Which emotional behaviors are actions?

Jean Moritz Müller and Hong Yu Wong

1. Introduction

There is a wide range of things we do out of emotion. For example, we smile with pleasure, our voices drop when we are sad, we recoil in shock or jump for joy, we apologize to others out of remorse. It is uncontroversial that some of these behaviors are actions. Clearly, apologizing is an action if anything is. Things seem less clear in the case of other emotional behaviors. Intuitively, the drop in a sad person's voice is something that happens to her, rather than something she actively performs. Perhaps more interestingly, even jumping for joy can seem a problematic case: although its execution involves the active performance of certain movements, it has been argued to contrast, e.g., with an act of apology, in that it is not performed in order to achieve some end, such as repairing a relationship. This can make this behavior seem considerably different from paradigm actions.

Our central concern in this paper is with which emotional behaviors should be classed as actions and why. To impose some initial order on the phenomena under consideration, we will distinguish the following categories:

- Basic bodily expressions: facial expressions (e.g. smiling, frowning), vocal expressions (e.g. changes in pitch), trembling
- Reflex-like emotional reactions: e.g. recoiling in shock, disgustedly spitting out an insect that entered one's mouth
- Complex expressive behavior: e.g. ruffling someone's hair in affection, jumping up and down out of joy, hiding one's face in shame, gouging out the eyes in a picture of someone out of hatred
- Actions out of emotions: e.g. running away in fear, apologizing out of remorse

As our fourth category indicates, there are some emotional behaviors whose status as actions we take as given. The foregoing categories require more thorough examination. In order to determine how extensive one should construe the domain of emotional action and on which grounds, we will consider what makes a behavior an action. We will then offer a relatively quick verdict on the first two categories and focus our discussion on the case of complex expressive behaviors. We will approach our topic primarily through the lens of conceptual issues and will set aside the science of emotional action.[1]

2. What Makes Something an Action?

When we look for criteria that are invoked by action theorists to specify which behaviors count as action, we usually come across the following:

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[1] One issue of current interest both to affective scientists and empirically informed philosophers is how precisely emotions generate behavior. While we will refer to some literature that addresses this issue (e.g. Arnold 1960; Frijda 1986, 2007; Reisenzein 1996; Scarantino 2014; Scarantino & Nielsen 2015), this topic itself will not be our focus here.

- Voluntariness: behaviors which the agent can directly control on the basis of her desires, intentions or, more broadly, her conative states
- Instrumentality: behaviors that are performed as a means to some end
- Consciousness: behaviors that are accompanied by the agent's awareness of what she is doing
- Rationality: behaviors that are reason-responsive, i.e. performed *in light of* something which appears to count *in favor of* performing them.

We take it to be part of the received view of action that for a behavior to count as action it must satisfy these criteria: actions are voluntary, instrumental, conscious and rational. Behaviors that display these four features thereby constitute actions.[2]

To illustrate these criteria, consider how they are satisfied by actions out of emotion. In running away in fear we have voluntary control over our bodily movements: if we choose to, we can stop them or even prevent ourselves from performing them in the first place. This partly accounts for our behavior as something we actively do and intuitively underwrites its status as an action. Our movements are also instrumental in that they are aimed at escaping a cognized danger. This purposive aspect is widely seen as capturing a further intuition we have about actions: part of what makes our movements an action is that we thereby *pursue* some end. In this respect, what we do contrasts with behaviors that are performed simply by accident. A related contrast with mere happenings is indicated by the fact that, in running away, we are aware of what we are doing. This awareness speaks to the idea that we monitor our behavior. Finally, our behavior is rational insofar as we run away in light of something that appears to speak in favor of escape. That is, we run in light of a cognized danger or, more proximately, in light of the cognized suitability of our movements to escaping a present danger. Ceteris paribus, the suitability of some behavior to escaping a present threat speaks in favor of performing it. Thus, if we perform this behavior in light of what we take to be its suitability to this end, we perform it in light of something that appears to favor performing it. According to philosophical orthodoxy, explanations of this kind articulate a further aspect of our ordinary conception of action: in contrast to mere behavior, an action is rational in this reason-responsive sense. More specifically, actions are behaviors that admit of some description (e.g. "running away", "attempting to escape") under which they are performed for apparent normative reasons. This is not true of all descriptions under which they may fall: even if in running we also scare away an ignorant bystander, our behavior is not rational under this description.

The most prominent version of the received view of action is the Humean view (Davidson 1963; Dickinson & Balleine 1993; Reisenzein 1996, Smith 1994). On this view, actions are caused by a desire and a corresponding instrumental belief. In the case of our example, the action is caused by the desire to escape a present threat and the belief that running away constitutes an effective means of escape. That it is caused by this belief-desire-pair is supposed to make it intelligible as performed both in pursuit of an end (specified by the desire) and in light of something that appears to speak in its favor (specified by the belief). In this context, the belief and the desire are said to *rationalize* the action. Moreover, on the

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[2] One might want to characterize this view more properly as a view of *intentional* action. However, in this paper we will not distinguish between action and intentional action.

