

EMOTIONS: A CONCEPTUAL FORMULATION AND ITS CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Psychology often gets itself into trouble by failing to do its conceptual, pre-empirical homework before embarking on experimental and clinical courses of action. One place where this seems especially true is in the area of human emotions. In the first part of this paper, I argue that the traditional formulation of emotions, which equates them with certain sorts of inherently private, discriminable feeling states, does justice neither to the conceptual nor to the empirical facts. In the second part, I outline a sketch of an alternative conception of emotions as, paradigmatically, a certain class of relationships of objects to persons, the appraisal of which logically carries motivational significance, and the nature of which is such that persons have a learned tendency to act on them without deliberation. In the third and final part, I demonstrate that this relational conception of emotion heuristically suggests a greater range of therapeutic options than do our predominant contemporary views.

Advances in Descriptive Psychology, Volume 3, pages 209–227

Editors: Keith E. Davis and Raymond M. Bergner

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ISBN 0-89232-293-4

. . . having an emotion is a much more complicated affair than it is often supposed to be.”
(Pitcher, 1965, p. 326)

The purpose of this paper is to take a fresh look at an old topic, human emotion. This look will comprise three parts: (1) a demonstration that the almost universally accepted conception of emotions as feeling states is an insufficient one, (2) a reconceptualization of emotional phenomena as fundamentally relational phenomena, and (3) an elaboration of the enhanced clinical utility of this relational view of emotion. This reconceptualization will utilize the insights of Descriptive Psychology (e.g., Ossorio, 1967/1981, 1976, 1978) and of certain ordinary language philosophers (e.g., Kenny, 1963; Pitcher, 1965; Ryle, 1949; Wittgenstein, 1953).

INSUFFICIENCY OF THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF EMOTION

The prevailing conception of emotion concepts today is that such concepts designate certain sorts of feelings or sensations (e.g., Beck, 1979, pp. 34–44; Leventhal, 1980; Mischel, 1981, pp. 502–503). Terms such as “anger”, “fear”, “sadness”, “love”, and so forth are terms that stand for relatively unique, discriminable, subjective human experiences. Further, these experiences are inherently private. That is, they are directly observable only by the individual having the emotion, and must be inferred by anyone else. I shall call this view, following Pitcher (1965), the “traditional view” of emotion.

The Rule of Common Usage

I should like to begin my appraisal of the traditional view with a preliminary consideration, a position which is sometimes referred to by philosophers as the “rule of common usage” (Hospers, 1967). Expressed in its negative form, the rule of common usage asserts that words do not mean whatever we want them to mean. I may call the utensil with which I am now writing an “automobile”, or the caffeinated substance I am now drinking “magnolia”, but I would be counted by any competent English language user as speaking either nonsensically or falsely. In appropriating these terms and assigning them a private meaning which is not the same as that consensually agreed upon by other users of my language, I have violated the rule of common usage. Fundamentally, if I am to say something meaningful to another, I must use terms in the sense or senses that competent speakers of my language have agreed to use them, not in the idiosyncratic senses that some of our experimental and personality psychologists, among others, have taken the liberty to adopt. See, for example, Mischel’s (1981, p. 2) assertion that, despite some common themes, “there may be as many different meanings of the term personality as there are theorists who have tried to define it.”

With a few exceptions (e.g., Heider, 1958), there is a tendency in psychology to dismiss this and related sorts of thinking, as “naive”, merely common sensical”, and “pre-scientific”. This is not the place to debate this issue. In this connection, I shall only quote the words of Austin (1957) regarding the value of respecting the meanings contained in ordinary language usages:

our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connections they have found worth making, in the lifetimes of many generations: these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any that you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon the most favored alternative method (p. 8).

Common Usage: Emotion Words Are Not Always Used to Denote Feelings

With this rule of common usage in mind, it is obvious that we often use emotion concepts, and do so correctly, to designate feeling states. If I say, for example, that “I was gripped by intense feelings of panic”, or that “a wave of anger swept over me”, I am clearly using emotion words to denote feelings or experiences that I am having.

On many other occasions, however, we use emotion concepts, again correctly, yet we do not thereby designate any feelings or sensations at all. For example, I may correctly assert that “I love my wife”, or that “I fear an economic recession is upon us”; in these cases, though I employ the present tense, and though I am talking about myself *right now*, I need not be having any occurrent feelings to assert these. Further, I might inform you that “I am calm about my upcoming examination but I am dreading the prospect of hunting for jobs.” Again, I use the present tense, but it is certainly difficult to see, if we must take this as a report about present *feelings*, how I can be feeling both calm and dread simultaneously (cf., Wolpe, 1958, on “reciprocal inhibition”).

To put this matter somewhat more generally and systematically, we frequently employ emotion concepts to designate *motives* (“Her seeming aloofness is motivated by fear, not arrogance”), *traits* (“He is a fearful individual”), *attitudes* (“He is hostile toward anything which he deems unscientific”), and *states* (“She is still grieving the loss of her father last year”). In our usages of emotion concepts to designate these states of affairs, we are not primarily reporting the presence of occurrent feelings. On many occasions we are not reporting the presence of feelings at all. Let me explain.

