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# *Explaining Expressions of Emotion*

PETER GOLDIE

The question is how to explain expressions of emotion. It is argued that not all expressions of emotion are open to the same sort of explanation. **Those expressions which are actions can be explained, like other sorts of action, by reference to a belief and a desire; however, no genuine expression of emotion is done as a means to some further end.** Certain expressions of emotion which are actions can also be given a deeper explanation as being expressive of a wish. Expressions of emotion which are not actions cannot be given a belief-desire explanation: no belief is involved, and a desire is involved only in an honorific sense of “desire”. The distinction amongst expressions of emotion between those which are actions and those which are not is not a precise one, and the paper concludes with some speculative remarks about borderline cases such as jumping for joy.

## *1. Introduction*

How in principle should we go about explaining expressions of emotion? These include such diverse things as smiling and laughing in happiness, jumping for joy, baring your teeth or slamming the door in anger, kicking a chair in frustration, lovingly stroking someone’s face, and, out of grief, kissing or caressing the clothes of a loved one who has just died. **Expressions of emotions are, I think, conceptually at a fascinating place between bodily changes which are part of an emotion and reasoned actions out of an emotion.** By bodily changes I mean autonomic nervous system responses and hormonal changes such as sweating, change of heart-rate, secretion of adrenalin and so forth, and muscular reactions such as trembling, flinching, and so forth; **their exact specification, for each type of emotion, is not my concern here.** These changes just *happen* to us; they are not things which we do or can directly try to do: my palms sweat, but I do not actively sweat my palms, although we can try, directly or indirectly, to restrain or control at least some bodily changes. By reasoned actions I mean those actions which can be adequately explained or rationalized by reference to appropriate combinations of beliefs and desires. Expressions of emotion seem to be more than mere bodily changes, causally explicable, perhaps, but no more than that: they seem, at least often, to be the sort of thing we can make sense of. And yet they also seem to be

somewhat less than fully rationalizable in the way that an action can be rationalized.

What will emerge is that not all expressions of emotion are open to the same sort of explanation. This might not be surprising, given their extraordinary diversity and especially given that some expressions of emotion (like lovingly stroking a face) intuitively seem to be very close to reasoned actions, whereas others (like smiling and opening the eyes wide in surprise) seem to be close to bodily changes and not to be at all action-like. Accordingly, what I will do to explore various sorts of explanation is draw a very broad and crude distinction between expressions which are actions and those which are not, and see where this leads us.

## 2. *Expressions of emotion which are actions*

An action can, quite generally, be explained and understood as rational under a description by the attribution to the agent of a combination of some sort of pro-attitude, such as a desire, and some sort of cognitive state, such as a belief. This rationalizing explanation gives the motivating reason for the action, and thus renders the action intelligible. Such an explanation can be given for reasoned action out of the emotions (cf. Davidson 1963 and 1976). Your action of jumping over the gate in fear of the bull can be explained by your desire to get away from it (an utterly intelligible desire for someone to have who is afraid) and by your belief that you can best get away from it by jumping this gate.

I will argue that, although genuine expressions of emotion which are actions can likewise be explained by a belief and a desire, they cannot *adequately* be explained in this way. An expression of emotion is genuine in the sense I mean only if it is not done as a means to some further end. Expressive actions which are not genuine would therefore include an action which is not sincerely expressive of an emotion, and which is done in order to give the impression that the emotion is being experienced. For example, you might, for the sake of good manners, conjure up a smile on saying hello to someone you simply cannot abide. An expression of emotion would also not be genuine if it was sincere, but was done by the agent in order that others should recognize that he is experiencing that emotion. For example, you ruffle his hair to show him that you love him. And an expression of emotion would not be genuine in the sense I mean if it was done, say, for the sake of pleasure. For example, you angrily kick the desk in order to feel better.