Humean account, actions are voluntary since the desire and the instrumental belief jointly constitute or give rise to an intention to perform the behavior, which is its proximate cause and guides its execution. Finally, insofar as Humeans suppose that in acting one is executing an intention, they are committed to actions being conscious: if in Φ-ing S executes an intention to Φ, then S is aware that S is Φ-ing (or at least trying to do Φ).[3]

In what follows, we elaborate on two aspects of this view, which are likely to invite further questions.

a) *Instrumentality*

The instrumentality criterion of action requires that actions have an end for which they constitute, from the agent's point of view, an adequate means. Sometimes the same idea is expressed by saying that there must be a *point* to the performance of an action. However, as we will see in section 3.3, it looks as though actions can have a point but no end. To accommodate for this view, our use of "point" in connection with behavior is supposed to be neutral with respect to the ascription of an end.

One might also wonder why we distinguish between an instrumentality criterion and a rationality criterion. Does the fact that a behavior is instrumental not entail that it is performed in light of its cognized import as a means to achieving a certain end, and thus in light of something that appears to count in favor of performing it? Is it possible for behavior to be reason-responsive without being instrumental?

On the face of it, instrumental behavior need not be rational. Consider behaviors that aim at some end, but where it is not the subject herself which is properly seen as pursuing that end. For example, reflex-like behavior like recoiling in the face of a sudden noise is directed at an end inasmuch as it has an evolutionary adaptive purpose. But here it is not the agent herself which pursues this purpose. Note that in this case the rationality criterion seems to be violated: this behavior is not performed for reasons, but simply triggered by the circumstances. Still, in being goal-directed it seems to be instrumental. However, it is important to stress that, on the received view of action, the instrumentality criterion concerns ends that are pursued by the agent herself. It is this reading that we will adopt. Given this interpretation, we take it that whenever an agent performs a behavior for the sake of some end, she does so in light of its cognized import as a means to achieving that end. Moreover, on the Humean version of the received view, reasons for action always require an end at which the action is directed: actions are rational only if they are instrumental.

However, as we show in section 3.3, this Humean assumption is questionable. There are grounds to suppose that rational behaviors need not be instrumental.

As a related clarification, there is also a sense in which an action can be rational simply insofar as it is an adequate means to achieving a particular end, whose attainment is beneficial to the agent. This notion of rationality applies to a comparatively wide range of behaviors, including those that have an evolutionary adaptive purpose. In line with the received view, we will however here conceive of rationality in the reason-responsive sense.

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[3] Admittedly, not all Humeans endorse the consciousness criterion. Cf. esp. Davidson (1971, 50) for some reservations. Alvarez (2009, 294) suggests a way of spelling out the requirement so as to meet these reservations.

b) Reasons and Rationality

In the context of the rationality criterion, the term "reason" refers to the *agent's reasons for her action*, i.e. the reasons *for which* she performs that action or her *motivating reasons*. Motivating reasons are specified by the locution "in light of". For example, to say that we run away in light of the cognized suitability of this behavior to escaping a threat is to specify the instrumental import of running, or what we take to be this import, as a reason for which we run. Motivating reasons for actions bear an intimate connection to *normative reasons* for actions. Normative reasons for an action are those aspects of the situation that speak in favor of that action. In explicating the rationality criterion in terms of motivating reasons that appear to speak in favor of the behavior in question, we assume that actions are performed in light of apparent normative reasons for them. This gives content to the relevant notion of rationality: intuitively, performing a behavior in light of an apparent normative reason to perform it is rational.

Crucially, a motivating reason for an action is not simply an end pursued in performing it. The end is that *for the sake of which* we act, but not that *in light of which* we act.[4] Similarly, motivating reasons differ from those psychological attitudes which, on the Humean view, cause the action. While philosophers occasionally use "motivating reason" to refer to these attitudes (cf. Smith 1994, ch. 4) and often speak of them as capable of "rationalizing" or "rationally explaining" the action (cf. Davidson 1963; Smith 1994, ch. 4; Alvarez 2016a, 2016b, section 3.2), it makes more sense to suppose that we perform actions in light of what these psychological states represent or are directed at, rather than the psychological states themselves. Someone runs away in light of the *import* of her action (or what she takes to be this import) vis à vis her aim to escape the situation, not in light of *her belief* that it has that import and/or *her desire* to escape it.[5] In line with this conception, we will here understand the claim that certain psychological states rationalize an action as the claim that they *make available* the reasons for which it is performed. That is, in order to run away in light of the cognized instrumental import of a behavior, there must be a psychological state by means of which the act is apprehended as instrumentally important.[6]

With these clarifications on the table, it takes little effort to see that the first two categories of emotional behavior which we initially distinguished are not actions by the standards of the received view. To begin with, basic bodily expressions and reflex-like emotional reactions are involuntary: we cannot simply stop our voice from dropping when we are sad; nor do we have direct voluntary influence over our movements when recoiling in shock from a sudden noise. Also, such behaviors are not instrumental or rational. To be fair, recoiling in shock serves an evolutionarily adaptive purpose. Perhaps this is true also of certain basic bodily expressions, such as smiling or frowning, which might be seen to serve a certain communicative purpose (cf. Darwin 1872/1955; Hinde 1985a, 1985b; Scarantino 2005). But there does not

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[4] In this connection, cf. also Alvarez (2010, 92f., 98f.; 2016b, section 3.2).

