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Philosophy and the Emotions

Edited by Anthony Hatzimoysis

Contributors

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Preface

'Philosophy' is the name of a calm passion: the love of wisdom. Looking inside oneself for the springs of such passion might make a nice case of soul-searching, but is not necessarily the best means for advancing philosophical inquiry. The papers in this volume arise from an international symposium on emotions, and provide material for a continuing dialogue among researchers with different philosophical itineraries.

Each essay addresses, in varying detail, the nature of emotions, their rationality, and their relation to value. Chapters I to VIII map the place of emotion in human nature, through a discussion of the intricate relation between consciousness and the body. Chapters IX to XI analyse the importance of emotion for human agency by pointing to the ways in which practical rationality may be enhanced, as well as hindered, by powerful or persistent emotions. Chapters XII to XIV explore questions of normativity and value in making sense of emotions at a personal, ethical, and political level.

I am very pleased to acknowledge the generous support of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, British Academy, Mind Association, and the Research and Graduate Support Unit of the University of Manchester. Finally, I would like to thank all the philosophers who contributed to the conference of the 'Philosophy and the Emotions' —their paper abstracts are available at:

http://fssl.man.ac.uk/philosophy/emotions/papers.htm.

Anthony Hatzimoysis

Notes on Contributors

Aaron Ben-Ze'ev is Professor of Philosophy, Rector of the University of Haifa, and co-director of the Centre for the interdisciplinary research on Emotions. He has published in philosophy of mind and the emotions, including the books *The Perceptual System* (1993), *Straight From the Heart: Emotions in Everyday Life* (1998), *The Geography of Emotions* (2000), and *The Subtlety of Emotions* (MIT Press, 2000).

Justin D'Arms is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at The Ohio State University. He is currently working on a collaborative book project with Daniel Jacobson, which develops a novel version of sentimentalist metaethics. He has published articles on metaethics, moral psychology, and evolutionary explanations of morality and behaviour. He also has research interests in normative ethics and practical reason.

Peter Goldie is a Lecturer in Philosophy at King's College London. He is the author of *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000, and the editor of *Understanding Emotions: Mind and Morals*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2002. His current philosophical interests include character and narrative.

Patricia Greenspan is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Maryland, having previously taught at the Universities of Indiana, Ohio, Chicago, and Harvard. She has published extensively in the areas of moral psychology and philosophy of mind, including the books *Emotions and Reasons: An Inquiry into Emotional Justification* (1988), and *Practical Guilt: Moral Dilemmas, Emotions, and Social Norms* (1995).

Paul Griffiths is Professor at the History and Philosophy of Science Department at the University of Pittsburgh, having previously held positions at Otago University in New Zealand and at the University of Sydney. He has worked on many topics in the philosophy of biology and philosophy of psychology, as well as on the nature of scientific categories and 'natural kinds'. He is Associate Editor of the journal *Biology and Philosophy*, author of *What Emotions Really Are: The Problem of Psychological Categories* (1997) and author (with Kim Sterelny) of *Sex and Death: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Biology* (1999).

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Alfred R. Mele, the William H. and Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University, is the author of *Irrationality* (Oxford, 1987), *Springs of Action* (Oxford, 1992), *Autonomous Agents* (Oxford, 1995), *Self-Deception Unmasked* (Princeton, 2001), and *Motivation and Agency* (Oxford, forthcoming). He is the editor of *The Philosophy of Action* (Oxford, 1997) and co-editor of *Mental Causation* (Oxford, 1993) and *Handbook of Rationality* (Oxford, forthcoming). His primary research interests are in philosophy of action, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics.

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Robert C. Solomon is Quincy Lee Centennial Professor of Business and Philosophy and Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University Texas at Austin. He is the author of *The Passions, In the Spirit of Hegel, About Love, A Passion for Justice, It's Good Business, Ethics and Excellence, Up the University, The Joy of Philosophy* and (with Kathleen M. Higgins) *A Short History of Philosophy* and *What Nietzsche Really Said*, and many other books.

Richard Wollheim taught at University College London from 1949 to 1981, and was Grote Professor of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic from 1963 onwards. He now teaches at the University of California Berkeley. He is the author of books in the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of art, including *Art and its Objects, Freud, The Thread of Life, Painting as an Art*, and *On the Emotions.* He is a Fellow of the British Academy and a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has been honoured by the International Psychoanalytical Association.