All these sorts of action are, of course, possible, and they can be explained relatively straightforwardly by appeal to a desire and a means-

end belief, but none of them is a genuine expression of emotion. How, then, do we give belief-desire explanations of actions which are genuine expressions of emotion, given that they cannot be done as a means to some further end? Rosalind Hursthouse (1991) has argued that belief-desire explanations cannot be given. In respect of those actions which I call genuine expressions of emotion, she maintains that it would be true to say that “the agent did not do it for a reason in the sense that there is a true description of action of the form ‘*X* did it (in order) to ...’ or ‘*X* was trying to ...’ which will reveal the favourable light in which the agent saw what he did, and hence involve, or imply, the ascription of a suitable *belief* ...” (1991, pp. 58–59). She maintains, instead, that simply being in the grip of whatever emotion it is explains the action as much as anything else does (p. 59).

We need not accept the revisionary view that we have here a class of intentional action that cannot be explained by a belief and a desire, even if we want to say, as I do, that these actions are not done as a means to some further end. What we can do, as indeed Smith (1998) has done, is put forward a means-end belief-desire explanation which, in effect, identifies the end and the means. Taking one of Hursthouse’s examples, that of “Jane, who, in a wave of hatred for Joan, tears at Joan’s photo with her nails, and gouges holes in her eyes” (Hursthouse 1991, p. 59), we can truly say that Jane is doing what she is doing because she desires to gouge out the eyes in the photograph of Joan and believes that she can do this by doing just what she is doing. As Smith emphasizes, the importance of this explanation comes out in situations where the belief is *false*, such as a situation where Jane hates Joan and gouges out the eyes in a photo of Cherie Blair in the false belief that it is a photo of Joan. The explanation of why she did this will thus involve the belief that she can do what she wants to do—gouge out the eyes in the photo of Joan—by doing what she is doing, namely tearing at a photo of the person she thinks is Joan.

Although this sort of belief-desire explanation is a good one, it is, as Smith says, “distinctly unsatisfying” (p. 22), because the belief-desire pair is “relatively bizarre” (p. 22), and the explanation is unhelpful in explaining why Jane should want to do what she is doing; so the explanation requires what Smith describes as a “supplement” (p. 22) by reference to an emotion. The question, then, is whether this sort of supplement is satisfactory. What Smith does is not to introduce a further reason for the agent; his supplement is, rather, that a type of emotion—hatred in this case — “is, by definition, a state in which we are disposed to think, and to desire, and to do, all sorts of things” (p. 22), including, in this case, gouge out the eyes in a photograph of the person we are angry with. Jane is thus

acting on a desire and belief that is typical for someone to have when in this sort of emotional state.

This sort of supplement is unsatisfactory in this case. It does not really make it at all clear why someone should be disposed when hating or in anger to desire to do such a “bizarre” thing as scratch the eyes in a photo of the person they hate or are angry with.<sup>1</sup> Some desires are what we might call primitively intelligible, in the sense that they cannot be explained in virtue of anything else other than the emotion which they are a part of. Desiring to be away from the object of your fear is *primitively intelligible* in this sense, as is desiring to do some sort of harm to the person who is the object of your anger. As Hume says, if I am not angry, “the punishment of an adversary is totally indifferent to me” (Hume 1758, p. 271); and if I am angry, then his punishment will be something which concerns me. Primitive desires like these are not at all bizarre, and here Smith’s supplement would be adequate. But it is not, I suggest, primitively intelligible that someone should desire to scratch the eyes in a photo of a person with whom they are angry, even though we do, in some sense, find the action intelligible: we do such things ourselves sometimes and we find it very human when others do them. So an explanation cannot be far away. The sort of explanation I will be putting forward for this and similar instances will not work for all expressive actions, but it will work for a good number. It involves the idea that Jane has another desire—one which *is* primitively intelligible.

