convinced that reading is not good and not something to feel proud about, then for him to continue to feel proud would be equally bewildering. Whatever Bill might be feeling, it wouldn't be pride. Pride requires both a belief about certain facts – that something is or is not the case (that Bill has read three books) – and an evaluation of a specific kind – that pride is felt in relation to having done something to distinguish oneself (Bill's having read these three books seems a real accomplishment given a belief that reading three books of this sort is a genuine achievement and something to be admired.)

When these two requirements are satisfied, Nozick continues, "there perhaps goes a feeling, a sensation, an inner experience." Nozick's inability to assert the necessity of the third component of an emotion, its feeling, highlights the fact that the physiological level of understanding the emotions is the most problematic for cognitivist theorists. Is the feeling of an emotion necessary? What are its sources? Is it also merely a mental state? Or does the feel of an emotion require also an accompanying physiological change? The problem involves how one conceives the relation of the mind (belief and judgment) to the body (physiological reaction). Are there other grounds for believing the belief and evaluation that inform the intentional object of an emotion to be necessary and perhaps sufficient for the emotion?

Imagine that in the above example Bill's friends, instead of bemoaning their idleness, had been exchanging lists of books that they had read. Each list contained the three books mentioned by Bill as well as others. This group of friends would hardly find Bill's achievement something to esteem. Absent their recognition, would Bill himself think that his accomplishment merited his feelings? It's possible, of course, that for Bill this still would represent an accomplishment that the others could acknowledge – perhaps Bill is an athlete who spends much of his time training. In either case it seems clear that the evaluative aspect cannot be removed without changing the nature of the experience.

Can the same be said of the factual description? Assume that Jane, another

friend, enters the coffee shop. She notices Bill's behaviour and discovers its source. But she finds herself in a slightly uncomfortable position: she has stopped by the coffee shop hoping to return Bill's copy of *Middlemarch*, which she borrowed at the beginning of the week. How will Bill react if she divulges this fact? If Bill did not deliberately deceive his friends but, rather, misstated the facts in the heat of the moment (or even misremembered them: perhaps he only began the novel before Jane borrowed it), he may simply have to concede that he didn't read three novels. But if the evaluative judgment depends on it being three, allowing that two books is a sufficiently lesser feat, will Bill still feel proud? This question seems to demand a negative answer: how can Bill feel proud of having done something that he didn't actually do? He might alter his evaluative judgment, lowering the standard, as it were, and so feel proud that he read two books; but he could not feel proud of having read three novels while knowing that he had only read two.

Emotions and Evaluations

In addition to these thorny problems, the relationship between emotions and value raises others. For example, Spinoza's definition of pride raises its association with vice. He sees pride on its own as a problematic emotion: "It would take too much time to enumerate here all the evils of pride, for the proud are subject to all emotions, but to none are they less subject than to those of love and pity."[19] Contrast this with David Hume, who acknowledges that his discussion of pride will offend those familiar with "the style of the schools and pulpit" that characterizes pride as exclusively vicious. For Hume, although pride can be vicious, it is potentially virtuous: "I observe, that by *pride* I understand that agreeable impression, which arises in the mind, when the view either of our virtue, beauty, riches or power makes us satisfy'd with ourselves."[20]

For the moment, we want to point out only some of the ways in which the emotions relate to the good life. At least three "conditions of fittingness" exist with respect to the emotions. From the supposition that they are cognitive – that they depend upon beliefs and judgments about descriptive and normative states of affairs – it follows that emotions can be fitting or unfitting, locally and in general. By locally, we mean that the belief itself can be mistaken and that the emotion may or may not be appropriate to the belief. Return for a moment to the example of pride. If Bill is wrong about having read three books, or if he is wrong to think that reading is a good to be pursued, the response that he has will itself be mistaken. The first supposition is experiential: either he has or hasn't read this many books. The second concerns evaluation: having read this many books in a week is or is not a matter about which one should feel pride *because* it is or is not something integral to good living. The third condition of fittingness is proportion. If Bill over-reacts, becoming ecstatic about having read three books to the

point where his response becomes a nuisance to others who value such an accomplishment differently, then his reaction may be judged inappropriate. Similarly, if, having accomplished something that is recognized as a source of pride, he shows no emotion, he may be faulted for being cold and unfeeling. Emotions are fitting, Nozick writes, when "the belief is true, the evaluation is correct, and the feeling is proportionate to the evaluation."[21]

The emotions can also fit or fail to fit in a larger sense. Generally, one must consider whether or not one should experience emotions or seek to situate oneself in such a way as to prove impervious to them. If a life lived without emotion is determined to be the best sort of life for human beings, then the third condition of fit will never obtain, because and insofar as the fittingness of the prior judgments or beliefs have altered. The Stoics argue forcefully that the elimination of emotion is a precondition of human flourishing, and their analysis of the emotions is intimately tied to this normative conclusion.

Becoming impervious to the emotions is only possible, however, if the emotions are under our control. Conceiving of emotions as cognitive events of a relatively complex order, such that they can be *constituted by* if not *identified with* rational judgments, brings them into the realm of the voluntary, according to Cicero in the third and fourth books of the *Tusculan Disputations*. One need not agree with the Stoic conclusion. Sartre did not expect the emotions to be driven from the human agent, but he did reject excusing agents because of their emotions: "The existentialist does not believe in the power of passion. He will never agree that a sweeping passion is a ravaging torrent which fatally leads a man to certain acts and is therefore an excuse. He thinks that man is responsible for his passion."[22] Others have been far less confident in pronouncing on the responsibility of agents for the emotions. But all have had something to say about the relation of the emotions to the lived lives of agents, to their pursuit of fullness, to their conceptions of value and the good.

Politics and the Emotions

So what are the repercussions of these ways of conceptualizing the interplay and interdependency of emotion, cognition, and reason for our understandings of and possibilities for democratic engagement? Regarding our capacity to reason as inextricably tied to our emotional capacities may do little to change our understandings other than to suggest an alternative phenomenological description of what sort of reasoning is actually taking place. Indeed, it might be suggested that the most dominant theories of our time, such as Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, already recognize an emotional underpinning, such as an ongoing desire for justice, that makes a normative picture possible.[23] If such is the case, we need only to supplement those established normative visions, on a terrain that they have conceded, with a somewhat thicker understanding of the human subject. And this would not necessitate any real changes to the content and implications of those theories.

But the consequences may not be quite so straightforward. The articles in this volume point to a variety of ways in which, by taking seriously these new accounts of the complexity of the human psyche and the intricate connections between emotion and reason, we must begin to rethink some of our common suppositions. All the authors in this collection recognize that human emotional capacities, given their necessary and sometimes desirable contributions to political life, also present challenges. From among the contributions to this book we can identify at least four ways in which these new theories can have an important impact on contemporary democratic and liberal democratic theory: they can generate a rethinking of our traditional ways of distinguishing between private and public; they can lead us to seek greater clarity on the ways in which emotion continues to sustain current political commitments in liberal and democratic regimes; they can contribute to recognizing better outcomes in democratic practice including democratic deliberation; and finally, in general, they allow us to develop a more realistic set of political expectations.

Public and Private

There is a long tradition of regarding state institutions as guardians of "sober second thought" against the excessive emotional responses of private individuals and even elected legislative bodies. In a recent work, for example, Cass Sunstein highlights the role of government officials in examining public fears in the light of expert evidence and in subjecting citizens' emotive responses and public panics to the sane adjudication of administrative rationality. Such a role supposes a boundary between the higher reason of officialdom and populist unenlightened emotionalism.[24] In addition, we can see that despite Rawls' recognition of a desire for justice as a precondition for a just political community, the distinction between the public domain and the particular interests that remain hidden behind the veil of ignorance in the realm of the private depends on, and indeed is constituted by, a conception of public reason itself.[25] Of course, many feminist critics of the liberal tradition have long been aware of the dangers of these conceptions.[26] Still, many theorists continue to conceive the border between the private and the public within liberal thought as that point where one crosses from unreason and the sentiment of households to rational public justification.

The primordial importance of the emotions at the core of political life could disrupt this distinction between the public and private that has been a common trope of our liberal democratic understanding. Do we not begin to blur the line between acceptable and unacceptable policy justifications if we admit of an emotional grounding to a drive for justice? If we accept current developments in the philosophy of mind, acknowledging a much more complex human psychology including an inextricable connection between emotion and reason, the normative models in political theory that give public

legitimacy to reason over and against the emotion of the private sphere must be rethought.