J. David Velleman is James B. and Grace J. Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. His publications include *Practical Reflection* (Princeton University Press, 1989) and *The Possibility of Practical Reason* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

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I. Emotions, Thoughts and Feelings: What is a 'Cognitive Theory' of the Emotions and Does it Neglect Affectivity?

ROBERT C. SOLOMON

I have been arguing, for almost thirty years now, that emotions have been unduly neglected in philosophy. Back in the seventies, it was an argument that attracted little sympathy. I have also been arguing that emotions are a ripe for philosophical analysis, a view that, as evidenced by the Manchester 2001 conference and a large number of excellent publications, has now become mainstream. My own analysis of emotion, first published in 1973, challenged the sharp divide between emotions and rationality, insisted that we reject the established notion that the emotions are involuntary, and argued, in a brief slogan, that 'emotions are judgments.' Since then, although the specific term 'judgment' has come under considerable fire and my voluntarist thesis continues to attract incredulousness the general approach I took to emotions has been widely accepted in both philosophy and the social sciences. When Paul Griffiths took on what he misleadingly characterized as 'propositional attitude' theories of emotion as the enemy of all that was true and scientifically worthy, I knew that we had made it.[1] Such ferocious abuse is surely a sign that we had shifted, in Kuhnian terms, from being revolutionary to becoming the 'normal' paradigm. The current counter-revolution of affect programmes and neuro-reductionism says a lot about who we are and how far we have come. (Progress in philosophy is moved more by this drama of one outrageous thesis after another—once called 'dialectic'—than by cautious, careful argument.)

The view that I represent is now generally referred to as the 'cognitive theory of emotions,' a borrowing from psychology and 'cognitive science.' The cognitive theory has become the touchstone of all philosophical theorizing about emotion, for or against. But what exactly is a 'cognitive' theory of emotions? The label 'cognitive theory' is not mine, and I fought it for years, not because

[1] P. Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are* (Chicago, 1998).

it was wrong but because 'cognition' is so variously or ill-defined. In this talk, I would like to take on 'cognition' directly and try to say what I think it is and what it isn't, with particular reference to emotion. But to begin with, I want to reject, or at any rate call into question, the very *dimensions* of the emotional phenomena that are now under investigation. In recent work by Le Doux, Panksepp, and Damasio, for example, an emotion is sometimes presented as if it is more or less over and done with in 120 milliseconds, the rest being mere aftermath and cerebral embellishment. An emotion, so understood, is a preconscious, pre-cognitive, more or less automatic excitation of an affect programme. Now, I do not deny for a moment the fascinating work that these researchers have done and are doing, but I am interested, to put it polemically, in processes that last more than five minutes and have the potential to last five hours, five days, or five weeks, months, or even years. I am interested, in other words, not in those brief 'irruptive' disturbances but in the long-term narratives of Othello, Iago, Lily Bart and those of my less drama-ridden but nevertheless very emotional friends. I am interested in the meanings of life, not short-term neurological arousal.

Those bold and intriguing discoveries in the neurobiology of emotion have stimulated a mantra of sorts, 'emotion *before* cognition,' which rather leaves the cognitive theory, so to speak, with its pants down. (A fair turn around, one might argue, from my old slogan, 'emotions are judgments,' i.e., not Jamesian feelings or neurological events.) But the very statement of the new mantra provokes a cognitivist rejoinder: Surely the very fact of a *response* indicates some form of recognition, and (just to say the obvious) recognition is a form of cognition. What gets thrown into question, therefore, is not the intimate connection between emotion and cognition but the nature of cognition itself. Cognition is not to be understood only as conscious and articulate. There are primitive pre-conceptual forms of cognition, 'a cognitive neuroscience of emotion.'[2] These are not the forms of cognition or emotion that primarily interest me, perhaps, but they are extremely important in understanding not only the very brief phenomena studied by the neuroscientists but also the long-term emotional psycho-dramas that do interest me. Whatever else I may have meant or implied by my slogan 'emotions are judgments,' I was not thinking of necessarily conscious—and self-conscious—reflective, articulate judgments.

[2] R. Lane and L. Nadel, *The Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotion* (Oxford, 1999).