In using emotion words to denote *traits*, *attitudes*, and *states*, we use them to designate ongoing dispositions or proclivities of greater or lesser temporal duration. While such a proclivity may at times involve feelings, it is clear that an enduring proclivity is not the same as, nor is it reducible to, a feeling or even a series of feelings. To say that “He is a hostile person” is to say that he is disposed or inclined with notable consistency to treat other persons in an un-

friendly, antagonistic manner. It is to allege an *observed* consistency in his behavior, not an *inferred* consistency in his feelings. In fact I need not know, and often do not know, anything at all about his feelings to rightly make this allegation.

Let me carry this analysis one step further. A proclivity or inclination, say, to be hostile or afraid, may at times involve no particular feelings of anger or fear at all. The person who is given to, and perhaps even gifted at, hostile humor, may resort to such behavior time and again in the absence of any particular angry feelings. In fact the presence of such feelings in any degree of intensity might well (1) hamper his ability to be successfully humorous, and (2) enable him to be the first person, rather than, as he often is, the last to recognize his own hostility (Ryle, 1949). Or the person who is afraid of heights might so steadfastly avoid them that he experiences no feelings of fear at all. Thus, I can rightly say of him that he "is afraid" (present tense) of heights on occasions when he is having no occurrent feelings of fear at all.

With respect to emotion concepts as designating *motives*, the prevailing misunderstanding is that to attribute such motives to a person is to assert the presence of a feeling or impulse (perhaps even an unconscious one) that preceded his behavior and caused it to occur. Much has been said elsewhere about this theory (see e.g., Ossorio, 1976; Peters, 1960; Ryle, 1949), the thrust of which is that it does not bear well too much close scrutiny. Here, I shall only put a slightly different slant on an argument I have just made above. To say "His avoidance of high places is motivated by fear" is not to say that, on each occasion on which he avoids high places, this avoidance is preceded by a fearful impulse or feeling. It is to say that he finds heights threatening (i.e., he appraises heights as dangerous to him) and thus avoids them. To a great extent, there is *no event at all* here that could serve as the cause in a causal sequence. Compare: if I say "I never go to Indian restaurants because curry nauseates me," nobody thinks to look for an endless series of "nausea impulses" or feelings that ceaselessly impel me away from Indian restaurants.

Common Usage: Emotion Concepts Never Designate Just Feelings

From what has been argued thus far, it might be concluded that sometimes emotion concepts do designate feelings, but often they do not. However, this is not yet an adequate position, and I will argue here for something stronger. Though emotion concepts are correctly used at times to designate feelings, they are *never* used to designate *only* feelings. They are used in every instance to designate more than just a feeling or sensation.

No feeling or sensation *by itself* could ever have the status of an emotion (Kenny, 1963). In support of this proposition, I should like to propose a hypothetical experiment. Suppose that medical scientists were able to devise a drug that produced feelings in me identical to those I get when I am feeling especially guilty about personal wrongdoing. Or suppose, as in some Shakespearean plays,

a potion were devised that evoked in me feelings identical to those I have when I am feeling especially loving toward my wife. When I was under the influence of either of these drugs and when the feelings I was having were totally drug-induced, would one want to say of me that "he is feeling guilty" or "he is feeling loving?" Would one want to say that these sensations *were* feelings of guilt and of love? I think clearly not. (As an informal experiment, I recently posed this question to 37 undergraduates. Given the choice between saying that these feelings *were* "love" and "guilt" or "feelings *like* love and guilt", all 37 chose the latter). As the concept, in card playing, of a "trump" is *conceptually* linked to the concept of "non-trump" and to a whole set of gaming practices, so is guilt connected to wrongdoing, love to beloved objects, fear to dangers, anger to provocations, and so forth. Were we able through biological manipulations to evoke the sorts of feelings in persons which they have on occasions when they are feeling guilty, loving, and so forth, these feelings would no more have the status of emotions than if, sitting alone here writing, a card which I select from a deck in front of me could have the status of a trump card. A necessary logical requirement, namely the existence of a *perceived object of my emotion*, is simply absent.

If Emotion Concepts Designated Private Feeling States, They Could Never Have Become a Part of a Language

There are a number of other good reasons for concluding that emotion concepts designate more than mere feelings. Perhaps the most compelling of these, and the last one I shall mention here, is a famous argument advanced by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* (1953, nos. 243–305), and beautifully condensed by Kenny (1963). According to Wittgenstein, no word could (1) be the name of something observable only by introspection, and (2) be connected with publicly observable phenomena only causally and contingently. The reason why this is so is that language is essentially public and sharable. If the name of *anything*, then, acquired its meaning by a private ceremony from which every other person was necessarily excluded, then nobody would have any idea what anyone else meant by this word. Nor for that matter, could anyone know what he himself meant by the term, because to know the meaning of a term is to use it rightly, and if there is no conceivable check on correct or incorrect usage, there is no question of using it rightly. According to this argument, then, emotion concepts could not possibly refer exclusively to sensations observable only through introspection, for if this were the case, they could never have come to have any place at all in our public, sharable language.

AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF EMOTION

If emotion concepts do not primarily designate feelings, what do they designate? I shall adopt the position here, following Ossorio (1976; 1978; 1970/81) that what our emotion terms denote first and foremost are *appraised relationships* of

a certain precise sort. Specifically, and paradigmatically, emotions involve (1) the appraisal by a person of a relationship which some object bears to him or her, which relationship (2) logically carries motivational significance and (3) is such that the individual has a learned tendency to act on it without deliberation. In this section I shall discuss each of these three paradigm case characteristics separately.

Emotions Concepts as Relational Concepts

Emotion words denote appraised relationships. What is involved in emotional phenomena, whether this be in the case of feelings, motives, states, traits, or attitudes, is a person discriminating a relationship which some object bears to him or her. If we take the following, content-free formula: "X is an appraised — — to P (person)," our emotions terms denote the perceived relationship of X to P. Thus fear designates the relationship "is a perceived danger to," anger designates the relationship "is a perceived provocation to," guilt designates the relationship "is a perceived moral transgression to," and so forth (see Appendix I for a more complete list of these relationships).

The term "object" as employed here should not be understood in the narrow sense that it denotes a concrete physical entity. Rather, the object of an emotion may be a person, a member of an infrahuman species, an event, or a state of affairs. Thus I might fear the man lurking in the alley, the dog barking at me, a courtroom appearance, or the alliance developing between my adversaries. Further, these objects might be real or merely possible. Thus, I might fear that my retirement pay will prove woefully insufficient, or that the bald tire on my car may blow out.

An interesting problem here concerns so-called objectless emotions (e.g., Pitcher, 1965). This appellation is used in circumstances in which persons report feelings, but state that these feelings do not seem related to any discernible object. I shall not dwell on this point at length. Suffice it to say that when such persons are examined closely by knowledgeable clinicians, their emotions routinely turn out to have compelling, if sometimes subtle, objects. For example, Goldstein and Chambless (1978), in their work with 32 agoraphobic clients, indicate that these persons routinely report objectless anxiety. Upon closer examination, however, it turns out (1) that their sense of themselves as tremendously incompetent to handle almost anything outside the protective confines of their families renders "everything" frightening, and (2) that they are literally afraid of fear itself (specifically, of anxiety attacks). Thus, while everything and fear are more subtle objects than lions and lightning storms, they are objects nonetheless, and their intelligibility as threats is clear.

Emotional Relationships Logically Carry Motivational Significance

To see something as a triangle *is* to see it as a three-sided, two dimensional, enclosed figure. To see a person as a bachelor *is* to see this person as male. The

relations between the two terms in each of these cases are logical, not empirical. If we expressed these relationships in propositional form (e.g., "All bachelors are male"), the propositions would be analytic and knowable a priori, not synthetic and knowable a posteriori. We would never think to do an experiment to confirm either.

In the same way, to see something (e.g., an uncaged lion bearing down on me) as a danger to me *is* to be motivated to escape or avoid it. To see something as a provocation to me *is* to be motivated to be hostile. To see a possible action of mine as morally objectionable *is* to have reason to refrain from doing it. (See Appendix 1 for other such relationships.) It makes no more sense to say "I saw that lion as a genuine danger to me, but that gave me no reason to escape him" than it does to say "I saw that person as a bachelor, but I did not see him (her?) as male." (To anticipate a possible misunderstanding, this does not imply that I will necessarily *act* on this reason; see the section below on Emotion Formulas.)

To conclude: not all discriminations which a person makes carry motivational significance. To see something as red, or as a table of square roots, are not reasons—by themselves—for doing anything. The discriminations, however, which are peculiar to emotional phenomena—provocations, dangers, and so forth—logically carry such motivational significance.

The Relationships Involved In Emotional Phenomena Are Such That Persons Have A Learned Tendency To Act On Them Without Deliberation