[5] The same goes for the connection between emotions and actions performed out of them. We do not run away *in light of* our fear. Fear is the cause of our running, not a reason for which we run.

[6] On the role of psychological attitudes in this context, cf. also Dancy (2000, esp. chs. 5 and 6), Hornsby (2008), Alvarez (2010, esp. ch. 5, 2016a, 2016b, section 3.2.). Our picture is in the broader spirit of these accounts, though there are some differences in the details. Ultimately, we sympathize with a disjunctive picture roughly along Hornsby's lines, though we will here not be able to set out or defend this in any detail. In this context, cf. also Mulligan (2010), Müller (2017).

seem to be any end that the agent herself has in view in performing these behaviors. Nor are there any cognized aspects of her situation that intelligibly motivate them. Rather, they are simply triggered by those circumstances.

In principle, one might of course try and argue for an alternative, more liberal view of action which accommodates reflex-like behaviors and basic bodily expressions. However, while we will consider certain possible revisions of the received view in due course, in this paper we will set aside any wholesale departure from this view. Accordingly, we will not count reflex-like emotional reactions and basic bodily expressions as actions.

In what follows, we discuss a more difficult case: complex expressive behaviors. Such behaviors are voluntary. Thus, in jumping for joy we do have voluntary control over the movements we perform. Moreover, we typically seem to be conscious of performing these behaviors when we do. At the same time, some theorists have argued that they are neither instrumental nor rational. However, instead of questioning their status as actions, they oppose the received view. Their idea is not so much to discard our ordinary notion of action in favor of a conception that strikes them as theoretically more fruitful. Rather, the status of complex expressive behaviors as actions is regarded as non-negotiable on (at least partly) pre-theoretical grounds. In the remainder, we address this challenge to the received view of action and assess a number of possible responses.

3. The Hard Case: Complex Expressive Behavior

As forcefully argued by Hursthouse (1991), complex expressive behaviors are genuine actions, even though they violate the instrumentality and rationality criteria. Whilst recognizing them as voluntary and conscious, Hursthouse writes that, in many cases of complex expressive behavior, "the agent did not do it for a reason in the sense that there is a true description of the action of the form 'X did it (in order) to ...' or 'X was trying to ...' which will "reveal the favorable light in which the agent saw what he did [...]" (1991, 58f.)[7] As we read her, Hursthouse suggests that such behaviors are often not performed in pursuit of an end, which would make them intelligible as rational by indicating something which appears to speak in favor of performing them and to which the agent is responsive.

Hursthouse elaborates this diagnosis on the basis of the Humean view. In the case of complex expressive behaviors we cannot attribute to the agent both a suitable desire and a corresponding means-ends belief. Hence, they are not instrumental. Assuming with the Humean view that this is required in order for them to be rational, she thus classes them as *arational*. As Hursthouse adds in support of her diagnosis, it would be wrong to suppose that such behaviors are always caused by a desire to express the respective emotion as well as the belief that the behavior in question is a means of expressing it or, alternatively, by a desire for pleasure and a corresponding belief that its expression will bring one pleasure. This is in part because it often seems false to ascribe such desires to the agent. We can jump out of joy without desiring to express our emotion or receive pleasure from doing so. Accordingly, such behavior is not performed *in light of* its cognized suitability to attaining either of these ends. Thus, if we assume that ascriptions of these belief-desire pairs constitute the only way in which one might try to make this behavior intelligible as instrumental and, moreover, endorse the Humean view of the

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[7] The inserted quote is from McDowell (1982, 301).

connection between instrumentality and rationality, it seems to present a counter-example to the received view of action.

While Hursthouse's challenge is developed in Humean terms, one might also try and motivate her basic charge against the received view independently. As Alvarez (2009) suggests, it seems entirely natural to suppose that complex expressive behaviors are often not performed in pursuit of any end or for any reason, even though they are bona fide actions. Alvarez does not argue specifically that it would be implausible to attribute to the agent belief-desire pairs along the lines posited by Humeans. She seems to assume that this diagnosis is in line with a pre-theoretical intuition that is not committed to the Humean account of action.

In what is now a lively debate, various authors have responded that considerations which purportedly show that complex expressive behaviors do not meet the instrumentality and rationality criteria fail to take account of all the options available of explaining them. In what follows, we discuss several major responses available in defense of the instrumentality and/or rationality of these behaviors.[8]

3.1 The Humean Response: Smith and Goldie

Proponents of the Humean view have responded to Hursthouse that this model covers complex expressive behaviors after all. As Smith (1998) argues, these behaviors are limiting cases of instrumental actions in which means and end coincide. On his proposal, a behavior such as jumping out of joy is caused by a desire to jump and an instrumental belief that one can do so just by doing so. Smith moreover claims that the respective desire originates in the emotion. Goldie (2000) augments Smith's basic account by arguing that in certain cases, such as hatefully gouging out another's eyes in a photograph, the agent has a wish, having which involves the symbolic satisfaction of a further desire that originates in the emotion. Goldie's leading consideration is that in such cases the desires posited by Smith are not "primitively intelligible" in that they are not explicable simply by reference to the emotion expressed. Thus, it is not primitively intelligible, according to Goldie, that someone in hatred should have a desire to scratch out another's eyes in a photograph. What is primitively intelligible is rather that she have a desire to scratch out the other's eyes. Respecting fundamental moral constraints, she merely imaginatively satisfies this desire and thus counts as having a corresponding wish. It is worth stressing that this supplementary explanation is not supposed to directly account for the rationality or instrumentality of these behaviors, but rather to make plausible that the agent has the desires which, on Smith's view, are necessary to recognize them as rational.[9]