Emotions as 'Thoughts' and Other Things

'Cognition' is a not very informative technical term. It demands a translation into the vernacular. (If the charge against me is that I am stuck in what is now called, 'folk psychology,' I can live with that. Jerry Fodor may overstate the case when he insists that, 'folk psychology is the only game in town,' but it is certainly the Mother of All Games in Town.) The number of candidates that have been put forward to front the cognitive theory is impressive. Many authors, Jeffrey Murphy and Kendall Walton, for example, suggest *beliefs*. Jerome Neu, one of the prominent voices in the philosophy of emotions for more than twenty years, suggests that the cognitive elements that matter most are *thoughts*, a view that (at least nominally) goes back to Descartes and Spinoza.[3] Several philosophers (including myself) defend the theory that emotions are *evaluative judgments*, a view that can be traced back to the Stoics. Cheshire Calhoun has suggested 'seeing as' and Robert Roberts has offered us 'construal' as alternative, more perceptual ways of understanding cognition in emotion.[4] Other theorists, especially in psychology and cognitive science, play it safe with 'cognitive elements' or 'cognitive structures'.[5] Some psychologists split on the question of whether 'appraisals' are 'cognitions,' sometimes leading to a narrowed and critically vulnerable conception of both.[6] Many philosophers play it safe with the technical term 'intentionality,' although interpretations of this technical concept are often even less helpful than 'cognition.'[7] Pat Greenspan has played it coy with 'belief warrant' while rejecting the 'cognitive' theory in its more committal forms.[8] Michael Stocker is more directly combative when he rejects all of this in the defence of 'affect' and 'affective states,' although I have always suspected and will again here that Stocker's 'affect'

[3] Jerome Neu, *Emotion, Thought & Therapy* (Routledge, 1978).

[4] C. Calhoun, 'Cognitive Emotions?' in C. Calhoun and R. Solomon, *What is an Emotion?* (Oxford University Press, 1984); Robert Roberts, 'Propositions and Animal Emotion' *Philosophy* **71**, 147–56.

[5] E.g. A. Ortony, G. L. Clore and A. Collins, *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Robert Gordon, *The Structure of Emotions: Investigations in Cognitive Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[6] R. Lazarus, J. Averill and E. Opton 'Towards a Cognitive Theory of Emotion', in *Feelings and Emotions*, Magda B. Arnold (Academic Press, 1970).

[7] A. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge, 1963).

[8] P. Greenspan, *Emotions and Reasons: An Inquiry into Emotional Justification* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

sneaks in a lot of what others portray as cognition.[9] Ronald De Sousa suggests 'paradigm scenarios,' an intriguing and more contextual and behavioural conception that is intended (among other things) to undermine the cognitive theory. (De Sousa, 1987)

Sometimes, the interpretation is absurdly more than the concept will bear, for example, in the overly committed conceptions of 'cognition' as *knowledge* (and therefore in some sense veridical). But it should be obvious that the cognition constituents of emotion can be wrong or mistaken. As my favourite philosophical author Nietzsche writes, 'The falseness of a judgment is not necessarily an objection to [it]. The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving ...'[10] Whether or not the falseness of a cognition is an objection to an emotion (sometimes it is, sometimes it ain't), it is amply clear that whether or not it is an emotion or not is independent of its truth.

So, too, 'cognition' is interpreted in an overly narrow typically passionless cognitive science framework as 'information.' But while every emotion may presume information (for instance, in the recognition of its object) no amount of information (including information about one's own physiological and mental states) is sufficient to constitute an emotion. By the same reasoning I think the common linkage between emotion and belief is misleading. Beliefs and emotions are related in many important ways, belief as precondition or presupposition of emotion, and belief as brought about by emotion (say, by way of wishful thinking or rationalization).

Belief isn't the right sort of psychological entity to *constitute* emotion. Beliefs are necessarily dispositions, but an emotion is, at least in part, an *experience*. A belief as such is not ever experienced. Beliefs are propositional attitudes while many emotions are not (which is what's wrong with Griffiths's characterization). If Fred loves Mary and hates spinach, the objects of his emotions are Mary and spinach, respectively, not propositions. If Fred believes that spinach is good for you (and that, perhaps, is *why* he loves it) the object of his belief (but not his emotion) is the proposition that spinach is good for you.

Appraisal and evaluation or what Ortony *et al.* call 'valenced reactions' are necessary in emotion, even on the most basic neurological level, and belief too readily slides into the exclusively factual and epistemic if not into mere information. But an emotion is always

[9] M. Stocker, with E. Hegeman, *Valuing Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[10] F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (New York: Random House, 1967).

value- or valence-laden.[11] Emotion as cognition does not point merely to information processing, and it cannot be captured in any list of beliefs or in terms of passionless states of knowledge.

