



Causes, Objects, and Producers of the Emotions

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The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 67, No. 21, Sixty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division. (Nov. 5, 1970), pp. 947-950.

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On the positive side, desires are wants that concern the satisfaction of present appetites. That is, for every person *S* and every action *a*, *S* desires to perform *a* if and only if *S* wants to perform *a* and *S* believes that performing *a* will satisfy some of his present physical or sensual appetites. This definition is partially stipulative. Sometimes, especially in philosophical contexts, 'desires to' is used synonymously with 'wants to'.

Further, for every person *S* and every action *a*, *S* wants to perform *a* only if *S* believes that it is within his power to perform *a* and *S* is moved to perform *a*. Two ways of *being moved to act* have to be distinguished, namely, being actively moved and being passively moved. A person has been passively moved to perform an action if he has performed the action and there is something that forced him to perform it. If a madman holds a gun to my throat and says "Raise your hands or I'll shoot," I am forced to perform the action of raising my hands. It is difficult to analyze "forcing" and to relate it to "causing"; it may be that all that is required here is an enumeration of the kinds of cases that constitute forcing. The old-time manner of drawing the distinction between movement originating from within and being imposed from without is clearly inadequate. If a psychological derangement forces me to attack the first person I see, then the source of my action is within me, in a straightforward way, but I have not been actively moved to act. The central notion, in short, is *being actively moved to act*. The analysis given to this notion, whether it be in behavioristic terms or in terms of 'preferring' or other action-related locutions, governs the final analysis of "wanting."

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CAUSES, OBJECTS, AND PRODUCERS OF THE EMOTIONS *

IT is commonplace to draw a distinction between the object and the causes of an emotion. I want to suggest that this classification needs to be expanded to include what I shall call "producers" of emotions. Recognizing this new element in the explanation of emotions not only gives a more accurate account, but also helps us to avoid certain confusions and sharpens certain questions about the emotions. Producers of emotions can be fairly easily

* Abstract of a paper to be presented in an APA symposium on Philosophical Psychology, December 29, 1970; other speakers will be Joseph Margolis and Myles Brand; see this JOURNAL, this issue, pp. 918-931, 932-947.

distinguished from their objects. They can also be distinguished from what I shall call "ordinary" causes of emotions; though whether or not we have then two subspecies of causes is probably as difficult to answer as the corresponding question of whether reasons for acting are also causes of actions, and I shall not attempt to answer it.

It will also turn out, I believe, that producers of emotions should be recognized as significantly different not only from "ordinary" causes, but also from what Anscombe has labeled "mental" causes—even though some of the examples she uses to illustrate that concept are clearly instances of producers of emotions.

To illustrate what I mean by a producer of an emotion, consider the following example: Jones becomes afraid of what Smith will say next about him. Smith has just said to Jones, "Sometimes I wonder about you." Jones, however, has been drinking; had he been completely sober he would not have found Smith's remark threatening of some impending unwelcome disclosure, because Jones knows Smith to be most discreet.

In this example, the object of Jones's fear is what Smith will say next about him—that is what he is afraid *of*. The ordinary cause of his fear is his having drunk too much—in citing his alcoholic state we explain why he became afraid in a situation where he would not otherwise have been. But we can also explain his fear by saying that Jones became afraid of what Smith would say next because of what Smith had just said to him. And this would be to cite what produced the fear of Smith's next remark—to give the producer of the fear.

In this example, it is easy to distinguish the producer of the emotion from its object. The object, what Smith will say about him next, is still the object even if it fails to materialize—Smith may not say anything more about Jones. But neither the explanation of Jones's fear in terms of its ordinary cause, his having been drinking, nor its explanation in terms of the producer, what Smith said to Jones, can stand unless these events occurred. And it is also clear that *what* Jones fears is neither his having been drinking nor what Smith has so far said to him.