Emotions and Citizenship

Dismantling the reason-emotion divide as one of the proper boundaries of political life may also open up debate on whether the emotional lives of citizens can be regarded as a worthy object of public policy, and in what ways. In Britain, recent reforms have led to a great increase in the availability of cognitive behavioural therapy through the National Health Service, and the government has even embarked on a project to institute a program for emotional literacy in the schools.[27] While liberals may be averse to the idea of directly legislating the emotional lives of citizens, these reforms go some way in promoting certain models of emotional well-being for citizenry. How can they be reconciled with liberal assumptions? A more sophisticated understanding of human psychology than that traditionally acknowledged in political theory will allow us to better come to terms with such new areas of policy. In general, if we are concerned about the failure of contemporary liberal democracies to foster the qualities required for the exercise of responsible citizenship, then these new understandings can be helpful to an educational project to promote the critical yet affective judgment required of a mature liberal democratic citizen.[28]

In addition, an acknowledgment of the relevance of emotions in political judgment and political life may help us better to acknowledge the differences among liberal regimes, even those with similar institutional forms and constitutional ideals. This is crucial to understanding the opportunities as well as pitfalls in building and sustaining democratic regimes worldwide. For example, what general dispositions of the citizenry are necessary for the effective functioning of liberal democracy itself? While certain authors, as we have seen, believe a general desire for justice among citizenry to be indispensable, others have conceptualized this fundamental liberal democratic ethos in competing ways, for example Judith Shklar's fear of cruelty (the liberalism of fear) or Alexis de Tocqueville's love of equality.[29] Most political theorists could agree, however, that the emotions play an important role in assuring the centrality of liberal values in the experience of the liberal democratic citizen. In other words, it is our emotions along with our reason that relay to us the importance of a set of practices that express recognition of dignity and respect for the human person, the importance of freedom, and other key commitments through which liberalism can be defined.

Still, to recognize judiciously the inextricable importance of the emotions for our political lives, we must find some means by which we can adjudicate among them, finding criteria by which we can assess those emotional qualities or associations which can further the cause of democracy and justice and those which can detract from them. Should we accept all forms of

emotion and of emotional states as in some way conducive to liberalism or democracy, or should some emotional templates be encouraged (or discouraged) for the sake of maximizing equality and freedom? In either case, how can this be done?

Another approach to examining the place of the emotions in a variety of regimes is perhaps more common to the ancients than among today's political scientists, at least until recent attempts to revive the republican tradition.[30] This approach explores the varying forms of *ethos* across different types of society. On a broad scale, some theorists argue within a cognitivist framework that the emotions are socially constructed, in whole or in part.[31] If emotions are largely the product of our beliefs and evaluations, and if our beliefs and evaluations are in general acquired through cultural transmission, then our emotional experiences can be regarded as a direct legacy of our social experiences and education. For the ancients, this was a matter of differing structures of governance. Can competing forms of government, such as monarchies, constitutional monarchies, republics, and tyrannies, still be associated with distinct emotional patterns among the rulers or the citizenry? Here emphasis can be placed on the patterns by which power is exercised and their possible impact on our political identities. The idea holds that a variety of emotional dispositions are associated with differing political forms, and that these public passions, so to speak, can play an important and positive role in the defining and consolidating of our broader political commitments. This may help us to understand the possibilities and limitations of competing forms of governance, as well as the continuing distinctions that we can see among different forms and practices of regimes.

Emotions and Democratic Deliberation

A third approach explores the particular and often competing passions of people living within liberal democratic states. While traditional theories, as we have seen, have often relied on the emotions to secure broad commitment to core liberal values such as liberty and equality, in more specific political debates the emotions have often been regarded as problematic. The consequent challenge has been to seek a mechanism whereby the competing passions of the public could be neutralized or minimized before or through the process of public deliberation. With the recognition that the idea of a purely rational public debate is founded on false notions of the relationship between reason and the emotions, it is incumbent upon political theorists to seek new means of integrating an appreciation for emotional life into the heart of our theories of public deliberation. The actual workings of deliberation involve a wide variety of motivations on the part of citizens, and one cannot expect outcomes of deliberation in an actual democratic setting to be based on bare rational principles. A new understanding of deliberation that not only incorporates an understanding of the inextricable importance and

positive contribution of emotion in the formation of political judgment but also explores the means by which the passions can work in the public sphere to achieve a degree of impartiality will help us become better judges of the democratic process.

One effect of this may be, as recognized by Michael Walzer, an appreciation not only of the passionate commitment that is required in a vibrant democratic community but also of the importance for politics of conflict, both within and among nation states.[32] This appreciation should teach us to avoid a narrow view of politics as the achievement of idealized consensual outcomes through rational deliberation. The centrality of emotion and competing passions in all forms of political action will inevitably mean that some people will feel better than others do about any political outcome.

Emotions and Political Aspirations

A final, and hopefully positive, effect of these rather new questions in political theory is to provide a vision of political life that more clearly conforms to the lives and aspirations of citizenry. Those who take up the cause of "bringing the emotions back in" have often suggested that the decline of citizen interest in the formal political process, as measured by a number of indicators, is in part due to a cynicism bred by an unrealistic model of what the political process should be.[33] While political theorists may be hubristic to think that their models of politics have so much popular impact, nonetheless an important gap is evident between contemporary political theory and the realities of politics in liberal democratic regimes. If our theorizing is to mean something in a world of new challenges to democratic governance, we must first seek a groundwork that conforms more adequately to the experience of citizens. A positive re-evaluation of the emotions in the political realm is one step towards a more meaningful dialogue with our own liberal democratic experience.

Overview of the Chapters

The essays in this volume are arranged for the most part chronologically, seeking to retrieve the importance of the debate on the emotions in political life through a number of thinkers and historical contexts in the Western tradition. Chapter 1, "Explaining Emotions," by the distinguished philosopher Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, is her classic 1978 statement of the need for a more complex approach to emotional life. She shows that no one principle can explain our emotional lives and that along with questions of individual and genetic dispositions we should also consider the social and cultural causes of both our emotions and the perceptions that underpin them. This chapter helps to lay the groundwork for this collection insofar as it provides an important philosophic account of how the emotions are being reconsidered. Rorty also provides us with a new postscript to this path-breaking article.

This volume's historical project begins with a consideration of ancient Athens. In "Plato on Shame and Frank Speech in Democratic Athens" (Chapter 2), Christina Tarnopolsky builds on revisionist accounts of Plato's Socrates. She argues that Plato, through an examination of the workings of *parrhēsia,* was putting forward a model of respectful shame to apply in both philosophy and politics as a corrective to (rather than replacement for) the norms of democratic practice in Athens. Like Sharon Krause and Marlene Sokolon in later chapters, Tarnopolsky suggests that we should reject the temptation to categorize our emotions as intrinsically either helpful or harmful for liberal democracy. Rather, we should embrace the full range of our emotions, acknowledging that they can serve democracy well only if they are manifested in ways that warn us about our vulnerability and mortality.

Arash Abizadeh's "The Passions of the Wise: *Phronēsis*, Rhetoric, and Aristotle's Passionate Practical Deliberation" (Chapter 3) shows that the practical wisdom central to Aristotle's ethics and politics does not function without emotion. Indeed, he argues that emotion (*pathos*), character (*ethos*), and logic (*logos*) are constitutive elements of both Aristotelian rhetoric and *phronēsis,* partly in terms of how the particulars are perceived and partly in terms of how deliberation proceeds in view of that perception. A proper understanding of the place of emotion in Aristotelian *phronēsis* and rhetoric, and an understanding of how the democratic forum can constrain rhetorical practice, allows a more favourable outlook on the possibilities of democratic politics in the absence of what Aristotle would judge to be full virtue on the part of statesmen and citizens.

In "Troubling Business: The Emotions in Aquinas' Philosophical Psychology" (Chapter 4), Leonard Ferry suggests a means to negotiate between those theories that view the emotions as fully conditioned by chemical and neurological reactions and those that suggest that the soul is wholly under our cognitive control. In broad terms, Thomas Aquinas' view of human action allows for a spectrum of possibilities in the human soul ranging from fundamentally physically generated feeling through a gradual range of emotion over which we can be said to hold an increasing degree of control. Ferry maintains that the perspective of Aquinas allows us to understand more fully those aspects of the soul over which we may have a certain command and those aspects that are more a matter of physical reflex. This has important political and legal implications, given the inconsistency in how our institutions deal with individual responsibility for emotional life. A better and more comprehensive understanding of the range of emotional life and the possibilities, though limited, of cognitive control will provide a better basis for informing our political and legal judgments.

In "The Political Relevance of the Emotions from Descartes to Smith" (Chapter 5), Rebecca Kingston argues that an important change occurred in the study of emotions in the seventeenth century. In the effort to apply new

scientific methods to the study of the soul, theorists began to conceptualize emotion and passion as not only an internal phenomenon but an individual one. They thus abandoned a whole tradition in political theory that can be traced back to the ancients, a tradition that recognized the possibility of distinguishing social and political communities on the basis of a shared emotional disposition. Kingston maintains that the abandonment of the idea of "public passion" has impoverished political discourse, leading to a contemporary understanding of liberalism that devalues the passions in public life by relegating their legitimate sphere of action to private life. Noting that this decline of the idea of a public passion was an unintended consequence, Kingston calls not only for recognition of this idea as an analytical tool to help make sense of our political lives today but also for a larger and more positive role for the emotions in our normative understanding of politics.