Furthermore, there is considerable confusion concerning the 'level of awareness' of cognition, with neurological ('hard-wired') response at one end of the spectrum and then consciousness as recognition, as self-consciousness, as reflection, as articulation, and as deliberation at the other. The ambiguity of the word 'consciousness,' referring as it does both to unreflective awareness (the emotional experience) and to reflective self-consciousness (our recognition that we have such-and-such emotion), is the source of many problems, though I would argue that it is also the simple-minded dualism, based on the metaphor of 'reflection' (that is, mental activity versus the *observation* of that activity) that is at fault here. In the sense of consciousness as awareness, every emotion is (necessarily) conscious. In the sense of consciousness as articulate and self-conscious reflection, an emotion can become conscious only if one has (at the minimum) a language with which to 'label' it and articulate its constituent judgments. Thus I would challenge Jerome Neu's Blake-inspired title, 'A Tear is an Intellectual Thing,' on the grounds that it is not the *intellect* that is typically engaged in emotion. Thus I will also reject the view that cognitive theory—once distinguished from the intellect—*excludes affect*. The fact that many if not most emotions are non-reflective has no bearing on the question whether affect (so-called) might be an essential part of the cognitive aspect of emotional experience.

In his early work, and I see little evidence of radical change since, Jerome Neu took the defining element of emotion to be the very Spinozistic notion of a 'thought.' He makes it quite clear that one cannot have an emotion (or a particular kind of emotion) without certain types of thoughts. Emotions, simply stated, *are* thoughts, or dispositions to have thoughts, or defined by thoughts. (I am not considering here the very general Cartesian sense of *'cogitationes'* that would include virtually any mental process, state, or event, making the claim that emotions are thoughts utterly uninformative.) At the very least, Neu is correct when he says that thoughts are indicative of emotions and are produced during emotions.

I think that the notion of a 'thought' is too specific and involves too much intellect to provide a general account of the emotions. To be sure, a person with an emotion will have thoughts appropriate to the emotion and the context shaped and constrained by his or her

[11] A. Damasio, *Descartes' Error* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

language and culture. In the case of adult human emotions, I think that this may necessarily be so. But if belief is too dispositional to capture the essence of emotion, thoughts are too episodic for emotions, which often turn out to be enduring processes rather than mere episodes. Thus a thought may punctuate and manifest an emotion, but it is in itself not a process. *Thinking*, of course, is a process, but thinking is clearly too cerebral, too explicit, to characterize most emotions. A thought is a momentary appearance. It is a more or less articulate formation, and it is more or less independent of perception. Most thoughts involve words and the use of language, whether or not the thought is explicitly couched in words. Thus my thought of Paris (a postcard view of the Seine, looking towards Notre Dame) is a visual image but it's being a thought *of Paris* requires a complex act of recognition on my part. Thus I would say that dogs and babies may have emotions, perceptions and make judgments, but they do not have thoughts.

Philosophers since Frege confuse the matter by taking 'the thought' to be the proposition expressed by the thought, but the proposition alone (a logical construction) is never tantamount to a thought in the psychological sense, as an episodic phenomenon. Much less is a proposition (or a set of propositions) ever tantamount to an emotion. Thus the absurdity of Donald Davidson's much heralded analysis of emotion (following Hume's example of pride) in terms of a syllogism of propositions in logical sequence.[12] Philosophers also confuse the matter by conflating thoughts and thinking (Davidson, again), but although both might be involved in emotion (some emotions certainly 'get us thinking') it is *having* thoughts and having them without necessarily thinking that is most pronounced both as symptom and as constituent of emotion. When I have recurrent thoughts of violence or recurrent sexual fantasies a plausible hypothesis is that I have the appropriate (or rather, *in*appropriate) emotion. But insofar as thought is an aspect of emotion (rather than just a symptom or sign), it cannot merely be a proposition (or a set of propositions), and it must not be tied too tightly to the activity of thinking. (I would argue that it is also important not

[12] Donald Davidson (1977) 'Hume's Cognitive Theory of Pride' reprinted in Davidson (1980) *Essays on Actions an Events* (Oxford University Press), 277–90. Davidson's view was taken very seriously by many philosophers who never showed any interest in emotion, much less in any cognitive theory of emotion. But what gets left out of Davidson's reconstruction—as Hume himself clearly recognized—was pride, that is, the emotion. See Annette Baier, 'Hume's Analysis of Pride', *Journal of Philosophy*, **75** (1978), pp. 27–40.

to insist that thinking *cannot* be an aspect of emotion but rather only an antecedent or consequence of emotion.)