Another distinguishing characteristic of emotions, and no doubt an important reason why historically they have warranted so much attention, is this: The relationships at issue where emotional realities are concerned are such that individuals "have a learned tendency to act on (these) discriminations without thinking, without deliberation" (Ossorio, 1978, p. 128). Thus, they enhance the possibility (but by no means guarantee) that persons will act without due consideration. In some circumstances, such behavior presents no problems. For example, an individual might leap up in exultation as the winning home run goes over the wall, cry upon hearing that the president has died, or express irritation to her husband upon seeing that his dirty clothes are again on the floor. However, in other circumstances, insufficiently considered action might prove imprudent, unethical, or inappropriate. For example, in response to a provocation, a man might angrily explode at his boss (potentially imprudent behavior), and in his anger say things to him which he knows to be gratuitously hurtful and untrue (unethical and imprudent behavior). Emotions, then, in certain circumstances and for certain persons present control problems (cf., Shapiro's 1965 conception of "impulsive" action). This is no doubt one important connection, if not *the* important connection, in which emotions have come to occupy a position of great importance and centrality in the literature on psychopathology and psychotherapy. The psychoanalytic focus on enhancing the strength and mastery of the ego vis-à-vis the id (e.g., Erikson, 1963; Freud, 1923/1962); the emergence of

cognitive therapies (e.g., Beck, 1974, 1979; Ellis, 1962, 1975; Raimy, 1975), which stress mastery of the emotions through rational thinking; and the increased popularity of Bowenian family therapy (e.g., Bowen, 1966, 1976), which emphasizes helping family members to act in terms of principle-based thinking and not emotional inclination, are all ample testimony to this. (In this discussion, I have been speaking of the paradigm case of a competent, socialized adult; specifically here, one who has a learning history that renders him or her able to act appropriately on emotional relationships appraised. A derivative case, but still clearly a case of emotion, would be that, for example, of an infant who is frightened by a strange and grotesque face, but has neither the learning history nor the motor skills to act on this, that is, to escape).

Emotion Formulas

There is a classical physical formula that may be rendered as follows: "A physical body will accelerate in the direction of an applied force." If one examines the actual usage of this formula by scientists and persons in general, it becomes clear that it does not serve as a disconfirmable empirical generalization (Ossorio, 1967/81). Rather, it is employed as a nonempirical prescription followed by the scientist in describing what he or she observes. It is, in Ossorio's words, a "a conditional prescription to the effect that the observed results *must* be described in accordance with the format provided by the formula if it is to be a description of a certain sort (here, of a physical body)" (1967/81, p. 44). Thus, if in a given case a physical body does *not* accelerate in the direction of an applied force (e.g., if one billiard ball were to strike another sharply, but the second ball were to remain totally immobile), the layman and the scientist do not abandon the formula. Rather, they employ it as a prescription which says to them in effect: "Go and find the additional force(s) acting on the body" (e.g., they might check to see if there was an equal and opposite force acting on the second billiard ball, or to see if this ball had been fastened to the table). This implies that, *in effect*, the formula contains at least one, if not more, "unless clauses" (Ossorio, 1967/81): "A physical body will accelerate in the direction of an applied force, *unless* there is another force (or forces) acting upon it." These unless clauses permit the user of the formula to preserve the original formulation while accounting for apparent exceptions to it, and conveys enormous heuristic benefit (e.g., if I am an astronomer, and a meteor I am tracking veers off in a totally unanticipated direction, this unless clause would dictate that I look for an as yet unseen force, such as the gravitational field of a planet or black hole; doing so, I might make a new astronomical discovery).

Ossorio (1967/81, 1970/81, 1978) has devised a relationship formula which parallels this physical formula, in that it serves as a nonempirical prescription followed by persons in describing what they observe with respect to relational phenomena. When one applies this formula to emotional relationships, the prod-

ucts generated constitute a set of emotion formulas. I shall present this relationship formula, and provide content pertinent to the emotion of anger (Appendix 1 will be helpful to the reader interested in generating the formulas for other emotions):

If *B* has a given relationship to *A*, (e.g., *B* provokes *A*), *A*'s behavior with respect to *B* will be expressive of this relationship (i.e., it will be hostile behavior), unless . . . (Alternate form: Provocation by *B* will elicit corresponding hostility from *A*, unless . . .)

- a. *A* doesn't recognize the relation for what it is, (e.g., *A* does not recognize *B*'s insult for what it is);
- b. there is some other relationship which takes priority (e.g., *A* is afraid of *B*);
- c. *A* is unable to engage in behavior expressive of the relationship (e.g., *A* can't think of an effective response to *B*'s insult); or
- d. *A* takes it that his behavior is a case of acting successfully on the relationship, but in fact it is not (e.g., *A* responds to *B*'s insult by bringing up what he believes is a sensitive matter for *B*, but in fact it is not a sensitive matter).