Sharon Krause, in "Passion, Power, and Impartiality in Hume" (Chapter 6), re-examines David Hume's phenomenology of judgment and demonstrates how it is a relevant and realist corrective to theories of modern liberalism. She shows how the central importance of affect for moral judgment does not undermine the possibility of impartiality in Hume, due to the social fabric of moral feeling (which is built on a certain sensitivity to the pains and pleasures of others), the need for a generalized perspective in judgment that mitigates against the imposition of our own individual interests, and, finally, the limits imposed by human nature on what can and cannot be approved of in moral judgment. She acknowledges that, today, the acceptance of a Humean account of moral judgment would need to be supplemented by a commitment to broad forums of democratic deliberation, so as to extend individual sympathies and to provide the conditions for as broad and as generalized a standpoint as possible.

Ingrid Makus explores the place of emotions in the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in "Pity, Pride, and Prejudice: Rousseau on the Passions" (Chapter 7). At the outset she describes the problems for contemporary liberal democratic thought in reviving a theory of the relationship between the passions and politics. Such a theory, she argues, must eschew foundationalist thinking while still holding to features of the ancient account of politics that recognize the centrality of the passions and a tie between reason and emotion secured by virtue. But how can virtue be addressed in a contemporary liberal democratic context that is pluralistic in both theory and practice? She argues that the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau can help to overcome the impasse, in particular through an understanding of the possibilities for the education of the natural human impulse to compassion.

In "Feelings in the Political Philosophy of J.S. Mill" (Chapter 8), Marlene Sokolon explores some of the tensions evident in Mill's work around the theme of emotions, or what Mill calls "feeling." Mill's reaction to his father's strain of utilitarianism was in part inspired by a need to incorporate a more

sympathetic role for the emotions in utilitarian thought and calculation, but he was also suspicious of the workings of certain types of emotions (a tendency reflected in contemporary discussions on the emotions today, which Sokolon calls the "negative-positive polarity"). Mill thought that one could construct a political community in which the undesirable or destructive emotions would be isolated from political and ethical decision making. Sokolon, examining how these tendencies in Mill's thought resonate in contemporary debates on the emotions in public life, argues against this view. She suggests that the whole range of emotional response (including shame, disgust, and other seemingly negative emotions) can, in principle, be valuable in public life. The task of politics is to ensure that these emotional responses are associated with the appropriate objects for public approval and disapproval.

Leah Bradshaw's "Emotions, Reasons, and Judgments" (Chapter 9) evaluates the arguments of various philosophers who advocate a more important role for emotion in democratic judgment and deliberation. She begins with contrasting the views of Aristotle and Kant on the place of reason and emotion in politics, and then shows how more modern developments in political theory, like the work of Richard Rorty, manifest a departure from both. She is critical of Rorty and other thinkers who advocate a full embrace of emotion and passion in politics without some regard for the place of reason, no matter how worthy an emotion such as compassion may seem on the surface. As she states, "For compassion to have any substance politically, it has to be converted to virtue, which is measured by reasoned actions." She argues that only emotion aligned with reason, such as found in modern demands rising from indignation (rather than compassion), constitutes a ground for just political action. As such, she provides what may be regarded as a reconsideration of the arguments of this collection, given her return to the classics to support the centrality of reason for virtue and the need for traditional political and educational reform. Nonetheless, she recognizes that the forceful passions (such as indignation) will always be allied to those virtues (such as courage) that are closely associated with the pursuit of justice. In this regard she thus acknowledges that we cannot develop an understanding of politics without an idea of passion as a potentially positive agent of change.

Chapter 10 is an essay by Robert C. Solomon entitled "The Politics of Emotion." The chapter examines four ways in which the emotions can be considered political: first, emotions should be considered as situated in the world and not just inside individual minds, given their association with actual events and situations; second, emotions are political in their function to sway and persuade others to view a situation in a certain way; third, emotions have a political function in our relation with our own selves, that is, how we shape our own relation to the world and our perceptions of it; fourth, the very description and labelling of emotions carries important political

implications. This piece broadens the conversation among the authors in this book by describing a wider scope for the play of politics associated with our emotional lives and our attempts to understand them.

All of these contributions force us to come to terms with a more complex yet more realistic human psychology than has traditionally been acknowledged in political theory. The authors all agree that the history of political thought can shed light on ways of reconceptualizing the place of the emotions and passions in politics. In addition, the chapters in this volume share a tone of caution, insofar as none of the authors call for a reliance on emotional principles alone; rather they seek a better recognition of the importance of emotion and of its links to rationality than is currently found in most contemporary liberal democratic theory.

Matters of Contention

Needless to say, this collection is an overview and does not claim to be a comprehensive treatment of the theme in the history of political thought. Nor indeed do all the authors agree on the way in which the emotions are most relevant to the political process. These disagreements point to a number of areas where there are emerging debates in the field of emotion and politics. For example, can emotion on its own, through the course of deliberation, lead us to just and publicly worthy outcomes in judgment? To what degree, and in what manner, should education be central to the liberal democratic project? Can we acknowledge or indeed find any worth in the process by which our emotional lives are constituted by our social and political context? Should we regard these features of our selves as inherited prejudice and a likely source of misjudgment, or are they a matter of our very identities that must be respected to enable proper political judgment?

The work highlights the differences between those who argue for a key set of emotional dispositions (such as a capacity for shame, indignation, or compassion) as particularly relevant for democratic life, and those who hold that any emotion can be both helpful and destructive in the democratic process. Still, both positions point to a need to explore in greater detail the difference between the potentially positive and negative force of emotion in political life and how precisely this is to be adjudicated. If we are to accept a certain blurring of the distinction between the working of emotion and rational discernment, then how precisely do we determine the vision of the political good by which we can adjudicate helpful and destructive modes of political life? Can such a vision be achieved through democratic consensus? If not, how can it be justified as a normative vision?

In the long run, we hope that the deliberations begun here will encourage those who have developed an interest in these issues and will point out further avenues for reflection both within and outside the Western tradition of political theory.

1

Explaining Emotions

Amélie Oksenberg Rorty

Sometimes our emotions change straight away when we learn that what we believed is not true. The grieving husband recovers when he learns that, because she missed her plane, his wife did not die in the plane crash. But often changes in emotions do not appropriately follow changes in belief. Their tenacity, their inertia, suggests that there is *akrasia* of the emotions; it reveals the complex structure of their intentionality.[1]

I want to examine the strategies we use to explain cases of unexpected conservation of emotions: those that seem to conflict with a person's judgments and those that appear to have distorted our perceptions and beliefs, making them uncharacteristically resistant to change or correction.[2] I shall begin with complex cases, so that we will be forced to uncover layers of explanation that need not normally be brought into play in what are taken to be the standard cases. When people act or react in ways that can be explained by reasonable beliefs and desires, we tend to suppose that these beliefs and desires are the causes of their behaviour. We then try to construct our explanations of the more complex cases using only what was necessary to explain the simple ones. Not surprisingly, we are often left with bizarre cases at the margins of our theory: self-deception, *akrasia*, and the irrational conservation of emotions. By beginning with fringe cases, we may find the more complex structures that underlie the apparently straightforward cases but which are difficult to discern when everything is going as we expect.

One of the difficulties of our enterprise is specifying the psychological principles that rationalize a person's beliefs and desires, her interpretations and responses. When an emotion appears to be anomalous, and its explanation requires tracing its etiology, identifying the intentional object of the emotion is difficult without constructing its rationale, if not actually its justification. But accurately describing a person's beliefs and attitudes, especially when they involve *akrasia* or the apparently inappropriate conservation of the emotions, often involves attributing false beliefs, apparently irrational intentional sets.[3] Sometimes it is implausible and inaccurate to explain an inappropriate

attitude by attributing a belief or desire that would rationalize it, because the apparently anomalous emotion is embedded in a system of other inappropriate attitudes or false beliefs. Yet explaining a person's condition requires tracing its causal history, reconstructing the details of a ramified, gradually changing intentional system of attitudes, beliefs, and habits of attention and focusing. Constructing this causal history often involves reconstructing a rationale: the problem is to determine at what point in that history to apply some modified version of the principle of charity.[4] Often it is accurately applied only quite far back in the person's psychological history, to explain the formation of prepropositional but intentional habits of salience, organization, and interpretation. These habits, through later intervening beliefs and attitudes – many of them false and inappropriate – explain the conservation of emotions. When so applied, the principle of charity is modified: it accounts for the coherent appropriateness of the *formation* of a person's intentional system without maximizing agreement on the number of true beliefs. It is not the belief or emotion that is rationalized but how a person came to have it.

