

Appendix A: Emotions and *Upheavals of Thought*

The analysis of anger and forgiveness in the present book can be fully grasped without studying the emotion theory I developed in *Upheavals of Thought*. Nonetheless, for a deeper understanding of the theoretical background, some readers may be interested in a brief summary of its main contentions.

In the earlier chapters of *Upheavals*, I defend a conception of emotions according to which they all involve intentional thought or perception directed at an object (as perceived or imagined by the person who has the emotion) and some type of evaluative appraisal of that object made from the agent's own personal viewpoint. This appraisal ascribes importance to the object in terms of the agent's scheme of goals and ends. Thus, we do not grieve for every death in the world, but only for deaths of people who appear to us to be important in our lives; we fear not all possible bad events, but only those that seem to pose some serious threat to our projects; and so on. These appraisals need not involve full-fledged beliefs, although they often do; indeed, they need not involve language or even complexity. Most animals make at least some appraisals of objects, from the point of view of their sense of their well-being, and have emotions in consequence. All that is required is that they see the object (a bit of food, say) as good from the point of view of the creature's own pursuits and goals. Similarly, very young human infants, not yet capable of language, are still capable of many emotions, because they have an inchoate sense

of their own good and ill, and of the way in which objects and events contribute to that good or ill.

Some emotions are "situational," fixed on a particular set of circumstances; others are "background," meaning that they are ongoing in the fabric of life (for example a fear of death that most people carry around with them), but can also become more concrete focused on a particular event (a particular threat to the person's life). Background emotions are sometimes consciously experienced, but not always. The fear of death often motivates behavior without being an object of conscious awareness.

In the balance of the book's first chapter, I then investigate the role of non-cognitive elements (feelings, bodily states) in emotions. I argue that, although some such elements are present in most of our emotional experience, and although, indeed, all human and animal emotions are embodied in some way, these non-cognitive elements do not have the constancy and regular association with the emotion type in question that would be required if we were to include them in the definition of an emotion of a particular type. Even with an emotion as simple as fear, which is indeed frequently associated with something like shivering or trembling, there are numerous counterexamples—including the fear of death. Most of us have that fear most of the time, in a way that has psychological reality and motivational power, but (usually) we are not consciously aware of shivering or shaking. In this case, then, there is not only no single feeling, but, sometimes, no conscious feeling at all. With other more complex emotions—for example, grief and compassion—there are usually feelings of some sort involved (again, not always), but it is not easy even to begin to identify, in a general way, the bodily feelings that would belong to those emotions. And often, even when we think we have identified such elements (grief feels like a pain in the stomach, say), we find, on closer inspection, that one may continue to have grief over time while these bodily manifestations change, often greatly. (A grieving person may sometimes feel achy, sometimes exhausted, sometimes endowed with extra energy—and yet it would be wrong to say that she is not still grieving.) Compassion does not have any close association with a particular feel. Love is accompanied by bewilderingly many different feelings—but also, at times, no marked feeling at all. (A parent's love for her child may persist without being linked to any particular feeling.)

We can still insist that emotions often feel visceral and profoundly agitating (not the non-conscious ones, however). What we should not do is to associate a given emotion type with any one particular sort of feeling state. Furthermore, we should understand correctly what the agitation is. What feels wrenching and visceral about emotions is often not

independent of their cognitive dimension. The death of a loved individual is unlike a stomach virus because it violently tears the fabric of attachment, hope, and expectation that we have built up around that person.

What is true of feelings appears to be true, as well, of physical states. Although we are learning more about the brain and its role in emotions of many kinds, and although we should certainly learn as much as we can, we do not yet have an account of any particular emotion, not even the relatively simple emotion of fear, that identifies it with changes of a particular sort in a particular area of the brain. Studying the work of Joseph Le Doux, I conclude (agreeing with him) that we have reason to think that fear has precursors or common concomitants in a particular area of the brain, but that this does not entail that, once fear is learned, there could be no case of the emotion that was not accompanied by changes in that part of the brain. Once again, the case of the fear of death is instructive.