Two criteria distinguish producers of emotions from ordinary causes. First, explanations in terms of producers of emotions require for their force that the subject of the emotion be aware of them, whereas this is not necessary for ordinary causes. In the above example, it is only on the assumption that Jones heard Smith say to him, "Sometimes I wonder about you," that Smith's remark ex-

plains Jones's fear of what he will say next. But Jones's having drunk too much still retains its explanatory force even if Jones does not realize that he has.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, knowing the producer of an emotion "rationalizes" the emotion as knowing the ordinary cause does not, and this is necessary also for its explanatory force. The way in which a producer of an emotion rationalizes has to do with the fact that for each emotion there seem to be certain characteristic beliefs that the subject must have about the object of his emotion. With many, if not all, emotions he must have a belief in the existence (used broadly to include, e.g., past and present events, facts, etc., as well as people and things) of the object. He also must see the object as having certain properties, e.g., the object of fear as dangerous, the object of longing as something desirable that he does not possess, etc. The producer of an emotion is something, the awareness of which gives the subject a reason for believing either that the object exists or that the object has the appropriate properties or both. An ordinary cause does not explain the emotion in terms of how the subject came to have such beliefs about the object of his emotion. These important differences seem sufficient to make a distinction between two kinds of explanations of emotions, in terms of producers and in terms of ordinary causes.

These two conditions for producers of emotions are sufficient to show, for example, that Anthony Kenny has gone wrong in his attempt to give a criterion for distinguishing objects from causes of emotions.

Producers of emotions resemble what Anscombe calls "mental" causes in respect to the first condition: that they explain only via the subjects' awareness of them, but Anscombe fails to see that there is a significant difference between, say, jumping because of a sudden loud noise and being angry at *X* because one has been told that *X* has failed to do what he promised he would do. In the first case, although hearing the noise is necessary for the explanation to go through and, hence, may be called a "mental" cause, jumping has no object, as emotions do, and the loud noise does not "rationalize" the jumping. In the second, what one has been told explains the anger because it shows how one came to have a reason for believing *X*, the object of the emotion, to have a property appropriate to the emotion, anger, that one feels toward him. This seems to be a significant difference, warranting a major distinction between the kinds of examples. There is also the fact that Anscombe seems to set off mental causes from motives for acting on just the grounds that

the latter "rationalize" whereas the former do not. But producers of emotions also "rationalize" and so, on similar grounds, should be distinguishing from "mental" causes.

One problem about the emotions is that we are often criticized for having a certain emotion toward a certain object. This sort of criticism cannot be assimilated to criticism of intentional actions, since there is not the element of voluntariness which is necessary to the latter. It can sometimes be assimilated to criticism of beliefs, and this can be seen by the fact that criticism will often involve the producer of an emotion. We can say, e.g., "Just because he said that to you was no reason to be afraid of what he would say next," where, although we see the producer as having given him *a* reason for believing certain things about the object of his fear, we think that it was not a *good* reason. But having seen this, it is obvious that some criticisms of people for having an emotion toward a certain object have nothing to do with the beliefs they have about the object. This marks off a special dimension of criticism concerning emotions. It also seems to undermine attempts, such as that of Errol Bedford, to explain emotions as being a certain kind of belief. Such accounts ignore the dimension of intensity.

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NOTES AND NEWS

The JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY is pleased to announce a new election to its Board of Trustees: as treasurer, Stephen S. Fenichell. Dr. Corliss Lamont, who has been serving as secretary-treasurer, will now serve as secretary only.

The *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie* (FISP) has selected an International Committee for the Fifteenth World Congress of Philosophy to be held in 1973. The Committee consists of L. Gabriel of Austria, President of FISP, Chairman; A. J. Ayer of Great Britain, P. V. Kopnik of the Soviet Union, F. Larroyo of Mexico, R. McKeon of the USA, R. Pannikar of India, Ch. Perelman of Belgium, A. Schaff of Poland, J. Theodoracopoulos of Greece, A. C. Ewing of Great Britain, Treasurer of FISP, and A. Mercier of Switzerland, Secretary General of FISP. A place was reserved on the Committee for a representative of the host country. The Committee voted to accept the invitation of Bulgaria to hold the Congress at Varna, on the Black Sea, and Stéphane Anguelov was asked to serve on the Committee. The Bulgarian Organizing Committee has recommended as General Theme for the Congress "Man, Science, and Technology." The International Committee will meet in January 1971.