### 3. *Imagination and the wish*

Some of our desires are idle, in the sense that we do not believe it is possible to satisfy them; examples would be the desire to be taller, or the desire to have lived in eighteenth-century Edinburgh. These are sometimes called “wishes”. My use of the term “wish” will not be quite the same as this. In the sense in which I will use the term, when I wish for something, I desire that thing, and I also imagine, or am disposed to imagine, the desire to be satisfied (cf. Wollheim 1984). In this sense, not all idle desires need involve wishes, as I might not, for example, be disposed to imagine myself being taller; and not all wishes need involve idle desires,

<sup>1</sup> Smith’s discussion involves another example of Hursthouse’s, that of a man who, in grief, rolls around in his dead wife’s clothes (Hursthouse 1991, p. 58). His supplementing explanation, along the lines discussed, is open to the same criticisms; and, it will later emerge, the alternative explanation which I proffer applies to this example equally well.

as I might imagine doing something which I want to do, and which I could, in fact, actually do—hitting someone, for example.

Let us return to the example of Jane. Why does Jane tear at Joan's photo with her nails, and gouge holes in the eyes? The answer is that this action is expressive of a wish: Jane has a desire *to scratch out Joan's eyes*, and the imagining is that she is doing this in the expressive action. Here, then, we have a real psychological state, one which is primitively intelligible for Jane to have towards the rival whom she hates and has feelings of anger towards: unlike the desire to scratch the eyes in a photo, it is primitively intelligible to desire to scratch out the eyes of someone you hate. Consider how natural it is for Joan to say—and to mean—"I hate her so much I could scratch her eyes out!"; and, revealingly, she might well say this as she starts to scratch at the eyes *in the photo*. Of course, what we should not do is attempt to rationalize Jane's expressive action of scratching the eyes in the photo by reference to this desire, to scratch out Joan's eyes, in combination with some belief; for this would require us to ascribe a belief which she is not likely to have in such circumstances, such as that, by scratching the eyes in the photo, this desire would be satisfied. (I assume here that Jane is not deluded.) It would also be an error (still assuming Jane not to be deluded) to think that Jane will believe her desire to scratch out Joan's eyes to be, in fact, satisfied by her expressive action. Indeed, if Jane were told that her scratching the eyes in the photo actually does have magical properties, that it actually does cause Joan to be blinded, her response would very likely be that this is not what she "really" wanted to happen. The civilizing restraints on what an angry, hating person can do—ethical restraints perhaps, or knowledge of the force of the law—are just what makes Jane perfectly aware that she ought not to do bodily harm to Joan, thus leading her, on this occasion, to resort to an expressive action. The symbolic nature of the expression takes place as it does partly because the *literal* action, as it were, is not a realistic option (cf Solomon 1993).<sup>2</sup>

This explanation in terms of a wish does not imply that Jane may not also have certain perfectly rational beliefs in this area—that, for example, this photo is a photo of Joan—and this belief can combine with the desire to gouge out the eyes in the photo. Smith's error consists not in postulating this sort of belief-desire explanation but in leaving the "bizarre" desire inadequately explained. The two explanations—his belief-desire explanation and my explanation in terms of a wish—are not in competition; they

<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein puts it like this: "Burning in effigy. Kissing the picture of a loved one. This is obviously *not* based on a belief that it will have a definite effect on the object which the picture represents. It aims at some satisfaction and it achieves it. Or rather it does not *aim* at anything; we act in this way and then feel satisfied" (1979, p. 4).

explain, as it were, different vectors of the expressive action. The explanation in terms of a wish can be seen as the expressive correlate of the sort of explanation which would make sense of Jane's *reasoned* action of scratching out *Joan's* eyes, if she were to do such a terrible thing. By acting out through expressive action Jane is, in a symbolic way, acting out *just* what she knows that she ought not to do.

I do not intend that the wishes of which I am speaking have necessarily to be repressed in the Freudian sense. Nor do I intend that there need be anything like an *unconscious* belief that the desire which is not acted upon is satisfied in the expressive action. Rather, I want to be able to account for a spectrum of cases. The repressed is, perhaps, at one extreme, but there are many examples of actions expressive of a wish that are towards the other extreme, where we are perfectly well aware of what we are doing and of why we are doing it: we make a wax effigy of someone we hate and then stick pins into it; or, much more crudely, we pick up the cushion from the sofa, say to ourselves or out loud "Right, that's *him!*", and then start to pummel it; or we kick our friend's car in anger at his annoying remark.