Just as our analogy to the physical formula and its use articulated how scientists and others account for the acceleration of physical bodies, the emotion formulas articulate how competent users of emotion concepts describe and explain emotional phenomena. Further, again in a fashion that parallels that of the physical formula, these descriptions and explanations provide rational bases for addressing oneself effectively to emotional states of affairs. For example, a clinician might be confronted with a client whom any neutral observer who knew the facts would describe as grossly exploited by her husband (i.e., provoked in this particular manner). If this woman were angry and behaving hostilely to her husband, this would be straightforwardly intelligible (the original formula that provocation elicits hostility would hold without exception). If, however, the woman were not angry or, if angry, not acting on this, the clinician would wonder why not. In attempting to explain these possibilities, the sorts of exceptive conditions articulated in the four unless clauses would constitute the sorts of things he or she would inquire about. Does this woman appraise her husband's behavior as a case of provocation, or only perhaps as her due or as justifiable revenge for previous wrongs she has done to him? Does she have some other relationship that takes precedence; for example, does she fear him, or fear that he could not take it if she became hostile? Is she unable to express hostility, perhaps because, given her personal history, such behavior is simply unthinkable? Finally, does she take it that what she is doing is hostile behavior, when in fact it is not; for example does she maintain a good deal of silence in his presence, and see this as "giving him the silent treatment," but her behavior is taken by him as mere quietness? Should the clinician wish to help this woman to address wrongs being done to her, any of these explanations or several taken in combination would then provide a rational basis on which to proceed. For example, should this woman take her husband's behavior, not as exploitative and provocative, but merely, given her lowly status, as her due in life, then the therapist might

rationally work with her to alter her conception of her own status, and thus to reappraise her conception of herself as one who is entitled to no better treatment than this.

It should be noted that the emotion formulas take us into the realm of emotionally motivated *behavior*. Earlier, it had been stated that, if a person makes a certain sort of appraisal (e.g., of some state of affairs as a provocation, threat, etc.), he or she is logically motivated to act on this appraisal. The emotion formulas take us from appraisals and motivation to the realm of action. They do so in a manner akin to an Aristotelian practical syllogism. What may be noted is the contrast between this depiction of a set of nonempirical relationships between discrimination, motivation, and action, and the traditional attempt to portray these relationships as causal, contingent ones comparable to the relationships between input, processing, and output in a computer (e.g., Cannon, 1927; James, 1890/1950; Leventhal, 1980).

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

The final general question I should like to deal with in this paper is this: "What difference would it make in our therapeutic practices should clinicians adopt the view of emotions which I have elaborated above?" I will approach this question by drawing a contrast between certain traditional and widely utilized clinical practices and practices that are heuristically suggested by the relational view of emotion. The traditional practices I will consider are (1) helping clients to become aware of their feelings, (2) helping clients to express their feelings, and (3) modifying emotional states by modifying the cognitions that are believed to cause them. I will devote separate sections to the first two of these practices, and discuss the third practice in the second of these two sections.

To anticipate, I will try to show that the relational view offers the clinical practitioner enhanced behavior potential, that is, more and better options for successfully addressing the emotional difficulties presented by clients. All of the constructive possibilities afforded by the traditional modalities just enumerated will be shown also to be heuristically suggested by the relational view. However, the relational view will be shown to suggest therapeutic tactics in circumstances where use of these traditional practices proves either unsuccessful or inadvisable.

Traditional Practice: Helping Clients To Be Aware Of Their Feelings

Certainly, one of the most broadly accepted of clinical endeavors is that of helping clients to "be in touch" with their feelings (e.g., Fromm-Reichmann, 1950, p. 70; Korchin, 1976, pp. 314–317; Passons, 1975, p. 53; Rogers, 1959, pp. 213–219; Satir, 1967, pp. 91–92; Yalom, 1975, pp. 92–92), and a great deal of therapeutic effort is frequently devoted to this. Getting in touch with one's feelings is generally taken to mean becoming aware of the emotional

experiences going on within one. In contrast, being out of touch is being alienated from or ignorant of one's emotional experiences, especially through the use of defense mechanisms such as repression, intellectualization, projection, and so forth.

Within the relational view of emotion, helping clients to be aware of what they are feeling would remain in many circumstances a most sensible practice. It would remain so, however, not because there is anything of intrinsic value in feelings *qua* feelings, nor because such knowledge frees up energy that had previously been utilized to maintain the feeling in a state of repression, nor yet because such knowledge is the *sine qua non* for the more important step of expressing emotions. In the relational view, knowing how one feels remains a sensible goal because (paradigmatically) knowing this is knowing something about one's relatedness to other persons, events, and states of affairs (e.g., enraged at one's own shortcomings, deeply saddened at the loss of another whom one believed he no longer cared for, afraid to incur the disfavor of one's children).

From my personal observations working in clinical settings, however, a problem that often arises in connection with this practice is that, when the attempt to help clients know how they are feeling fails, therapists feel tremendously stymied. The belief seems to be that, if clients cannot come to know how they feel, then therapy itself cannot continue. The oft-heard lament runs something like this: "This person is so incredibly out of touch, I just don't know where to go with him."

When one thinks of emotions as pre-eminently involving appraised relationships and not feelings, this places them in a broader context that has considerable heuristic suggestiveness for the clinician. If what one must come to know is one's *feelings*, then one is confined in one's efforts to a single strategy, namely, an introspective search for historically particular and ephemeral inner sensations. But, if what one must come to know is one's *relatedness* to some object of the emotion, then one may utilize any of a range of ways in which persons can come to know relationships.