Emotions do not form a natural class. A set of distinctions that has generally haunted the philosophy of mind stands in the way of giving good descriptions of the phenomena of emotion. We have inherited distinctions between being active and being passive; between psychological states primarily explained by physical processes and psychological states not reducible to nor adequately explained by physical processes; between states that are primarily nonrational and those that are either rational or irrational; between voluntary and nonvoluntary states. Once these distinctions were drawn, types of psychological activities were parceled out *en bloc* to one or another side of these dichotomies. The next step was to argue reclassification: to claim that perception is not passive but active, or that the imagination has objective as well as subjective rules of association. Historically, the list of emotions has expanded as a result of these controversies. For instance, the opponents of Thomas Hobbes, wanting to secure benevolence, sympathy, and other disinterested attitudes as counterbalances to self-interest, introduced them as sentiments with motivational power. Passions became emotions and were classified as activities rather than as passive states. When the intentionality of emotions was discussed, the list expanded still further: *ressentiment,* aesthetic and religious awe, anxiety, and dread were included. Emotions became affects or attitudes. As the class grew, its members became more heterogeneous and the analysis became more ambiguous; counterexamples were explained away by charges of self-deception.

When we focus on their consequences on behaviour, most emotions can also be described as motives; some – but not all – emotions can also be described as feelings, associated with proprioceptive states.[5] The objects of some emotions – exuberance, melancholy – are difficult to specify; such global states verge on being moods.[6] Still other emotions come close to being

dispositional character traits: we speak of vengeful or affectionate persons. But when we speak of psychological state as an emotion, contrasting it to motives, feelings, moods, or character traits, we focus on the ways we are affected by our appraisals, evaluative perceptions, or descriptions.[7]

The causal history of an individual's emotions, the significant events that form his habits of response, affects his conception of their objects. That causal history contains three closely interwoven strands: (1) the formative events in a person's psychological past, the development of patterns of intentional focusing and salience, and habits of thought and response; (2) the socially and culturally determined range of emotions and their characteristic behavioural and linguistic expressions; and (3) a person's constitutional inheritance, the set of genetically fixed threshold sensitivities and patterns of response. Because the social and genetic factors were assumed to be shared or invariable, their effects always appearing within a person's psychological history, we have treated them, when we focused on them at all, as fixed background conditions. But they are essential to the full account, and often critical in explaining apparent anomalies: their contribution to that explanation does not reduce simply to a variant of individual psychological explanation.[8] I shall, however, abstract from the social and genetic factors, and concentrate on the intentional components in the formation of a person's individual emotional dispositions.

Causes, Objects, Targets

Jonah, a news writer, resents Esther, his editor, whom he thinks domineering, even tyrannical. But as bosses go, Esther is exceptionally careful to consult with the staff, often following consensus even when it conflicts with her judgment. His colleagues try to convince Jonah that Esther's assignments are not demeaning, her requests not arbitrary. Jonah comes to believe he was mistaken in thinking her actions dictatorial; he retreats to remarking that she derives secret pleasure from the demands that circumstances require. Where his colleagues see a smile, he sees a smirk. After a time of working with Esther, Jonah realizes that she is not a petty tyrant, but he still receives her assignments with a dull resentful ache; and when Anita, the new editor, arrives, he is seething with hostility even before she has had time to settle in and put her family photographs on her desk. Although many of the women on the secretarial staff are more hard-edged in mind and personality than either Esther or Anita, he regards them all as charmingly endowed with intuitive insight. He patronizes rather than resents them.

To understand Jonah's plight, we need distinctions. We are indebted to David Hume for the distinction between the object and the cause of emotions. But that distinction needs to be refined before we can use it to understand Jonah's emotional condition. In the case of the husband who believed his

wife had been killed in a plane crash, the precipitating or immediate cause of the man's grief is hearing a newscast announcing the fatal crash of the plane his wife intended to take. But of course the newscast has such a powerful effect on him because such a news story is itself an effect of the significant cause of his grief: her death in the crash. Often when we find emotions puzzling, it is because we do not see why the immediate cause should have such an effect.

The significant cause of an emotion is the set of events – the entire causal history – that explains the efficacy of the immediate or precipitating cause. Often the significant cause is not in the immediate past; it may be an event, or a series of events, long forgotten, that formed a set of dispositions that are triggered by the immediate cause. Tracing the full causal story often involves more than locating initial conditions or identifying immediate causes: it requires analyzing the magnetizing effects of the formation of our emotional dispositions, habits of thought, as well as habits of action and response.[9] Magnetizing dispositions are dispositions to gravitate toward and to create conditions that engender other dispositions. A magnetized disposition to irascibility not only involves a set of specific low thresholds (e.g., to frustration or betrayal) but also involves looking for frustrating conditions by perceiving situations as frustrating. It not only involves wearing a chip on one's shoulder but involves looking for someone to knock that chip off. Magnetizing dispositions need not by themselves explain actions or attitudinal reactions: they can do so indirectly, by characterizing the *type* of beliefs, perceptions, and desires a person is likely to have. Such traits determine actions and reactions by determining the selective range of a person's beliefs and desires.[10] The genesis of a magnetizing disposition need not always lie in an individual's particular psychological history; such dispositions are often acquired, along with other characteristically culture-specific intentional sets and motives, as part of a person's socialization. It is because significant causes often produce magnetizing dispositions that they are successful in explaining the efficacy of the immediate causes of an emotion: they explain not only the response but the tendencies to structure experience in ways that will elicit that characteristic response.

In order to understand the relation between the immediate and the significant cause, we need to refine the account of the objects of the emotions. The immediate object of an emotion is characteristically intentional, directed, and referring to objects under descriptions that cannot be substituted *salva affectione*.[11] Standardly, the immediate object not only is the focus of the emotion but also is taken by the person as providing its ground or rationale. The immediate target of the emotion is the object extensionally described and identified. I shall refer to a person's emotion-grounding description of the target as the "intentional component of the emotion," to his having that description as his "intentional state," and to the associated magnetized

disposition as his "intentional set." Of course a person need not be able to articulate the intentional component of his emotions. Ascriptions of emotions, like ascriptions of belief, are inferences to the best explanation.[12]

A person's intentional set may fail to ground the emotion because the target does not in fact have the relevant properties, or because it does not have them in the configuration with the centrality that would ground the emotion, or because it does not in fact exist: the description does not succeed in referring. The difficulties of ascribing intentional states and of referring in opaque contexts are no more (and no less) devastating in ascribing emotions than they are elsewhere.[13] When an otherwise perceptive and reasonable person widely and persistently misdescribes matters or persistently responds in a way that apparently conflicts with his beliefs, we first try standard strategies for explaining misperceptions and errors. Sometimes, indeed, we persuade a person that her emotion is unfounded; and sometimes this persuasion is sufficient for the emotion to change.

When an emotion remains intractable or an anomalous intentional set persists, we suspect that the emotion is rooted in habits of selective attention and interpretation whose activation is best explained by tracing them back to the significant causes of a magnetized disposition.[14] The causal story of that formation can take several forms. For instance, we might suspect that Jonah resents Esther because he now is, or once was, resentful of his mother. His mother may be the (acknowledged or unacknowledged) target of his emotions, and Esther only the front for that target. But Jonah's mother need not be the explanatory target – acknowledged or not – of Jonah's emotion; she may simply have been a crucial part of the significant cause of Jonah's magnetized disposition to structure and interpret situations by locating some female figure whom he sees as hostile and domineering, a figure who, so seen, grounds his resentment. Which of the various alternatives best explains Jonah's condition is a matter for extended investigation; we would have to examine a wide range of Jonah's responses, interpretations, and emotions under different conditions. In any case, our best explanatory strategy is as follows: when in doubt about how the immediate target and precipitating cause explain the emotion, look for the significant cause of the dispositional set that forms the intentional component of the emotion.[15]

Habits and Intentional Sets

The significant cause can help us reconstruct the rationale of the intentional component of the emotion, once we examine the composition of the significant cause. An important part of the history of Jonah's condition will show us what we need:

Not only does Jonah regard women in high places with resentment and hostility; he also suffers from nightmares and, sometimes, from obsessive terrors.

Both have a recurring theme: his mother is trying to kill him. Moreover, he loathes scarves, refusing to wear them even in the coldest, dampest weather. No matter what wonderful things have just happened to him, he breaks into an anxious sweat when he walks through the scarf section at Woolworth's. His mother, a gruff, brusque woman, used to swathe him in scarves that she knitted herself. But she always bought the itchiest wool imaginable; and when she bundled him up in winter, she used to tie the scarf with a swift, harsh motion, pulling it tightly around his throat. She had never come close to trying to kill him. She was in fact an affectionate woman, but an awkward one. Certainly she was occasionally ambivalent, and sometimes exasperated and angry. It was because Jonah was sensitive to the negative undertones of her attitudes (a sensitivity that had an explanation of its own) that he felt the pressure of the scarf as painful rather than as reassuring or comforting.