There is often some symbolic match or correspondence between the object of the emotion and the object towards which the expression of that emotion is directed (cf Wollheim 1991, p. xxxiv). This need not always be the case: for example, whilst opening your post during breakfast, you read that your bank manager is proposing an increase in charges, and you kick the kitchen table in anger. But many of our expressions of emotion can be such that the object of the expressive action will bear some significant relation to the object of the emotion. A relation of representation is an obvious one: the photo, the wax effigy, the cushion. I think we can also make use of an analogy with the tropes of synecdoche and metonymy to appreciate further possible relations. In synecdoche, the substitution is of part for whole or of whole for part; and here, analogously, the compassion felt by Raskolnikov for the whole of human suffering is expressed by his kissing poor Sonia's foot (part for whole), or the love for one person might be expressed by loving gestures towards people in general (whole for part). Or, in shame, the face is hidden from view when the wish is to hide completely (part for whole again). In metonymy, the substitution is of a property or relatum of a thing for the thing itself: the car as belonging to the friend who is the object of the emotion; the clothing which the mourner kisses or caresses as having belonged to the dead lover.<sup>3</sup>

In actions expressive of a wish where the expression involves civilizing constraints, such as Jane's scratching the eyes in the photo, there has to be

<sup>3</sup> Here we have the explanation of the example which Smith discusses: the man's action of rolling around in his dead wife's clothes is expressive of a wish: he wants her back with him (a primitively intelligible desire in someone who is grieving) and he imagines this desire to be satisfied in the expressive action.

some motivation not to act on the uncivilised desire, although clearly the agent need not be aware of such a motivation, nor need the motivation impair the spontaneity of the expressive action. Nevertheless, there is a degree of complexity of thought behind such actions which suggests that not all expressive actions are like this: there are some which should, in fact, be explained more directly, and with less complexity. In the example of kicking the kitchen table after reading about the increased bank charges, the explanation could be in terms of a wish, involving a desire to do physical damage to your bank or to your bank manager (primitively intelligible, as I am sure we would all agree), but perhaps the better explanation here will be the cruder one of just “venting” your emotion on the nearest thing to hand. (We should recall here how some other animals—apes and dogs, for example—sometimes express their anger, much as we do, on what is to hand, and not on the object of their anger.) Without being too regimenting about this, I think that if there is some relation between object of emotion and object of expressive action onto which the agent’s mind might latch, or if, as in the example of pummeling the cushion, the agent, so to speak, “co-opts” an object for expression, vesting it in imagination with some such relation, then it will be likely that the right explanation will be in terms of a wish; and if there is no such relation either believed or imagined to exist by the agent, then the explanation is more likely to be along Hursthouse’s lines, as due simply to being in the grip of the emotion.

In an action expressive of a wish, there is not just a relationship between the object of the emotion and the object of the expressive action—Joan and Joan’s photo. There is also a relationship between the aim of the desire—to scratch out Joan’s eyes—and the expressive action—scratching out the eyes in the photo. The relationship need not always be as straightforward as this example suggests. One reason why it would not be is that often, as I say, we are perfectly well aware of what we are doing and why, and can knowingly act something out in expression in a much more extreme form just because we really know it to be harmless to the object of our emotion. But nevertheless, phrases that we often use on such occasions, like “getting it out of our system” and “letting ourselves go”, do suggest that the desires which are expressed are not entirely civilised. Another reason can be that the object of the expressive action is simply not the sort of object which would be “amenable” to the preferred manner of expression: for example, if it were an enormous billboard of Joan, perhaps the best Jane could do would be to throw eggs at it.