Although still widely accepted as a plausible account of action out of emotion, there is a growing consensus that the Humean model cannot adequately account for complex expressive behaviors. We will here not address all the various problems that have been noted for this response.[10] One of the most notable concerns is that this response does not apply to all the relevant phenomena. For example, it seems that more impulsive varieties of complex

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[8] We will consider three central lines of response. Additional responses, which we will not be able to discuss, include Raz (1999) and Betzler (2009).

[9] That said, Goldie's explanation does suggest a further respect in which some complex expressive behaviors are instrumental and rational, which relates to the end of symbolically satisfying a certain desire. Cf. section 3.2.

[10] Cf. e.g. Döring (2003), Kovach & DeLancey (2005), Scarantino & Nielsen (2015), Bennett (2016).

expressive behavior often occur too fast as to be preceded by the formation of a belief and a desire, and by the mental act of relating the two in practical reasoning (cf. Scarantino 2014, 162). Moreover, the rational intelligibility afforded by this model is quite limited. Complex expressive behaviors are performed in light of their cognized import as a means to performing just those behaviors. However, when enquiring about someone's reason for gouging out another's eyes in a picture or jumping up and down, we are typically not content to learn that she takes it to be an effective means to achieving just that same thing.[11] Ultimately, there is a strong impression that the Humean response to Hursthouse is motivated by an antecedent commitment to Humeanism rather than a concern to be faithful to the phenomena.

3.2 A Non-Humean Alternative: Scarantino & Nielsen

Given the shortcomings of the Humean response to Hursthouse, adherents of the received view are advised to look for other ways of showing such behaviors to be instrumental and rational, which do not conceive of them as caused by desires and corresponding instrumental beliefs. Note that it would be premature to conclude that there is no point in looking for further candidates for ends and reasons for such behaviors once we take seriously considerations which tell against their being caused by belief-desire pairs. This is because there might be room to make sense of an action as instrumental and rational without supposing that it is caused by these attitudes. Such a conception would need to explain how ends and reasons for actions can be made available via different psychological states.

An alternative conception along these lines is defended for actions out of emotion by Helm (2001) and Döring (2003) who appeal to the intentional content of emotions. Emotions are conceived as having evaluative content insofar as they represent the emotion's object as having a particular evaluative property. For example, fear represents its object as dangerous. Moreover, the evaluative content of emotions is apt to furnish an end for action. In the case of fear, this end is to avoid danger. The emotion also provides a reason for action in virtue of its content and thus rationalizes the behavior. When acting out of an emotion, one acts in light of what it represents. This motivating reason – an apparent instance of a specific evaluative property – is also an apparent normative reason. In representing something as dangerous, fear represents it as speaking in favor of escape. Accordingly, in running away in light of the way one's fear represents the situation, one acts for an apparent normative reason to escape. Since in running away we attempt to escape, this seems rational.

Scarantino (2014) offers another account of actions out of emotion which takes them to be instrumental without invoking beliefs and desires. It identifies emotions with action control systems, whose activation causes tendencies to engage in a certain kind of behavior.[12] These tendencies are individuated in terms of the end which the behavior is supposed to achieve (the emotion's "relational goal"). On this view, an episode of fear consists in the activation of a specific action control system and causes a tendency to avoid purported danger; the fear system has the relational goal of achieving safety. Similarly, episodes of joy give rise to a tendency to engage in an open range of behaviors, its relational goal is "undifferentiated interaction with the world". Such tendencies are conceived as having "control precedence" in

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[11] For a similar complaint, cf. Bennett (2016, 77).

[12] On the connection between emotions and action tendencies cf. also Arnold (1960), Frijda (1986, 2007), Reisenzein (1996), Deonna & Teroni (2012).

that they have priority both in action control and information processing (Frijda 1986 and 2007). As Scarantino elaborates his view, emotional actions result from the interaction between the action tendency with control precedence and the executive control system. Crucially, on this view, it is the action tendencies caused by emotions rather than desires, which make ends for actions out of them psychologically available. Moreover, although Scarantino does not argue this, his picture seems to allow for reasons for the respective action to be available in the absence of instrumental beliefs. This is because on Scarantino's view, too, emotions themselves represent evaluative properties.[13]

We should emphasize that the considerations by Helm, Döring and Scarantino presented so far only serve to illustrate that there may be ways of explaining how reasons and ends for an action are psychologically available in the absence of belief-desire-pairs. The central task for a non-Humean defence of the received view of action is, of course, to show that there actually are further, plausible candidates for ends and reasons for complex expressive behaviors. Moreover, if Smith's conception of them as limiting cases of instrumental action is unconvincing, it seems that the ends ascribed to them will need to be distinct from the means which serve to achieve them.