To understand what has happened to Jonah, we must examine several components of the significant causes of his nightmares, phobias, and terrors. When children remember events as attacks, they may be picking up genuine undercurrents in the behaviour of those around them. Adults often behave with hostility without attacking, seductively without trying to seduce. Because children are unable to place the undercurrents they discern in the context of a person's whole psychological character, they magnify what frightens them. So the fantasy often rests on something perceived. Perception shades into magnified or distorted interpretation, which shades into fantasy, often in ways that can be distinguished only with the benefit of theory-laden hindsight.

But let us suppose that what Jonah's mother did was not in itself sufficient to form his emotional dispositions. His perceptions of the attitudes that determined her manner toward him are essential ingredients in the causal story of his condition. There were not two events, two significant causes but one: the tying of scarf in a way that pained Jonah. In such situations it is often necessary not only to identify the significant cause by an extensional description (scarf tied at a certain speed and a certain pressure) but also to see it through the eyes of the beholder. When we understand that both components of the significant cause – the scarf tightly tied and Jonah's feeling that tying as painful – are fused in the forming of Jonah's emotional dispositions, we can see how locating the significant cause can help us reconstruct the emotion-grounding description that links the intentional component of Jonah's emotion to its immediate cause and target.

Because the intentional component of the significant cause and the intentional component of the apparently anomalous emotion do not always fall under the same description, the significant cause is not always as easy to spot as, in this post-Freudian age, we have located the significant cause – and even the explanatory target – of Jonah's emotion, almost without stopping to think. Nor need the significant cause involve a particular set

of events that fused and formed the person's magnetized dispositions, the patterns of salience and attention. The causal story is likely to involve idiosyncratic beliefs and associations, many difficult to recover or articulate. In any case, our motto can now be made more precise: when in doubt about the rationale of an emotion, look for the intentional component of the significant cause of the dispositional set that forms the intentional component of the emotion.

But we are not yet through explaining Jonah's condition, for we do not yet have an account of his tendency to interpret the minimally harsh manner of his mother's scarf-tying ways as hostile. It might seem as if we have reintroduced our original problem – the problem of explaining an anomalous emotional reaction – at an earlier stage. Jonah's perceiving his mother as hostile is an essential part of the significant cause of his phobias and his troubles with female bosses. Nevertheless, if only Jonah and not his brother Abednego has this intentional set, although Abednego was also tightly swathed in itchy scarves, we have not got the significant cause in all its glory: though our explanation is fuller, it is not yet complete.

To understand why the usually perceptive Jonah so misperceived his mother's attitudes, I must tell you more of his story:

Jonah was the eldest of the children. During his childhood, his father, the Major, was given army leave only to return home for short visits. At an appropriate time after one of these visits, Abednego was born. Since his mother was on her own at the time, Jonah was sent off to stay with his adored grandfather while his mother was in the hospital. Now the truth of the matter is that the adored grandfather loathed his daughter-in-law, whom he saw as a domineering, angry woman, the ruination of his son. Without intending to do so, Jonah's grandfather conveyed these attitudes to Jonah, who at that time was apprehensive of losing his mother's affections. Susceptible to the influence of a figure who represented his absent father, he found in his grandfather's attitudes the confirmation and seal of what might have been a passing mood. His grandfather's perspective became strongly entrenched as his own.

We now have an account of why a reasonable person might, in a perfectly reasonable way, have developed an intentional set that, as it happens, generates wildly askew interpretations and reactions.[16] But have we found a stopping place, thinking we've explained an anomalous attitude simply because we have come to a familiar platitude? Perhaps: that is a risk explanations run; but if we have stopped too soon, at a place that requires further explanation, we can move, whenever the need arises, farther back in the causal story. And indeed, we may want explanations of reactions that are not at all anomalous: we can ask why an accurate perception or a true belief has the form it does, why a person focused on matters *this* way rather than that.

The principle of charity is now seen to be very general in scope. Characteristically, it is best applied to the intentional components of the significant causes of magnetizing dispositions, where it accounts for a range of attitudes and beliefs (without necessarily maximizing agreement on truth), rather than to individual episodic beliefs. Moreover, its use presupposes not only that we have a certain gravitational attraction toward truth but that we are also endowed with a wide range of psychological dispositions that determine the ways in which we acquire and change our beliefs and attitudes. These dispositions are quite varied: some are neurophysiological determinants of perceptual salience (e.g., red being more salient than grey under standard background and contrast conditions); others are psychological in character (e.g., the dominance order of emotions under standard conditions: fear displacing and reorganizing the emotional field in characteristic patterns); still others are psychosocial (e.g., the effects of mass hysteria or the presence of a schizophrenic on a person's schema of intentional sets). In short, when we try to apply the principle of charity where it best explains and identifies the range of our attitudes, its canonic formulation is so modified as to disappear as a special principle.

But having come to the end of Jonah's story, have we come to the end of an account of how we explain emotions? Our questions seem now to multiply: Will we, in tracing the significant cause to an appropriate stopping point, always still introduce an intentional component of the significant cause? Are we to interpret young Jonah's tendency to take on the intentional set of a figure who stands in a certain relation to him as itself an intentional set? Or do significant causes of magnetizing dispositions sometimes have no intentional component of their own? We do not know enough about the neurophysiology and psychology of early learning to know what constraints should be set on our philosophical theory. In any case, an account of the etiology of the intentional components of emotional dispositions is nestled within a general psychological theory and inseparable from theories of perception and theories of motivation. The holistic character of mental life makes piecemeal philosophical psychology suspect.

Since airtight arguments have vacuous conclusions, it would be folly to stop speaking at the point where we must start speculating. There are good, but by no means conclusive, reasons for recognizing a gradation between beliefs or judgments in propositional form, and quasi-intentions that can also be physically or extensionally identified. Let us distinguish:

1. beliefs that can be articulated in propositional form, with well-defined truth conditions
2. vague beliefs in sentential form whose truth or satisfaction conditions can be roughly but not fully specified ("It is better to have good friends than to be rich.")

3 specific patterns of intentional salience that can be formulated as general beliefs (A pattern of focusing on aspects of women's behaviour construed as domineering or hostile rather than as competent or insecure might in principle be treated as a set of predictions about the behaviour of women under specific conditions.)
4 intentional sets that cannot be easily formulated as beliefs (A pattern of focusing on the military defensibility of a landscape, rather than on its fertility or aesthetic composition, cannot be so easily formulated as a set of predictions about the benefits of giving priority to military defence over fertility or aesthetic charm. Nor can such patterns of salience be translated straightforwardly as preference rankings. For instance, a painter can focus on patterns of colour in a landscape rather than on its compositional lines, but the patterns and habits of his attending are quite distinct from his painterly preferences.)
5 quasi-intentional sets that can, in principle, be fully specified in physical or extensional descriptions (e.g., other things being equal, painful sensations are more salient than pleasurable ones).

For such intentional sets – patterns of discrimination and attention – the question of whether the significant cause of a magnetized intentional set has an irreducibly intentional component is an open one. Such quasi-intentional components form patterns of focusing and salience without determining the description of those patterns. A quasi-intentional set (patterns of perceptual salience under standard conditions of contrast and imprinting) can be given both physical and intentional descriptions; in some contexts, the physicalistic descriptions can function in an explanation, without any reference to the intentional description. But in other contexts, particularly those that move from functional explanations toward interpretive or rational accounts, the intentional description is essential. Often the intentional and the quasi-intentional components of the significant cause of magnetized interpretive dispositions are ambiguous in this way: we tend to read the intentional component back into the significant cause when doing so helps rationalize the person's responses. But the intentional set that is introduced at that stage often bears a causal rather than a directly logical relation to the magnetized set produced. (The quasi-intentional set that made Jonah prone to adopt his grandfather's interpretations at just that time bears a causal but not a logical relation to the intentional set he acquired as a result of this sensitivity. But the connections between the intentional set he acquired from his grandfather and the intentional set that leads him to see Esther as domineering are logical as well as causal.)

In such cases there are physiological generalizations about the quasi-intentional states under their extensional descriptions. Although the opacity criteria for intentionality do not yet apply, it is useful to recognize that such

selective sensitivities are oriented to a stimulus under a description that later does function in its fully intentional form. Holistic considerations influence us: the wider the range and the greater the complexity of behaviour that is best explained by the intentional set in its fully intentional form, the more likely we are to treat the significant cause as having that intentional component, even though it need not, in its original appearance, have then functioned in its fully intentional form. (For instance, a child can be frightened by a clap of thunder without initially having an intentional set to interpret such sounds as danger signals. If he is ill and feverish, hearing loud sounds is painful, and, if he is generally in a weak and fearful condition, he can develop a fully intentional sensitivity, becoming frightened *of* thunder because he had been frightened *by* it.)