The clinician who conceives of this matter relationally, then, might employ traditional practices designed to help clients know how they are feeling. But he or she might also help clients to know their relatedness in other ways. To cite several examples, the clinician might (1) ask clients about emotional relationships in terms that do not involve the vocabulary of emotions (e.g., "Do you have any objections to what she has been doing to you?" "Where do you stand on this matter?" "What do you think of what you have done?" etc.); (2) portray relationships described by clients in nonemotional terms as being relationships of an emotional sort (e.g., "What she has been doing seems rather insulting to you." "Do you believe that what you are contemplating is wrong?" "So it seems like your boss's attitude represents a continual threat to your job security?" etc.); (3) describe the client as emotional, but showing this in action,

not in feelings (e.g., "Quite aside from how you feel, you seem to be treating her as only an angry person would." "It's not surprising that your constant checking up on her and questioning of her would be seen by her as jealousy." "I think your steadfast avoidance of him these past few months suggests fear more strongly than any feeling could." etc.).

All of these tactics present possibilities regarding how therapists may help clients to clarify their emotional relatedness without being in touch with feelings. To take this matter a step further, if one bears in mind that achieving such clarity is often propaedeutic to engaging in needed action or to refraining from ill-advised action, the self-definitions engendered through these therapeutic operations may serve just as well as knowing one's feelings serves to guide action. For example, both the individual who *feels* guilt because she is experiencing temptations to slander another, and the individual who merely *discerns* that this action would be deeply immoral, are given guidance in their actions by their respective knowledge. (It is even conceivable that, given our modern proclivity for dismissing guilt feelings as "neurotic" and therefore illegitimate, the latter person may actually achieve a clearer sense of direction than the former.)

Let me anticipate a possible objection here. I think it true that in this culture many persons (including many psychotherapists) assign a certain sort of epistemic superiority to feelings. Where Pascal once asserted that "the heart hath reasons which the mind knoweth not", these persons would add that, "yes, and not only that, but the heart knows best". The belief is that feelings, in (supposed) contrast to mere beliefs and perceptions, are somehow more trustworthy, more grounded, more veridical. Much might be said about this in a systematic way (see, for example, Kenny, 1963; Pitcher, 1965; Shideler, 1981). Here I would only remind the reader that if, as I have already argued, any emotional experience rests on an appraisal of realities and possibilities, then it follows that a feeling cannot in principle be any more trustworthy or well-grounded than the appraisal on which it rests. The feeling could not enjoy any epistemic superiority over the appraisal. (The traditional Rational-Emotive hypothesis [Ellis, 1962] which holds that beliefs cause feelings, would have exactly the same implications in this respect.)

Thus far in this section, I have been arguing that if as a psychotherapist you cannot get feelings from your client, or if you have some better reason not to, then do something else. However, before concluding, I wish to mention a somewhat common sort of situation in which it is of especial value to help clients to feel. This situation, I believe, warrants more than the usual efforts one might devote to this goal. Certain feelings, perhaps most notably feelings of love and of grief, serve for most persons as very powerful reassurances of their humanity, of their very status as members in good standing in the human community. Thus, for persons who believe they are incapable of love, or who believe that they once loved but no longer do, or who have felt little grief at the death of a loved one, it can be a source of considerable reassurance of their own status as caring human beings to experience feelings of love or of grief. In such circumstances, then, the

therapeutic creation of situations likely to engender feelings (e.g., in working with bereaved individuals, fantasied recollections of certain sorts) deserves more than the usual efforts which a therapist might devote to this.

Here again, however, the relational view suggests options in those circumstances where clients cannot or will not experience feelings. In relational terms, the therapeutic goal here is one of providing reassurance to clients of their positive connectedness or relatedness to other human beings. Suppose for example, that a therapist should wish to discuss love with a man who is obviously devoted to his wife, but due to a lack of feelings on his part, doubts his love for her. He or she might point out to this man that "actions speak louder than feelings" and thus that his history of choosing her good for her sake, of maintaining fidelity and loyalty, and of assigning primacy to this relationship with her is, if anything, more profound evidence of his love for her than any feelings could be. In this connection, further, the notion of a "sentimentalist", that is, a person who *feels* a great deal of love and sympathy for others, but *does* very little for them, might be shared with the client. (Incidentally, such an approach will sometimes have the effect that an individual ceases to pressure himself to feel, and consequently begins to feel more.) Again, as psychotherapists, the relational view suggests more procedural options than do traditional views. One is able to proceed both in circumstances where clients do experience feelings and in circumstances where they do not.

Traditional Practice: Helping Clients to Express Emotions

A second extremely common clinical belief is that our clients should be helped, not only to know their feelings but also to express them (Alexander, 1946; Breuer and Freud, 1895; Janov, 1970; Moreno, 1946; Perls, 1971; Rubin, 1969; Satir, 1967; Yalom, 1975). On this basis, much therapeutic effort is devoted to eliciting overt expressions of felt emotions. Clients are encouraged to express their anger overtly, particularly, where feasible, to the appropriate target of this anger. They are encouraged to express sadness, especially to cry, in circumstances warranting grief. They are encouraged to express their positive feelings, feelings of love and of caring, to others. And, since in this view it is deemed positive and constructive to do such things, clients are helped, not merely to engage in such expression on a situational basis, but to become *emotionally expressive persons*.