I do not rely on this relatively controversial aspect of my theory anywhere in the present book, although it still seems to me to be correct and important. I do not think that it is even that controversial if all my qualifications are taken duly into account.

Next, investigating the emotions of nonhuman animals in chapter 2, I argue that we should not understand the cognitive content of emotions to involve, in every case, anything like the acceptance of a linguistically formulable proposition. Many emotions, both nonhuman and human, involve only an evaluatively laden sort of seeing-as, where a creature sees an object as salient for its well-being. Where humans are concerned, such simpler emotions are particularly common in prelinguistic infants, but they can persist in adulthood as well, as many infantile emotions do. Moreover, even with complex emotions that have something like a propositional structure, it would be wrong to think that this structure always takes a linguistic form or could be formulated in language without awkward translation. Thinking about emotion in music (which I study in chapter 5) informs us that language is not the only symbolic structure capable of rich emotional expressiveness, and there is no reason to think that the linguistic formulation of an emotion is always primary.

Chapter 3 then turns to the role of society and social norms in constructing an emotional repertory. The cognitive content of emotions is shaped in many ways by specific social norms and specific societal circumstances. These give instructions for the manifestation of an emotion, but they also more deeply shape the appraisals that make up an emotion, and may create specific types of emotion that are unique to a given society. General shared features of human life also exert a major influence, but even those shared circumstances (mortality, bodily illness) are differently shaped in different societies. Sometimes divergent social norms shape only people's views about the proper objects of a given emotion

(what it is appropriate to fear, or grieve for). But sometimes, in addition, they shape the emotional taxonomy itself, producing subtly different forms of anger, grief, and fear. Thus, applying that account to the present case, anger is in a way a cultural universal, since in all societies people react to wrongful damages and wish for payback; but specific forms of anger are strongly shaped by social norms regarding what an insult is, what honor is, what manliness is, and so forth.

I then study (in chapter 4) the developmental character of human emotions. Our earliest emotional experiences precede the acquisition of language and even the secure individuation of objects. Moreover, causal thinking of the type involved in anger, though earlier than many have thought, still takes time to develop. Such facts color not only the emotional life of infancy but also a person's later history. Archaic patterns often persist into adult life, underneath the often sophisticated structure of adult love and grief. (This part of *Upheavals* parallels the account of human development in chapter 7 of my *Political Emotions*, which, however, goes beyond it in many respects, discussing the role of love in overcoming infantile anxiety and guilt.)

An issue of particular delicacy is the difficulty of distinguishing between "background emotions" that persist through situations of many types, and moods. Moods (as I understand them) are objectless states, lacking the intentionality of full-fledged emotions. An objectless sadness, a global fearfulness, a chronic irritability, an endogenous state of depression, all are moods. However, given the imperfection of our self-knowledge, it is very difficult to distinguish these from emotions whose object is either highly general or unknown to the person. Take depression. Some depressions may have purely chemical causes, and no object. But sometimes people are depressed about their lives and prospects in a very general way. Their depression has an object, albeit a highly general one. Or they may be depressed about some crisis or loss in early life and are not fully aware of this. In such cases therapeutic work is frequently needed to uncover the roots of the depression, determining whether it has an object, and, if so, what. The same thing is true with fear.

What about anger? People who are chronically irritable often are really angry at something or someone, but just can't uncover the roots of their emotional state. Or their anger may have a highly general object: a universe that they perceive as unfair to them, or just a set of life-prospects in which they are never treated with the respect that is their due. As we've had reason to see, such irritability may be connected to a sense of helplessness: people can feel extremely vulnerable and in consequence feel that the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" are wrongly directed at them. Is there any irritability that is purely endogenous and lacking intentionality? Certain physical states

(for example, premenstrual tension, in at least some women's experience) often do appear to predispose a person to annoyance or anger; but perhaps they do so through creating a feeling of powerlessness or weakness or unattractiveness that then predisposes the person to think the world, or the people in her life, are against her in some way, rather than through direct endogenous causation. The entire question is difficult, and badly understood.

The existence of such difficult borderline cases, however, does not call an intentionalist account of emotions into question. Any category-demarcation is likely to yield unclear cases, since the world is not preordered for the convenience of philosophers.