This latter sort of reason can also apply to our perfectly ordinary actions, as such nothing to do with our emotions, where what is to hand for some other purpose is, like the cushion, vested in imagination with a



relation to the object of the emotion. Here the ordinary action becomes, so to speak, infused with expression of emotion. Leaving the room in a huff, you do not just shut the door, you *slam* it; arguing with your husband at breakfast, you do not just slice the bread, you *hack* at it; angry with the person on the other end of the phone, you *bang* the receiver down. In these cases, there may be no desire to slam, hack at, or bang down the person with whom you are angry; the desire might be more indeterminately aimed at doing some physical harm to him. In such cases as these, where expression of emotion is, as I will put it, *adverbial*, there will be distinct vectors of explanation for verb and for adverb: the perfectly ordinary action, picked out by the verb (the door-shutting, the bread-slicing and so forth), is explained by reference to a belief and a desire which have no reference to an emotion; and the expression, picked out by the adverb (the violence of the shutting, the vigorousness of the slicing and so forth), is explained by reference to a wish.

Much of one's emotional life is expressed in this way: not through action which is solely expressive, but through everyday, mundane action which is adverbially expressive. But, again, not all such action is expressive of a wish. In many cases of adverbial expression—cases where the object of expression bears no relation, real or imagined, to the object of the emotion—the explanation will be less complex, as being due simply to the agent's being in the grip of an emotion. For example, when a child slams the door because she is told that it is time for bed, this less complex explanation is, perhaps, the more likely one. Much adult expressive behaviour can be similarly childish and uncomplex, and explanation in terms of a wish would be to over-complicate: in anger, we can *simply* slam the door or bang the phone down, and this adverbial expression in primitively intelligible.

It should now be clear that explanation of expression of emotion as being expressive of a wish should be added as a real alternative to the armoury of possible explanations of things which we do. Sometimes it will be the right one, and sometimes not. Consider the following example, where any one of several explanations could be the right one. Husband and wife are having a blazing row in their drawing room, and, in extreme anger, the husband picks up his wife's favourite vase and smashes it to the ground right in front of her. Why does he do this? Here are four possible explanations. First, he wants to show his wife how angry he is, and believes that smashing this vase is the best way of doing this. (Perhaps the vase is just the nearest thing to hand; or perhaps he believes that smashing what she holds dear will make it most plain to her how angry he is.) A second possible explanation is that he wants revenge, and believes that smashing her favourite vase is the best way of getting it. A third is that he

picks up and smashes the nearest thing to hand, which happens to be his wife's vase, and he does this simply because he is in the grip of anger; there is no further explanation. And now here is the fourth, where the action is expressive of a wish. What he desires is to smash her (or at least to do her physical harm), but, given the civilizing constraints which have a (at least partial) hold on him, the vase-smashing is something which he resorts to as an expression of this desire and of an imagining that it she who is being physically harmed. Which of these four—amongst other—possible explanations is, in this case, the right one is clearly not determinable on the basis of the information which I have given, although much might hinge on the outcome of the interpretation: in particular, the ethical properties of the action—and of the agent—would very likely vary, depending on which interpretation is the correct one; and the grounds for divorce might be different also. The right explanation, as for action in general, will sometimes be fairly easy to find, and sometimes, try as one might, it will not be found, by agent or by observer.

Many of our emotions, like anger and hatred, involve aggressive and destructive desires—at the extreme to kill or destroy; other emotions, like lust, jealousy and greed, involve possessive desires—at the extreme to own or consume exclusively; other emotions, like fear, involve self-protective desires—at the extreme to flee or hide. But, as we saw with Jane and the photo, and with the husband and the vase, our civilisation puts satisfaction of these desires—at least at the extreme—out of court. We are restrained to do the watered-down “what is appropriate”. But, so often, the action which is appropriate is not what we feel, and sometimes say, we “*could* have done”. The civilizing, normative pressure towards the appropriateness of response so often seems to be opposed to what we somehow feel we might be capable of in a less civilised world. “Animal blood”, to borrow Robert Musil's evocative phrase (1995, p. 1306), has its residue in us civilised adults, and this residue is revealed in the desires which are only “satisfied” in an etiolated, symbolic sense through the power of imagination.