Objections

One might wonder: Why do we need these distinctions descending like a plague to devour every living thing, transforming a once fertile plain into a desert? Why can't we explain intractable, inappropriate emotions more simply and elegantly by specifying the relevant belief that fixes the description of the target? Perhaps what explains Jonah's resentment is that he thinks figures in authority are likely to be, or to become, authoritarian. Although such beliefs or judgments are occasionally interesting and true, the appropriate plausible belief is sometimes difficult to ascribe. Jonah does not resent Abe Zloty, the editor-in-chief, though Zloty is far more peremptory than Esther. It seems more plausible to ascribe to Jonah the belief that when women are in a position of authority, they become insufferably authoritarian. But Jonah is a sceptical sort of fellow, who rarely leaps to generalizations, let alone wild ones. Often when we don't understand an emotion, or its intractability, we also don't understand why the person should have and hold the belief that is its intentional component. The belief "explains" the emotion only by subsuming its intentionality in a more general frame.

But our objector persists, claiming that in tracing the etiology of an emotion, intentional sets and quasi-intentions are unnecessarily complex ways of talking about beliefs or evaluative judgments. If we judge emotions for their rationality, goes the objection, then some belief must either be presupposed by, or embedded in, the emotion. The correction of an emotion generally involves the correction of the mistaken belief. Certainly many cases do follow such a pattern, and certainly some emotions can be identified by the full-blown beliefs that are also a part of their causal explanation. But the issue is whether the intentional component of an emotion is always a belief, and whether there are emotions that are more properly evaluated as inappropriate or harmful than as irrational.

If the intentional component of an emotion is always a belief, then the conservation of an emotion after a change of belief would always involve

a conflict of beliefs. This may indeed sometimes occur; but often the only evidence that the person retains the abandoned belief is his emotional state. One of the reasons for resisting the assimilation of all intentional components of emotions to beliefs is the difficulty of stating *what* the belief is. There is sometimes no non-question-begging way of formulating a proposition *p*, where "inserting *p* in the sentence 'S believes that —' would express the fact that the subject was in that state."[17]

A person may not only deny having the abandoned belief but (with the exception of the episode in question) consistently act in a way that supports that denial. On the view that emotions always involve beliefs, it becomes necessary to suppose that the person is massively successful in deceiving herself about the conflict between the belief embedded in the emotion and the belief implicit in the rest of her conduct. This is certainly a recognizable and even common phenomenon. It seems implausible, however, to assimilate all cases of the conservation of emotions to cases that involve a self-deceptive denial of such conflicts. No doubt much conservation can be explained by ambivalence, and at least some ambivalence can be understood as involving conflicting judgments, with the person deceiving herself about at least one side of a divided mind.[18] But unless the claim is to raise questions, the conservation of emotions cannot *automatically* count as grounds for attributing self-deception. Characteristically, self-deception involves quite distinctive behaviour: signs of facial malaise, frozen features, and certain sorts of systematic failures in action.[19]

Even if it were the case that – in a much revised and extended sense of "belief" – the intentional components of emotions were beliefs, the distinctions we have drawn would have to be reintroduced to differentiate the ways in which a person accepts or uncharacteristically ignores or refuses counterevidence. The phenomenon of the conservation of emotion would then reappear as the anomalous conservation of belief. To explain such conservation, we would once again have to return to the ravenous hordes of distinctions between the immediate and the significant causes of magnetized intentional states; we would have to introduce beliefs that could not be attributed in propositional form. Explaining the anomalous conservation of belief, or its resistance to considerations or observations that would characteristically change it, would lead us to exactly the same sort of schema of causal explanation that we use in understanding the conservation of emotions.

There are objections from other quarters. Nowhere does the mind-body problem raise its ugly head with a stiffer neck than in the analysis of the thought component of the emotions. In some cases, it might be said, the significant cause isn't significant at all. It casts no light on the rationale of the intentional component of an emotion because there is no rationale. For example, in the narrative epilogue at the end of *War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy describes the emotional condition of the aged Countess Rostoff. She needs,

he says – and he suggests that this is in part a physiological need – to become angry, melancholy, merry, peevish, to express the cycle of her emotional repertoire every few days. Usually the family manages to arrange matters in such a way as to give her emotional life an air of appropriateness. But sometimes this cannot be done, and she becomes peevish in a situation in which she is normally merry. Tolstoy remarks that in infancy and old age – and, we could add, in adolescence – the apparent reasonableness that we believe really conditions our adult emotional life wears thin, and emotions reveal a rhythm and pattern of their own. (Tolstoy does not, unfortunately, go on to speculate whether the independent rhythm of the emotions is merely disguised in our prime, indiscernible beneath our bustling intention-directed activity, or whether what makes the emotional life of infants and the senile different from our own is precisely that their emotions are merely coincidentally associated with the appropriate intentions.) When a person suffers from a hormonal imbalance, his emotions have one target after another, none linked to the intentional component of a significant cause. When we look for the explanation of a recalcitrant inappropriate emotion, there is sometimes no need to look deeply into the etiology of the intention: the state of the person's endocrine system is explanation enough.[20] The best thing to do with this objection is to accept it gracefully. It is, after all, true.

But we must be careful not to conclude too much. From the fact that the best explanation of a person's emotional state may sometimes be glandular malfunction, it does not follow that, under standard conditions, explanations of emotions can be given without any appeal to beliefs or intentional states.[21] Most physicalistically oriented theories fill in their accounts by tracing the interaction among the *sorts* of physical states that are associated with being in an emotionally charged condition (generally metabolic states).[22] Such physicalists do not, however, claim to be able to identify the propositional content of a person's attitudes solely by reference to physically described brain states. On this view, we would not expect to find strict physicalistic laws distinguishing Jonah's perceiving-Esther-as-Slavic and his perceiving-Esther-as-Semitic.

The zealot hard-core physicalists go farther: they propose to identify "psychological" states as states whose descriptions eliminate all reference to intentional states and their propositional content – distinguishing Jonah's believing Esther to be bossy from his believing her to be vain – by specifying the differences in the brain states that constitute the two beliefs. It seems at the very least premature to present the results of what is an extended and only projected program of research as having provided the explanations we need, especially as zealot hard-core physicalists have yet to give us an account of how to proceed with the reductive analysis. So far, all we have are science-fiction stories about possible worlds in which the reductive analysis has taken place, where what scientists somehow discovered is already part of the popular culture. Until the theory is

established, all the physicalist account of the emotions adds to the intentionalist account is the important observation that, when the best explanation of a person's emotional state is primarily physiological, then raising questions about the causal force of the intentional object may produce arbitrary, ad hoc answers. There may be a revealing pattern in the immediate causes or objects of an adrenally charged person's various aggressive angers, but sometimes that pattern is best explained by tracing the effects of chemical changes on perception and attention.

This suggests that, for at least these sorts of cases, the physicalist and the intentionalist accounts of anomalous emotions are perfectly compatible and perhaps even complementary, physicalist theories explaining why a person is in *that* state, while intentionalist theories explain why the emotion has *that* intentional object. The theories appear to be at odds only when both get reductionally ambitious: when, denying overdetermination, each tries to explain all phenomena at all levels. Certainly if the intentionalist accounts deny that a person's hormonal state ever enters into the explanation, and if the physicalistic accounts deny that intentionality is ever required to explain or identify the emotional states, the two approaches will clash in an unilluminating struggle whose sterility will be masked by the parties goading each other to dazzling displays of ingenuity.[23]

Does it follow that both levels of explanation, the physiological and the intentional, are necessary while neither is sufficient? The situation is (un)fortunately more complex. Physiological and intentional aspects do not enter into all emotions in the same way. The difference between a distaste for malicious gossip in departmental politics and the terror of waking after a nightmare whose drama one has already forgotten, the difference between nostalgia-for-the-lilacs-of-yesteryear and fear in the face of a powerful danger, are differences in kind.

Some emotions are primarily associated with physical states largely affected by metabolic imbalance: for example, malfunctions of the pituitary or adrenal glands are associated with highly specific emotional disorders, leaving the rest of a person's emotional dispositions relatively intact. Other, quite different sorts of emotional disorders are associated with some types of brain damage.[24] Still other sorts of emotions – such culturally variable ones as nostalgia or Sunday melancholy – seem difficult to associate with any particular physical condition. While the introduction of intentional apparatus seems forced in some cases, the introduction of physiological determinants is forced in others.