Now, some commentators on Hursthouse take the very idea that a behavior expresses an emotion to rule out that it is aimed at a distinct or further end (cf. esp. Goldie 2000, 125f.).[14] As they seem to suppose, we must acknowledge a crucial sense (rightly recognized by Hursthouse) in which they are performed simply for their own sake. This position is opposed by recent anti-Humeans who argue that there are plausible candidates for such ends. While we do not share the intuition that complex expressive behaviors do not admit of a further end, we will argue that it is indeed difficult to specify distinct ends for all of them. What is more, there is also a worry regarding the extent to which non-Humean views of action out of emotion along the lines we have presented can help develop a non-Humean account of what makes ends and reasons for complex expressive behaviors available.

One sophisticated recent attempt at specifying distinct ends for complex expressive behaviors is offered by Scarantino & Nielsen (2015), who expand on Scarantino's (2014) account of action out of emotion.[15] Scarantino & Nielsen recognize a wider domain of emotional action which they divide into two categories: instrumental and displaced emotional actions.[16] Within instrumental emotional actions, they further distinguish between directly instrumental and communicatively instrumental emotional actions. Classic examples of action out of emotion, like running away in fear, fall into the directly instrumental category. Here the action tendency of avoidance and escape is a direct means to satisfying the relational goal of fear. Scarantino & Nielsen argue that some cases of complex expressive behavior also fall into this category. For example, ruffling someone's hair in affection is directly instrumental as the action is a direct means to the relational goal of love, which, following Frijda (1986), they understand as seeking proximity with the beloved. The same goes for certain complex expressions of shame, such as covering one's face, which is instrumental to hiding a self appraised as flawed (cf. Lewis 2008).

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[13] Unlike Helm and Döring, Scarantino thinks of representation in teleosemantic terms.

[14] In this connection, cf. also Helm (2001, 2016) and Döring (2003).

[15] Scarantino & Nielsen do not defend the received view of action. However, their considerations indicate an interesting possible defense of this view.

[16] On the notion of displacement in this context cf. also Kovach & DeLancey (2005).

The second category of communicatively instrumental emotional actions are cases where a communicative act is a means to accomplish the respective relational goal. For example, jumping out of joy communicates one's openness to interaction and hence provides an indirect means to the relational goal of joy.

Displaced emotional actions are not a means to attaining the relational goal of the emotion but aimed at a different end. The concept of displacement was originally introduced to characterise animal behavior that is not instrumentally appropriate for its situational context (Tinbergen 1951). Scarantino & Nielsen distinguish between symbolic and non-symbolic categories of displaced emotional action. Developing Goldie's (2000) considerations, the act of gouging out another's eyes in a picture out of hatred is understood as a symbolically displaced emotional action, because the picture symbolizes the object of one's hatred. This behavior is instrumental to symbolically satisfying the relational end of hatred (hurting its object). In contrast, angrily kicking a door is neither instrumental nor symbolically related to the object of the emotion, but a displaced manifestation of the action tendency associated with anger. This behavior is performed in order to vent the emotion (cf. also Goldie 2000, 134).[17]

Scarantino & Nielsen's comprehensive account indicates an interesting defence of the received view insofar as it purports to show that complex expressive behaviors are instrumental by serving a certain (broadly) strategic purpose, whose realization is beneficial to the agent.[18] Moreover, if we follow Scarantino, Helm and Döring in assuming that emotions represent evaluative properties, this picture seems also to make sense of them as rational.[19] If affection represents another as dear or valuable, and if we moreover assume that someone's being valuable speaks in favor of seeking proximity with her, then affectionately ruffling another's hair in light of how the emotion represents this person will qualify as a response to an apparent normative reason to seek proximity with her. Inasmuch as this behavior is an attempt at achieving proximity, it thus seems rational.

In our view, this proposal makes an important contribution to a defense of the received of action. Thus, we take Scarantino & Nielsen's attribution of ends to complex expressive behaviors to be plausible in a variety of cases. It seems quite intuitive that in covering one's face in shame, one seeks to hide oneself. The same goes for those behaviors which they group as displaced emotional actions. There is something compelling to the thought that one hatefully gouges out someone's eyes in a picture for the sake of symbolically satisfying the desire to destroy that person's real eyes. Likewise, we plausibly often angrily kick objects in order to vent our emotion, where this involves displacing the target of our inclination to lash out. Moreover, it also seems right to suppose that in conceiving of these behaviors as responsive to specific, emotionally represented evaluative properties, the view conceives of them as responsive to

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[17] If venting is a form of expression, this may seem to contradict Hursthouse's case against the idea that complex expressive behaviors aim at expressing the emotion. However, Hursthouse's considerations mainly pertain to the claim that they are caused by the desire to express it and a corresponding instrumental belief. Scarantino & Nielsen do not invoke desires and beliefs. Moreover, Hursthouse does not deny that complex expressive behaviors ever have this aim.

[18] Of course, the end of symbolically displaced emotional actions is strategic only in a qualified sense since a benefit for the agent is achieved only symbolically.

[19] We should stress that Scarantino & Nielsen themselves do not discuss issues of reason-responsiveness.

apparent normative reasons and thus as rational. That said, we doubt that it offers an adequate account of the category as a whole.