Becoming aware of, and acknowledging, these desires can be a crucial element in self-understanding and in self-control. If you can come to realise that a certain sort of expressive action—perhaps a sort which you repeat—is expressive of a rather terrible and uncivilised thought, then you may no longer see the expressive action as barely intelligible, seeing it rather as a relatively harmless way of channelling your primitively intelligible and utterly human desires to do the terrible things which some of our emotions involve. An idealist (Aristotle perhaps) might hold that we should have no need for this sort of expressive action, as the desires of the ideal agent will be thoroughly civilised. Less optimistically, and more

realistically, I maintain rather that one should be aware of and acknowledge one's expressive actions as being what they are, accepting that the wishes that they express and which serve to explain them remain far from civilised, yet nevertheless welcoming the expressive action as a lot less uncivilised than the rational action of which it is a pale shadow. It is, after all, better for everyone that Jane should scratch out the eyes in the photo of Joan rather than that she scratch out Joan's eyes.

#### *4. Expressions of emotion which are not actions*

We are already in the fascinating territory between bodily changes and reasoned action out of an emotion. I turn now to those expressions of emotion which are not in any sense actions. I have in mind not only facial expressions of emotion (the smile and the frown, the contortion of the face in fear, the opening wide of the eyes in surprise), but also laughter, the flow of tears and the tremor of fear in the voice. They too, like bodily changes, can be causally explained, but they are not actions, in spite of the fact that we think of them as *expressions* of emotion, rather than as part of the emotion itself. In this category I am mainly interested in those *involuntary* bodily movements which are involved in expressing some emotions. I emphasize involuntary in order to contrast them with what we can, and sometimes do, directly try to do. We can smile in order to give the impression we are glad when we are not; we can smile when we are glad in order to show that we are; and we can smile because smiling gives us pleasure. But all these ways of smiling are to be contrasted with the genuine or "Duchenne" smile, which involves distinct muscles which we cannot directly try to move.

There is a good reason why these bodily movements are thought of as expressions of emotion, rather than as being mere bodily changes. The reason is that their function is to communicate emotion to others: I can recognize that you are angry by seeing your scowl. Darwin (1998) asked why involuntary expressions of emotion occur in the way that they do, given that in many cases the form of the expression seems arbitrary. His answer involved what he called the principle of serviceable associated habits. The idea is that our "habits" or traits for expression of emotion, in particular for some facial expressions of emotion, fulfilled some adaptive function for our remote ancestors. Although these traits may now no longer fulfil that function in humans, they have survived in us as "secondary adaptations" because they now fulfil the secondary function of communicating to other members of the species. What was once adaptive for some purpose or other may become "co-opted" for some other purpose.

For example, the baring of teeth in anger in the past readied the creature for using its teeth in fight; now it only serves to communicate anger. Other traits for facial expression, such as opening wide the eyes in surprise, may now fulfil both functions: widening the field of vision, and communicating surprise to others. This sort of explanation may well extend beyond facial expressions to other sorts of observable bodily movement; how far is, of course, an empirical question. But what is important for my purposes is that the idea that we can communicate our emotions through facial expression does not imply *intention* on behalf of the individual doing the communicating—something which Darwin often suggested, partly because he believed in the now discredited Lamarckian inheritance of acquired characteristics through learning by the individual. So when we say that his spontaneous and genuine smile communicated his happiness, we need not feel pushed towards postulation of a motive for his smiling, or of a means-end belief-desire explanation of it. A smile would be an action, explicable like this, only if it were of the sort discussed at the end of the preceding paragraph.

When we smile or laugh as genuine expression of, say, happiness, do we have a *desire* to do so, even if a belief-desire explanation is not available? I think there is a sense in which we can be said to want to do such things, but the title of “desire” to capture this sense is really rather honorific. Of course one might naturally say that one wanted to laugh at the funeral, but then one might equally naturally say that during the concert recital one wanted to cough, sneeze, belch, hiccup or yawn; the term “want” or “desire” here really suggests little more than an impulse to “vent” or “release” something. The honorific nature of the title is most plain in those spontaneous, instinctual expressions which one is hardly aware of having made: the frown and the grimace of worry or anger, the raising of the eyebrows in surprise. Here there is typically no phenomenology to the “desire” (to allow the honorific title); it typically only has a phenomenology when one also wants *not* to do whatever it is—as at the funeral or the concert. There does seem to be an inner struggle going on at times such as these—one which does not necessarily involve irrationality. What I think we have here (at least typically) is a “desire” to laugh, in competition, as it were, with a piece of reasoning: you think that laughing at funerals is offensive and inappropriate, and accordingly you want not to laugh on this occasion. It is ironic that the term “want” or “desire” is most naturally used for things like laughing and sneezing just on those occasions when we also want not to laugh or sneeze; and it is least naturally used when we simply laugh or sneeze, with no contrary desire.