Expressing emotions is usually posed by its proponents as a general value. However, we may begin our examination of this value by noting that, upon closer inspection, even these proponents encourage clients to express *certain emotions but not others*. For example, although they would encourage clients to express anger, sadness, and love, they would rarely encourage them to express their envy, jealousy, shame, or despair. In practice, then, the prescription (and the value) becomes: "Express certain feelings, but not others."

That the expression of certain emotions has become such a popular goal

among mental health professionals seems attributable primarily to the historical place of honor which catharsis or abreaction have enjoyed in psychology and psychiatry (Alexander, 1946; Breuer and Freud, 1895). The notion of catharsis in turn rests on the notion that emotions are feelings, that these feelings can somehow be "pent up" or "dammed up", thus causing personal damage, and that the external expression of these is tantamount to releasing that which has been dammed up. In this fashion, freedom from the damaging emotion is established. Historically, anger and grief have been the two emotions most discussed in this connection.

That this cathartic view is false is corroborated not only by some experimental evidence (e.g., Berkowitz, 1970), but also by the most commonplace clinical observation. Most of us have seen clients who are continually expressing anger, yet forever angry. Their expression of this anger brings not even a temporary diminution in its level of intensity. And most of us have seen individuals who, following a significant loss, have expressed enormous sadness, and yet have achieved little or no relief from this sadness. The most dramatic example of this which I have observed personally was a woman who, following the death of her seven-year-old daughter, cried virtually every night for fifteen months. This crying brought her no peace and no respite from her grief.

However, sometimes the expression of feelings, for example, a "good cry" or an angry outburst, does seem to result in the diminution of these affects. How can this be so? I believe that the relational conception of emotion does a better job of accounting for these observations than the cathartic view does.

Recall that, in the relational view, one is fearful insofar as one is threatened, one is angry insofar as one is provoked, one is grief stricken insofar as one is confronted with significant loss, and so forth. In general, one is emotional insofar as one has appraised that one stands in certain sorts of relations to real and possible objects. On this view, one's emotions ought to change if (1) one reappraises these relationships as not being of the sort that one had previously supposed; (2) the relationships at issue change; or (3) relationships other than the relationships at issue change in such fashion that the effects of the original emotional relationships are intensified or (partially or totally) cancelled out. I will discuss each of these possibilities separately.

The first of these possibilities, the reappraisal of a relationship as not being of the sort one had originally supposed, is familiar as a paraphrase of the traditional Rational-Emotive hypothesis (Ellis, 1962, 1975; see also Beck, 1974, 1979; Raimy, 1975). This is so familiar that it requires little elaboration. Essentially here, if I reappraise, let us say, a perceived provocation as not a provocation at all, emotional change will occur. For example, I might work with an adolescent who is angry with his father over what he takes to be arbitrary and punitive limit setting. Based on my assessment of the father's actions and intentions, however, I might take it that the father's restrictiveness, though excessive, is motivated by love and by fear of what his son might do if not restricted. If I am successful in

getting the son to appraise his father's actions in this way, his emotional disposition toward his father (at least with respect to this issue) will change from anger to one of a different sort.

The second possibility is that the emotional relationship at issue changes. Thus, to cite a nonclinical example, an astronomer might become frightened when he perceives that a large meteor is on a collision course with Earth. Subsequently, however, this meteor collides with another object in space, alters its course, and no longer represents a threat. The astronomer's emotional state changes from fear to relief upon perceiving this relationship change. Of particular importance to clinicians here is the fact that clients may *deliberately act to change many emotional relationships*. Fearful individuals may identify threats and act to escape or to master them; if they succeed, these states of affairs no longer stand in the relation "threat" to them, and emotions change accordingly. Or, angry individuals may act to remove provocations; if they succeed, again, the persons or states of affairs in question no longer stand in the relation "provocation" to them, and emotions change (see Ossorio, 1978, 1970/1981, on the "relationship change formula").

The third and final possibility is that the emotional relationship at issue does not change, but *other* emotional relationships (or one's awareness of same) change in such fashion that the emotion attendant upon the original relationship changes. The effect of these other emotional relationships may be that they intensify or that they partially or totally cancel out the effects of the original relationship. For example, a woman who is angry with her husband over his perpetual lack of involvement with the family finds out that he is having an affair. Originally provoked, she is now doubly provoked, and her anger increases accordingly. Or, to cite a contrasting example, an individual who is grief-stricken at the loss through death of his spouse, becomes less so when after a time he forms a new and rewarding relationship with another woman.