One concern is that, in some cases, complex expressive behaviors need not have the end assigned to them by Scarantino & Nielsen. For example, we frequently ruffle another's hair in affection when maximal physical and psychological proximity have already been attained (e.g. whilst in close embrace with the beloved). Here, the behavior often takes a playful form, which lacks the strategic dimension they accord to it.[20] A further concern is with cases in which it Scarantino & Nielsen's ascription of an end seems generally accurate, but where this end cannot be attributed to the agent herself. Communicating one's joy by jumping up and down may be adaptive in the evolutionary sense, but it is not an end normally pursued by agents engaged in this behavior. One might here be tempted to suppose with Goldie (2000, 126) that jumping up and down in order to let others know what one is feeling even compromises its very status as expressive of the emotion. Now, we do not think that one should go as far. Indeed, this position seems false if we consider, for example, the sometimes stylized ways in which athletes express their joy. Such behavior is performed with an audience in mind, but no less genuine a case of emotional expression because of this. At the same time, it seems that this aim is simply not mandatory. Usually, this behavior is characteristically spontaneous and does not serve any communicative purpose.

Note, moreover that, as it stands, the proposal also falls short as a fully satisfactory defense of the rationality of complex expressive behaviors. As suggested in section 2, instrumental actions have as their proximate motivating reason their cognized instrumental import. Thus, if we hatefully gouging out another's eyes in order to symbolically satisfy the desire to scratch out her real eyes, we can think of this behavior as rational in that it is performed in light of its cognized suitability to this end. But this is not covered by the present approach, which construes their rationality exclusively in terms of responsiveness to a certain non-instrumental import constituted by specific, emotionally represented evaluative properties. (The same point applies to non-Humean accounts of action out of emotion which explain their rationality exclusively by reference to such properties.[21]) Note that this gap can be filled, though, by explaining how instrumental import, too, can be psychologically available as a reason for behavior in the absence of instrumental beliefs. For example, according to some psychological appraisal theories, emotions are associated with appraisals which determine the conduciveness of objects and events to the subject's goals and needs (cf. e.g. Scherer 2001; Ellsworth & Scherer 2003). Moreover, according to Leventhal & Scherer (1987), in some cases the conduciveness of events to the subject's goals is assessed automatically and without explicit reasoning (cf. also Scherer 2001). These considerations might help to show how the instrumental import of a behavior can be available as a motivating reason even when agents do not form a corresponding belief. Here, one might understand the associated appraisal as conferring additional evaluative content to the emotion or suppose that it is a distinct state.

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[20] This might suggest that affection lacks a relational goal along the lines specified by Frijda and Scarantino. However, it is important here to check if there are sufficiently many other behaviors caused by affection which aim at achieving proximity.

[21] Indeed, the very idea that emotions represent evaluative properties can seem problematic. Cf. Deonna & Teroni (2012), Müller (2017). Moreover, one might independently doubt that emotions provide mental access to evaluative properties. Cf. Mulligan (2010), Müller (2017). Taking up these issues would here lead us too far afield, though.

In sum, then, we think of the present view as offering important material for a partial, though not full, vindication of the received view of action. If supplemented by an explanation of how instrumental import can be cognized non-doxastically, it offers a plausible way of making those complex expressive behaviors intelligible as instrumental and rational, which can plausibly be attributed a strategic end.[22]

3.3 Further Non-Humean Alternatives: Bennett and Helm

A further set of non-Humean responses attempts a (partial) vindication of the received view whilst taking seriously the idea that complex expressive behaviors are in some important sense performed for their own sake (Helm 2001, 2016; Bennett 2016). Their authors likewise reject the idea that they are caused by belief-desire pairs.[23] But they also reject the view that they aim at some strategic end. At the same time, unlike Smith, they do not assume that, in these cases, means and end coincide.

On Bennett's (2016) account, we perform complex expressive behaviors simply in order to do justice to or acknowledge the cognized significance of our situation. More specifically, their purpose is to give external symbolic form to the evaluative content of one's emotion. This purpose is different from the goal of attaining a benefit for the agent. Unlike achieving safety, communicating one's emotion or venting it, the aim of doing justice to significance is not strategic, but rather supposed to capture a sense in which such behaviors are performed for their own sake.[24] On Bennett's account, complex expressive behaviors are rational since the agent performs them in light of apparent normative reasons to do justice to the situation's cognized significance. One such reason might be seen to be the emotionally represented evaluative property: one does justice to the goodness which one's joy represents a certain event as having by performing a certain complex expression (e.g. jumping) in light of this goodness. Here, the event's being good speaks in favor of its adequate acknowledgment as good (e.g. by jumping). However, the more proximate reason for such behaviors on this approach should be conceived as their cognized instrumental import vis à vis that end. Although Bennett himself does not say so, one might suppose that both motivating reasons are available in virtue of how the situation is non-doxastically appraised or represented in having that emotion. Moreover, in accordance with Helm (2001) and Döring (2003), one might take it that the involved evaluation makes available also the end of doing justice to our situation or alternatively suppose, adapting considerations in Frijda (1986) and Scarantino (2014), that this end is furnished by an emotionally triggered action tendency to do justice to it.