I said at the outset that my distinction was a crude one between expressions of emotion which are actions and those which are not. I would like

to end by briefly speculating about those expressions of emotion which intuitively seem to be closer to actions proper than do smiles, frowns and barings of teeth, but are still some way from being actions proper. I have in mind such curious behaviour as jumping for joy, scratching your head in frustration, and punching the air in delight. These things which one does are unlike the genuine smile in that the latter involves a movement of certain muscles which one *cannot* directly try to move. But still, surely a genuine spontaneous jump for joy (consider the bodily movement of a six-year-old on being told that she is going to see “Cinderella” for a birthday treat) no more involves a belief than does the genuine spontaneous smile. A belief, say, that you can move your body in a jumping way serves no explanatory purpose, and makes jumping for joy too close to the one extreme of intentional action and too far from the other extreme of mere bodily movement.

Some expressions of emotion (and of mood) are characteristically repeated: scratching a particular part of your body, fiddling with your clothes or a pen, or crossing and uncrossing your legs. The person who does this sort of thing is not usually reflectively conscious of doing it, although if you, as it were, catch them at it, they might say “Oh, was I doing that? Yes, I suppose I was”. But no thought seems to be involved. Most of us have at least a few such habits (which normally do not reach the point at which they become anti-social or even compulsive); and it is sometimes rather alarming to encounter someone who has none. Here too, I think, a belief seems entirely out of place, and even postulation of a desire is rather honorific.

But what is fascinating about some expressive behaviour is just how calculative it can be, even when it is entirely genuine. For example, consider how the character in C. P. Snow’s *The New Men* (cited by Taylor 1986) expresses his delight at some academic success by time after time trying to throw an eraser up onto a picture rail. Here, I think, we do have an *action*—one which, echoing Austin (1966), we might say was done intentionally, and with deliberation, although not on purpose. And it is really thoroughly intelligible that one might want to do such a thing—after academic success you are capable of just about *anything*. Less calculative, but nevertheless highly stylized, is the way, for example, professional footballers and tennis players express their delight in victory. Notably and intriguingly, expressions of delight are much more stylized than are the typical expressions of dejection in defeat: professional tennis players now punch the air in a quite different way from how they did it two or three years ago; but heads hang just as they always did. Yet these expressions of delight are also often not without spontaneity. I would like to say that it is the habit or disposition to express the emotion in a partic-

ular manner which has been culturally influenced in all sorts of ways, but the expression itself can still be spontaneous; compare the way of landing of a trained and experienced parachutist—highly trained but done “without thinking”. So is punching the air in genuine delight an action? I think it is, although, like the behaviour of the character in the C. P. Snow novel, not done on purpose. My inclination is to say that hanging the head in dejection is not an action: this, surely, is much closer to the smile or the frown; if it is genuine, it is not something that we directly try to do, although we can directly try to control it.

There is, I think, more philosophical (and perhaps ethnographic) work to be done on expression of emotion, including the curious collection of expressions of emotion about which I have just been speculating, in the grey area between action and mere bodily movement. As a class, expression of emotion is very heterogeneous: some expressions are actions, close to but not the same as actions out of emotion, some are more like bodily changes; some have an evolutionary explanation, some probably not; some can be explained by a wish, some not; some are done knowingly and with the greatest of care, some we can be completely unaware of doing. It is hard to see what unites the class, other than the suggestion that there is no genuine expression of emotion which takes place as a means to some further end.<sup>4</sup>

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