At the beginning of the clinical section, I stated that I would contrast the heuristic implications of the relational view of emotions with those of the cognitive view (e.g., Beck, 1974, 1979; Ellis, 1962, 1975; Raimy, 1975). At this point, it can be seen that cognitive views provide the psychotherapist with formal, systematic access to only the first of these three ways to change emotions. Their exclusive emphasis is on altering appraisals of reality to alter emotional states. They are thus needlessly restrictive in not providing formal access to the possibilities of altering emotions by altering the emotional relationships at issue in a given circumstance, or by altering other emotional relationships in such a way that the emotion is intensified or diminished. Further, these views only apply in circumstances where persons have misappraised realities and possibilities; they do not help us as clinicians to deal with the many circumstances where our clients' emotions rest on correct or reasonable appraisals.

Returning now to a consideration of the problem that emotional expression sometimes results in a diminution of emotion, but sometimes does not, we have

already seen that the cathartic hypothesis cannot account for this. On the relational view, we would predict that emotional expression would result in the diminution of emotion when this expression brought about one or more of the three possibilities outlined above, and this in such fashion that one's newly appraised emotional relatedness runs counter to the originally appraised relatedness. Thus for example, if I am angry at another for being late, and I express this emotion by yelling at him about this, my anger should diminish if for example, (1) he convinces me that he was late due to unforeseeable and unpreventable circumstances (i.e., I reappraise what I took to be provocative as nonprovocative); (2) he apologizes and promises to be on time in the future, and I believe him to be sincere in this (i.e., he alters our relationship from one in which he is careless about our agreements to one in which he respects them); or (3) he acknowledges that he was late through negligence but then, without apologizing or otherwise closing this issue between us, he suddenly and very enthusiastically says, "Hey, I spent about four hours last night getting information you wanted, and wait 'til you see what I've got! You won't believe it!" (i.e., he expresses other relationships which he has to me, here, those of helper and provider of vital information; I get caught up in this bid, forget the original provocation, and my emotional state changes). On the other hand, if I yell about this matter, my emotional expression should not result in a diminution of my anger if none of the above three types of possibilities ensue. For example, if I yell at this individual about his lateness but he dismisses my concern as petty and illegitimate, my anger will not abate, but intensify, since a new provocation has been added to the original one. My personal clinical observations, and, I believe, everyday observations in general, support the superiority of this view to the cathartic hypothesis.

From the relational view of emotions, then, the therapeutic policies that emerge are these: Confronted with problematic emotional states of affairs in clients, clinicians may help these persons by helping them (1) to reappraise the reality bases of these emotions, (2) to alter the emotional relationships in question, or (3) to alter, or to realize the existence of, other emotional relationships which would serve to partially or totally cancel out the effects of the original emotional relationship. From the fact alone that helping clients to express emotions is but one therapeutic possibility that is compatible with the relational view, it is clear that the relational view provides an expanded heuristic suggestiveness and, in the bargain, a rationale regarding when the expression of emotions is well or ill advised.

Earlier, I noted that the express-your-emotion cathartic viewpoint, even among its most enthusiastic proponents, is utilized in connection with but a limited range of emotions. It may now be noted that the emotion-as-relation formulation and its procedural implications apply to *all* emotions. In this connection, again, the relational conception of emotion provides expanded heuristic suggestiveness. Finally, I noted at the outset of this section that practitioners of

the express-your-emotion viewpoint encouraged their clients, not merely to engage in emotional expression on a situational basis, but to become emotionally expressive persons. While this remains an option, it is far from being the only option suggested by the relational view. The more fundamental development is that individuals become able, when confronted with emotional relationships, to act in such fashion that constructive emotional change takes place, and this in whatever manner they elect to do so.

SUMMARY

In this paper, I have attempted to show three things. The first of these was that the traditional formulation of emotion, which equates emotions with certain sorts of inherently private feeling states, does justice neither to the conceptual nor to the empirical facts. Second, I have outlined a sketch of emotions as paradigmatically a certain class of relationships of objects to persons, the appraisal of which logically carries motivational significance, and the nature of which is such that persons have a learned tendency to act on them without deliberation. Third, and finally, I have tried both to show how this relational conception of emotion heuristically suggests a greater range of therapeutic options than do our traditional views and to enumerate a goodly number of these additional procedural options.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my considerable indebtedness to Andre Cadieux, Keith Davis and Jane Littmann for their very thorough and very helpful reviews of an earlier draft of this paper. Author's address: Department of Psychology, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, 61761.

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Appendix 1

Emotional Relationship Chart

<i>Emotion</i>	<i>Some object, real or possible is an appraised _____, to me and logically conveys motivation to engage in _____ behavior.</i>
fear	threat or danger to me escape or avoidance
anger	provocation to me hostile
guilt	wrongdoing, moral transgression of mine penance, restitution (after)
shame	stigma of mine avoidance (before) face-saving
despair	impossibility for me no
envy	inequity to me equalization
jealousy	competitive loss of what is mine recovery
sadness	loss to me lamenting
joy	gain to me celebration