It is important to stress that, in contrast to Goldie and Scrantino & Nielsen, Bennett attributes to complex expressive behaviors in general a symbolic dimension. Thus, on this view, jumping out of joy is also symbolic in that this behavior displays an upward direction, which reflects power, readiness and activity, and contrasts with the direction characteristic e.g. of the slumping behavior we display in sadness, which reflects resignation, passivity and inactivity.

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[22] Scarantino & Nielsen (2015) also account for the distinctive emotional character of complex expressive behavior. Reasons of space forbid that we take up this issue.

[23] Bennett (2016) takes the relevant end to be supplied by a desire. But this does not seem essential to his core proposal. Cf. also our remarks on his view below.

[24] Arguably, actions out of emotion also in some sense do justice to the situation qua significant. But here the aim is not simply to do justice, but typically a strategic one.

This upward (downward) direction is thought to symbolically express the good (in the case of sadness: loss) represented by the emotion. Moreover, in contrast to Scarantino & Nielsen's view of symbolically displaced action, the end Bennett assigns to complex expressive behaviors is not to symbolically attain a benefit for the agent, but simply to give form to the way the situation matters.

As with the previous proposal, we believe that Bennett is right about a subset of complex expressive behavior. It seems correct, for example, that fairly sophisticated expressive behaviors such as carrying the coffin of a dead loved one at their funeral are normally performed in order to give symbolic expression to a loss. (On this example, cf. Bennett 2016, 80ff.) Moreover, we agree that many other complex expressions, including behaviors plausibly classed as instrumental by Scarantino & Nielsen, symbolically reflect the cognized significance of their subject's situation.

Still, Bennett's considerations, too, misrepresent the category as a whole. Thus, in line with Scarantino & Nielsen we would maintain that some complex expressive behaviors serve a strategic purpose. For example, we find it hard to adequately account for the hateful disfigurement of a rival's photo without supposing that it aims at the symbolic satisfaction of the end of disfiguring the rival herself. There is something genuinely satisfactory to the performance of this behavior for the agent, which seems to us best explained by supposing that it is aimed at symbolically fulfilling an aggressive desire that is targeted at the rival herself. Here, the end is not simply to give symbolic form to the emotion, but to symbolically attain a certain benefit for the agent.[25] Similarly, in contrast to Bennett, it does seem to us to be more in line with ordinary psychological explanation to suppose that we often angrily kick objects to vent the emotion, rather than simply to give symbolic form to how the situation matters (that is, in this case, to its apparent offensiveness). Indeed, it is not clear to us that this behavior has a recognizable symbolic aspect in the first place. We also doubt that Bennett successfully establishes the instrumentality of those behaviors for which Scarantino & Nielsen fail to specify plausible ends. While it seems right that, for example, in jumping out of joy, we typically give external form to a cognized good, it does not seem that we jump *in order to* do so. The more natural thing to say about these cases, it seems, is that jumping out of joy *is* giving external form to a cognized good, rather than a means to doing so. Similarly, one would think that affectionately ruffling another's hair *is* doing justice to her cognized value, rather a means to this end. While, on this reading, Bennett's central notion fails to specify ends for all complex expressive behaviors, it is worth stressing that it still indicates a possible defense of the rationality even of those cases which are best conceived as ways rather than means of doing justice. Thus, there is room to argue that complex emotional expressions can have a point which makes them intelligible as reason-responsive, even if we cannot make sense of them as instrumental.

This option is explicitly adopted by Helm (2001, 2016). As Helm suggests, jumping out of joy has a point, which is celebration. However, jumping out of joy is not a means to celebration. We do not jump in order to celebrate; rather our jumping *is* celebration. Similarly, on Helm's view, affectionately rumpling another's hair has the point of being solicitous; yet it is not a

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[25] Bennett (2016, 91) argues that one can do without this desire. More would have to be said here, though we ultimately take the aspect of satisfaction that accompanies it to strongly speak in favor of Scarantino & Nielsen's instrumental interpretation. Bennett is generally skeptical against assigning a strategic purpose to any complex expressive behaviors. This global skepticism seems unwarranted to us.

means to being solicitous, but rather *is* solicitude. Instead of attempting a full vindication of the received view of action, Helm rejects the instrumentality criterion. As he maintains, actions must have a point which makes available a description under which they are performed for apparent normative reasons. This point may, but need not, be an end.[26] For example, if jumping out of joy has the point of celebration, we can recognize it as performed for an apparent normative reason favoring celebration.[27] Helm supposes that the relevant normative reason is the emotionally represented evaluative property (an event's goodness). If jumping out of joy is a way of celebrating, doing so in light of an apparent normative reason to celebrate is rational. On his picture, both the reason and the point of the behavior are provided by the evaluative content of the emotion.