Explanation, Change, and Rationality

> We can expect three things from the study of history: the sheer pleasure of knowing particulars; useful precepts for the important matters of life; and

> furthermore because the origins of things recur in the present from the past, we acquire the best understanding of all things from a knowledge of their causes.
>
> – Gottfried Leibniz, Preface to *Accessiones Historicae*

The conservation of emotions has its explanation in the conservation of habit, especially of those magnetized dispositions involved in selective attention and focused interpretation. We have concentrated primarily on that aspect of a person's psychological history which explains the formation of his characteristic intentional habits. But social and genetic factors also contribute to the causal story; the full account of the conservation of emotional habits would have to include these determinants as well. The three layers of explanation – the individual, the social, and the genetic – are closely interwoven. A person's constitution – his threshold to pain and to various sorts of stimuli, the structure of his glandular and nervous systems – affects the development of his intentional sets, his habits of interpretation and response. Constitutional factors (for instance, metabolic rate) influence the social roles and settings in which a person is cast; this in turn affects the formation of his intentional sets. Sociocultural factors structure the interpretations of a person's experiences: a range of emotional responses is formed by such interpretations.[25] The full explanation of a person's emotions requires not only an analysis of the causal contribution of each of the three strands but also an account of their interactions.

(What goes without saying may need to be said: we should not be misled by talk of interaction, layers, or strands to suppose that we are dealing with distinct variables whose causal interaction can be traced. What is variable in a theory need not be independently variable in fact. At this stage, we are still using metaphors; we are not yet entitled to suppose we have detached them as a technical vocabulary. "Biological limits" or "constraints" to sociocultural variation, physiological "determinants" of psychological or intentional processes, cultural "forms" of biological "givens": all these expressions are borrowed from other contexts. Our vocabulary of the interrelation of these "domains" is crucially in the formative stage; talk of separate but interwoven explanatory strands must be treated as provisionary to a developing explanatory scheme – heuristics without ontology. We have here a clear example of the encroaching constitutive character of early terminological raiding. Perhaps eventually, by tracing these sorts of borrowings, we shall be able to see the rewards – and the costs – of theft that cannot be distinguished from honest toil without the benefit of a program.)

My suggestion that emotions are not only explained but often also identified by their causal histories may appear either trivial or exaggerated. No one would deny that we require more than the immediate occasion to understand the exact shades of Jonah's resentment: the images and thoughts,

the sensations and anticipations, the evocation of associated emotions that constitute just *that* condition. But it doesn't follow that we need a causal account to identify his condition as a case of resentment, and to explain it by his perception of Esther.

Certainly emotions are often identified in a rough way without tracing their causal histories; one need not always know why a person is angry to recognize her condition. The contexts in which emotions occur and their expression in speech and behaviour are sufficient to identify them; their immediate contextual causes are often quite sufficient to explain them. There is, however, a rough and unexamined but nevertheless quite specific folk psychology that stands behind and informs such standard explanations.[26] The explanatory strategies that I have sketched make explicit the stages and assumptions embedded in our ready and quick contextual identifications of emotions and their intentional objects. It is because we supply the standard causal history of emotion-types that we readily identify tokens of that type.

But instances of emotion-types differ markedly from one another in their origins, their expressions in speech and action, and in their psychodynamic functions. To bring order to these heterogeneous classes, we need a much finer taxonomy of the varieties of, for example, anger, melancholy, and envy. Such taxonomy can be constructed by distinguishing varieties of causal histories of the intentional component of these emotions. Differences in the characteristic causal histories of their intentional components helps to explain why different instances of the same emotion-type often have different tonal and behavioural expressions. But we have been too impressed by the multiplicity of instances of emotion-types, and so have tended to distinguish different instances of the same type by the differences in their particular intentional objects. Certainly if we want an account of their individuation, especially in cases of overdetermination, this is necessary.[27] When we identify and explain a particular emotion without tracing its etiology, however, we are implicitly classifying it as a standard instance of a *variety* of the emotion-type; in doing so, we are relying upon the characteristic causal story that distinguishes that variety from others. If we thought that the causes of a person's condition conformed to none of the standard histories, we would doubt the attribution.

If this analysis is correct, then an account of how people succeed in changing emotions that they judge inappropriate or irrational closely follows the more general explanation of how people change their habits. The difficulties involved in bringing about such changes – the deep conservation of emotional habits – make claims that emotions are choices or voluntary judgments seem implausible.[28] Sometimes (rarely) some people (a happy few) are able to take steps to restructure their intentional sets and revise their emotional repertoire. Sometimes secondary emotions – emotions about emotions – play a crucial role in such transformations. For instance, someone who thinks that the objects he fears are indeed dangerous may nevertheless reasonably judge

that he is too afraid of being afraid. He may think that he should not go as far as he does in order to avoid situations where the possibility of danger is only remote. It is this secondary fear ("We have nothing to fear but fear itself") that impels the responses the person might judge inappropriate; and it is this, rather than the first-level fear, that he might wish to change. Or it might go the other way: a person might underwrite a second-level emotion, and wish to change its first level.[29]

Shifts in emotional repertoires can often take quite subtle forms: someone might wish to check the standard expression or behavioural consequences of either a first- or a second-level emotion without wishing to change the habits or intentional set of having it. Although some tendency to action, often taking the form of posture or expression, is "part" of many first-level emotions, it is often possible to restrain or mask the behaviour without changing the emotional set.[30] One of the ways of doing this is to distinguish more sharply between the varieties of instances of an emotion-type. A person might learn to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate responses by coming to see that different instances of the same type cluster together because they have the same causal history. They form a variety defined by its etiology. If he tackles his problem of identifying and overcoming inappropriate resentments separately each time, Jonah is unlikely to make much headway by learning not to resent Esther, and then learning not to resent Anita, and then Sarah, … and each and every woman in authority. Because he thinks some cases of resentment are perfectly justified by their causes and objects, he is unlikely to solve his problem by setting himself the task of avoiding resentment altogether. But by understanding the special etiology of the variety of resentments of which his resentment of Esther is a particular instance, he can at least begin to be alert to the situations that trigger magnetized dispositions he regards as inappropriate.

The analysis of the causal history of our emotions suggests that judgments of the appropriateness of the emotions must be made on a number of different levels. It may be not only irrational but inappropriate for someone to be frightened of lions in a zoo, but it is not inappropriate to be frightened before one has had time to be reasonable, so constructed that one's fear is not immediately eradicated by one's more considered reactions. It may be irrational for Jonah to take on his grandfather's attitudes without testing them, and irrational for him to reinterpret all the evidence that might correct his attitudes. But it is also beneficial for children to tend to absorb the intentional dispositions of the crucial figures around them, even at the cost of generating confusion and conflict. What is maladaptive in a particular case need not be so typically; it may be highly beneficial for habitual responses to dominate rational considerations, and for them to be changed by rational considerations only with considerable difficulty. It is part of the discomforting character of our emotional life that the genetic programming and social

formation of emotional dispositions do not respect the rationality or the comfort of individuals.

Thirty-Five Years Later: A Postscript

When and how do we voluntarily act – and continue to act – from emotions that we judge undesirable or inappropriate, all things considered? Most explanations of *akratic* emotions focus on the scope and structure of individual psychology. Attempting to understand the dynamics of what happens when someone apparently ignores or forgets what she seems to know or believe, most explanations of *akratic* emotions bracket their social sources and reinforcement. As long as such deviant emotions were classified as species of culpable irrationality, the ultimate culprit was typically thought to be motivational: the agent's considered judgments were deflected by emotions or desires that were, all things considered, less solidly justified but more pressing or powerful. We need to go farther to ask when and why this happens. When we understand the social, political, and economic sources of emotional *akrasia*, we shall also see that these sources stand behind a person's ordinary, standard-issue emotional repertoire. Once again, the fissures of *akratic* pathology reveal the structure and dynamics of ordinary psychological functioning.

Akratic emotions rarely occur as isolated events. As signs of psychological disorders, they are typically habitual and patterned; and they are frequently sustained and reinforced by sociopolitical and economic arrangements. Envy is supported by economic structures that generate consumer desires; anger is prompted and enforced by the social and cultural value placed on aggressive responses to perceived slights. Like other intentional activities, emotional responses are endorsed by sustaining social support. As standard beliefs and motives are elicited and reinforced by social patterns and political institutions, so too are the standard-issue dispositional patterns of our emotional repertoire.

A familiar case study may help: the members of a president's cabinet can collectively act aggressively from grandiose indignation that they would not endorse in solitary reflection. Influenced by their collective power and eminence, and by the luxurious appointments of the cabinet room, supported by the army of their secretaries and assistants, solicited by lobbyists and consulted by the media, they so collude in magnifying one another's tendencies to the pretensions of self-importance that the policies on which they consensually agree are stronger than their individual attitudes, in *foro interno*. They will collude in expressing – and acting on – indignant aggression that they would check if they were acting as individuals. The forms of such aggressive responses are modelled by social images and practices of admiration and contempt, by sports and the media, by popular films and biographies: "We must respond promptly with massive force and strength."