On the face of it, the points attributed by Helm to individual complex expressive behaviors seem to differ from the point Bennett assigns to the entire category. However, one might argue that, for example, one celebrates a cognized good in jumping up and down precisely insofar as one gives adequate symbolic form to it and that one is solicitous simply insofar as one gives adequate symbolic form to one's affection. It is thus not obvious that the two conceptions of the point of these behaviors are rivals as long as we think of Bennett's account of their point, like Helm's, in non-instrumental terms. Assuming the distinction between points and ends is cogent, these accounts seem to us to offer a promising way of vindicating the rationality criterion with respect to those complex expressive behaviors which seem not to be instrumental on the lines proposed by the Humeans and anti-Humeans we have considered. To be fair, we may here not have exhaustively considered the space of possible attempts at making sense of them as instrumental. At the same time, it seems to us that the failed attempts at doing so by Smith, Scarantino & Nielsen and Bennett provide some warrant to doubt that further plausible candidates for ends are easy to come by. This verdict seems warranted to us also since we take the attribution to them of a point distinct from an end to resonate with the impression that, normally, their performance is characteristically spontaneous.

Of course, to recognize these complex expressive behaviors as non-instrumental is to concede to opponents of the received view of action that some instances of this category do not accord with this view. However, it is not clear that anything is lost by rejecting the instrumentality criterion in favor of the constraint that actions have a point which makes them intelligible as performed for apparent normative reasons. Though clearly a departure from the received view, this departure is still faithful to its underlying pre-theoretical motivations. This proposal by Helm invokes a pre-theoretical understanding of action that comprises rational behaviors both of the instrumental and non-instrumental type. From the point of view of this understanding, there is no rationale to the exclusion of certain complex expressive behaviors from the category of actions simply for lacking an instrumental structure. After all, it does not seem that the intuitive contrast with a mere happening which we initially noted to be central to our ordinary concept of an action is any less conspicuous in the case of complex expressive behaviors which are attributed a

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[26] Admittedly, our exposition of Helm's core account is slightly procrustean. We also set aside Helm's (2016) development of his basic picture into a more detailed account of emotional expression that centers around the reactive attitudes.

[27] Where the point is an end, the relevant description characterizes the behavior as a means to achieving that end and makes it intelligible as performed in light of its cognized instrumental import. We return to the connection between points and rationality at the end of this section.

point, but not an end. While this contrast is captured (in part) by thinking of actions as performed in pursuit of an end, it is also accommodated by the more general idea that actions have a point. That is, inasmuch as the performance of certain movements has a point for the agent, it seems not to be a matter of mere accident. In light of this, thinking of both instrumental and non-instrumental complex expressive behaviors as actions seems pre-theoretically sound.

Since, on the relevant reading of this criterion, the point of an action makes available a description under which it is rational, it implies the rationality criterion. Moreover, the rationality criterion in turn implies that behaviors that satisfy it have a point which accounts for their rationality. As noted in section 2, actions are rational under some description. If we know that S's behavior is rational under the description Φ (e.g. "celebration"), we know that S's motivating reasons are apparent normative reasons that favor Φ-ing (celebrating). These reasons may be instrumental or non-instrumental. In either case, recognition of the behavior as performed for apparent normative reasons implies that it has a point. In the first case, the reason is the cognized suitability of Φ-ing for the attainment of an end, which coincides with the point of the behavior; in the second case, it appears to favor Φ-ing for its own sake, which, again, is its point. Given the equivalence of attributions of a point and attributions of rationality, it seems that the proposed alternative to the received view can be formulated in terms of three rather than four criteria: actions are behaviors that are voluntary, conscious and have a point.

In light of our assessment of the various accounts we have discussed, we finally propose an account which conceives of complex expressive behaviors as actions whilst allowing for both instrumental and non-instrumental variations.

4. Conclusion

While basic bodily expressions and reflex-like emotional reactions do not constitute actions since they are involuntary, complex expressive behaviors suggest a different verdict. Assuming that these behaviors are voluntary and conscious, we focused on the question of their instrumentality and rationality. Our considerations suggest the following picture.

Some complex expressive behaviors aim at achieving a (real or symbolic) benefit for the agent (e.g. hiding one's face in shame, hatefully gouging out another's eyes in a picture, kicking objects in anger). Others are instrumental too, where the end in question is to give symbolic form to the situation's cognized significance in the form of a specific evaluative property (e.g. carrying the coffin of a loved one in grief as giving form to a cognized loss). Instrumental complex expressive behaviors are rational since they are performed in light of their cognized instrumental import vis à vis the respective end as well as, plausibly, in light of the specific evaluative property which the given situation is represented as instantiating (e.g. loss in the case of grief). Further instances of this category prove resilient to instrumental characterizations (e.g. jumping out of joy, affectionately ruffling another's hair), but arguably still have the point of giving external form to a cognized evaluative property and are performed in light of this property (e.g. goodness in the case of joy). These latter behaviors do not accord with the received view of action. However, there are reasons to reject the instrumentality criterion in favor of the constraint that actions have a point which makes them intelligible as rational. This allows us to recognize all complex expressive behaviors as actions.

The picture we have sketched can avoid important difficulties faced by a Humean approach if the reasons for and the point of the behavior is provided independently of belief-

desire pairs. One might think of them as made available by the emotion's evaluative content or by distinct accompanying appraisals. One might also think of the respective point as provided by an action tendency caused by the emotion. Here, the relevant action tendencies would need to include both tendencies for actions aimed at an end as well as tendencies to perform non-instrumental actions. Though these considerations are suggestions that need further fleshing out, they indicate possible avenues that non-Humeans might take in elaborating their defence of the instrumentality and/or rationality of these behaviors.

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