William Ruddick and Rom Harré have called our attention to the ways

that psychological habits are enhanced and entrenched by social collusion.[31] Their analyses of these social processes extend to emotional *akrasia*. Social norms and institutional practices provide models for the development of the sources and expression of emotions and motives. Greed is prompted by envy; envy is used to prompt consumer activity. An ambitious stockbroker learns to wear emotional blinders when she follows the ethos of the market in selling junk bonds; she models her approach to her clients by imitating other brokers; her friends envy and enthusiastically admire her aggressive initiative and ingenuity; they manifestly delight to share in her bounty. Although the stockbroker is moved by her pastor's description of the plight of the elderly who are bilked by junk bond trading, his impact does not compare with the weight and ramification of the social rewards of her hard-hearted chicanery. Carefully selective emotional blindness is as much the result of social conditioning as is carefully selective aggression.

We can extend Ruddick's and Harré's insights. Social institutions and economic systems encourage and foster the very actions that they also condemn. While promoting the emotions that prompt habits of co-operation, they also reward radical independence; while condemning aggression, they also praise "aggressive initiative." While admiring selfless devotion, they also reward canny self-interest. Except in extreme cases, rewards and sanctions do not form a clear and guiding pattern. Recent theories of the social construction of psychological phenomena present examples and analyses of the self-fulfilling effects of linguistic and categorical frameworks that channel and model psychological and behavioural patterns. A redescriptive turn of phrase, rather than a clear objective difference, distinguishes *akrasia* from acceptable normal behaviour. The difference between one stockbroker's "envious greed" and her colleague's "assertive initiative," or between the rage of a veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress and his officer's politically aggressive indignation, expresses widely ramified ideological and political interests.

Laws, economic institutions, civic associations, moral and religious ideals, and public culture express and model the formation of social habits. Conflicts among them provide some of the major sources of emotional *akrasia*. Early childhood experience – patterns of family behaviour, their motives and habits, preoccupations and expectations, the tonality of interactions – is affected by patterned pressures that are not always discerned by the people formed by them. Status, occupations, and the extent of a family's disposable income profoundly affects the ambitions, opportunities, and expectations of its members. Chronic unemployment, the reversal of stereotypic gender divisions of labour, laws affecting primogeniture – all these manifestly affect the tonal stress and tensions within family configurations. Class and ethnic patterns frame legitimate or forbidden outbursts of anger; they provide criteria for justified claims to power and property; they affect the emotional specifications of generic desires.

While officially condemning envy as a socially undesirable trait, most societies use, and even induce, envious traits to encourage the development of useful talents and abilities. Market-based, consumer-oriented economic systems generate invidious comparisons as a way of increasing consumption. We are bombarded by images of women who are admired for their expensive cars and clothes, who take exotic vacations with desirable men. The public is systematically presented with alluring images of svelte bodies and junk food, power and junk bonds. The mass media, television dramas, songs, and advertisements present riveting and reigning models of desirability and success. They are brilliantly designed to affect patterns of consumption, through images of satisfied desire, all providing some of the structural, social, and political sources of systematically focused characterological *akrasia*.

Workplaces, banks, courts, armies, and hospitals all stream, direct, and constrain citizen motives. They define flow charts of duties and virtues, rights and obligations whose infractions carry severe costs and sanctions. Nonconformists are regarded with suspicion and charged with irrationality; they have difficulty eliciting co-operation and suffer pressure that is intended to produce guilt, or at the very least, shame. Social institutions provide the models for public deliberation and accountability, setting norms for the tenor of broader social interactions, finely attuned for status and power, formality or intimacy, empathic tact or aggressive confrontation. They form the patterns and the habits exercised in resolving ordinary conflicts, and they define the terms of utility and fairness.

Our struggles against emotional *akrasia*, our attempts at integration, reflect conflicts among the larger social and economic institutions that structure our motives. *Akrasia* of envy and greed could express the tension between a person's ideals of social service and the attractions of an expensive, lively style of life, but could just as well express tensions between cosmopolitan urbanity and a suburban country-club enclave or between personal and impersonal social service. The canny emotional *akrates* puts herself in situations where her emotions and the actions they prompt will be socially supported. The increasingly overt and sharp conflicts among the objective social interests, and the presumptive separation of public and private domains, block the possibility of integration. This disarray is no accident; it is deeply embedded in our economic arrangements and in our cultural self-presentation and self-understanding. For us, the most powerful and effective moral influence on the possibility of integration is the economy ("It's the economy, stupid"). Our psychology, our emotions, and our habits are profoundly influenced by the way that economics drives civic politics. Both, taken together, pervade absolutely every nook and cranny of our lives. We must fashion ourselves, form our abilities and habits in such a way as to make ourselves employable; worse, we experience and enact the economy's need to generate the inexhaustible and unsatisfiable desires that define and direct our activities.

Our role – our place – in the economy shapes our lives, determining our security and pleasures as well as the kind of recognition we receive. Domestic economy is fixed in a closed pattern that sets the generations at odds: what we give to our children is no longer available for our parents; what we give to our parents diminishes what we have for ourselves.

To the extent that any part of the population is hopelessly and structurally excluded from an economically driven civic life, they have no objective reason to follow its principles and ideals, realistically having no stake in the life they serve and express. Whatever a society may say and promote in the way of the emotional habits of social cohesion and co-operation, however it may assert the interdependence of citizen welfare, it perforce also confronts the harsh realities of the economic formation of emotional and motivational structures. To be sure, social and economic institutions also structure and promote the sentiments of fairness and justice – and the generosity and kindness on which they depend – when they are exercised at some cost to individual interests. The persona that strives to integrate the diverse and often conflicting directions of socioeconomic habit-formation only succeeds in adding yet another voice to the cacophony that is the endeavouring self. Integration is admired as an intrinsic good because it frequently brings little else. The call to integrate motives and habits is all the more fervent because it involves effort, risk, and loss.

A policy of astute compartmentalization appears to evaporate emotional *akrasia* by justifying what would otherwise present itself as dis-integration or dis-association. It does so all the more effectively and securely when socio-economic institutions separate "distinct" domains: work, family, recreation, citizenship. The habits and mentality of severe cost accounting that govern many occupations are cordoned off from those that govern affectional relations. Ironically, sometimes the very attempt to integrate habits – to import business practice cost accounting into friendships, for instance – may supply the occasion for emotional *akrasia*. It can also go the other way: a judge who finds herself importing the emotional habits and mentality of her personal life into the courtroom can violate the principles she thinks ought to govern her judicial decisions.

So far, we've concentrated on the *akrasia* of envy and greed. Let's turn to the darker and more troubling case of a veteran who suffers from post-traumatic stress syndrome. His difficulties in readjusting to civilian life, his anxiety, depression, and rage are often acted out in ways that further deepen his alienation and dis-integration, setting an ever-enlarging pattern of erratic action. These disorders often arise from the shock of combat experience, but they extend beyond them. Having been trained to violate some of his deepest civilian habits, he must set aside a good deal of that training on his return to civilian life. The humiliations of military training, the arbitrariness and tyranny of superior officers, their willingness to risk the safety of their men – contribute to PTS. As well, combat veterans' families and friends are unable

to envision their experiences – and, after a time, they do not even wish to hear about them. To make matters worse, veterans return to a changed and often straitened economy. Unlike their friends who avoided the draft, they have lost crucial years of professional training; they have difficulty finding the kind of employment – constructing the kind of life – that recruitment posters led them to expect. All this, taken together, magnifies their sense of alienation. It provides the sources of the kind of lashing *akratic* rage that they do not condone and that extends their sense of alienation to self-alienation.

The distress of combat veterans extends to equally far-reaching but less narrowly traumatic cases. An increasingly large part of the population suffers chronic and structural unemployment. They see themselves as permanently excluded from the satisfactions that continue to be ideologically and economically publicly broadcast to form standard life expectations. Like veterans, they may suffer the disintegration of deeply entrenched, socially formed attitudes, emotions, and motives. They find themselves confounded and confused by the tensions within their attitudes, and they suffer the further damaging effects of blaming themselves. Not even the most hardened cynic can magically shed the ideals and desires that fuel his cynicism. The injurious conflicts that arise from difficult readjustments of this sort are fertile ground for *akrasia*, depression, and other forms of emotional disintegration.

Whether the stockbroker or the veterans or the chronically poor succeed in resisting the lure or pressures of emotional *akrasia* is largely a matter of political and economic luck. The success of their integrative efforts depends on the extent to which their economic situation and social environment systematically supports rather than undermines those efforts. They cannot be so situated that their capacities for effort are only notionally postulated.