One feature of thoughts of particular interest to me which more or less follows from the distinction between thought and thinking is the fact that thoughts do not always appear by way of organized activity (like thinking) but rather appear in at least three ways, which I would summarize as 'conjured up' (when, for example, I think my way through a problem or try to remember the answer to a query), 'invited' (as when I work on a problem, give up on it for the evening, and the answer 'comes to me' in the middle of the night), and 'uninvited' (as when a thought 'pops' into my head, unwanted and unanticipated). This triple feature of thought is particularly relevant to the question whether and in what sense one can choose one's emotions for it is true both that one can (through thinking) choose one's thoughts and that thoughts can come unbidden. Insofar as thoughts are essential aspects of emotion one might note that thoughts are sometimes straightforwardly voluntary and even 'willed' (as in thinking), but thoughts also display considerable degrees of involuntariness, as when they 'pop' into my head (or, as Nietzsche wrote, 'A thought comes when *it* will, not when I will.')

Peter Goldie makes the interesting argument that while thoughts are voluntary, our imagination often 'runs away with us.' This depends on the nature of the distinction between thought and imagination. If a 'thought' is something abstract and merely conceptual (such as the *idea* that some one could possibly run off with my wife) while an image is by its very nature something fully fleshed and robust (such as an exquisitely detailed scenario in which my wife is having sex with another man) Goldie's claim is surely correct. But why should we restrict ourselves to such an emaciated sense of 'thought' or such an overly provocative sense of imagination? I think that Goldie is thinking primarily of thoughts 'conjured up' as opposed to thoughts merely invited or uninvited. I would say that both our thoughts and our imaginations are sometimes wilful, sometimes obsessive and beyond our control. Either way, wilful or obsessive, it is evidence that we have a strong emotion (whether or not we acknowledge it or know what it is) and it is suggestive of a sense in which our emotions are not in our control.

Beyond Belief

'Belief' has now become a catch-all term in cognitive science that specifies very little while it suggests something very specific. (Thus

emotion theorists in the late eighties, for instance Ronnie De Sousa and Robert Gordon, spent considerable time arguing that emotion cannot be captured by any combination of belief and desire but inevitably found that they were trying to get hold of a jellyfish.) Belief is too loosely tied to perception to account for those cases where one has an emotion immediately upon coming upon a situation, and it is too tightly tied to the logic of propositions to explain, for example, how it is that we can often hold conflicting (but not literally contradictory) emotions at the same time (what Patricia Greenspan raises as 'the problem of mixed emotions.')

Belief is typically described as a state, and though emotions may be states (that is, if they are of considerable duration and one ignores the dynamic engagement that goes on in emotion), it is surely inadequate to suggest that thus all emotions are states. That is why beliefs are often taken to be only 'cognitive preconditions' of emotion, not constitutive of emotion, since emotions are dynamic and often in flux while belief, as a holding onto a proposition, is a steady state. One either believes a proposition or not (although one might misleadingly express doubt or scepticism by saying that he or she 'sort of' believes that *p*.) Furthermore, beliefs are not experiences, though to be sure they shape and explain experiences. In Neu's vocabulary, they are always explanatory (they must always be postulated to explain behaviour and utterance in the third-person case) and not phenomenological. Belief may be perfectly appropriate in *explaining* emotion but it is inappropriate in the *analysis* of emotion.

These doubts about 'belief' explain the appeal of 'perception' as the 'cognitive element' most appropriate to the analysis of emotion. Ronnie De Sousa makes this case, as did John Dewey years ago, and I think that perception does indeed capture the heart of one kind of emotional experience, that which I would call 'immediate' (though without bringing in the heavy philosophical baggage that term conjures up in the history of epistemology). That is, in those examples where I have an emotional reaction to a situation unfolding right in front of my eyes, i.e. the sorts of examples employed (for obvious reasons) by William James in his classic analysis of emotion. Pointing out the close link between emotion and perception seems to me a plausible way of proceeding. Indeed one of its virtues is that it blocks the insidious distinction (still favoured by some positivistic psychologists) that perception is one thing, appraisal, evaluation, interpretation, and emotional response are all something else. Again, I prefer the concept of judgment precisely because it maintains these close ties to perception but at the same time, is fully conceivable apart from perception.

But when the trigger of an emotional response is a thought or a memory, the perception model looses its appeal. In general, when the object of emotion is something not immediately present, it makes little sense to say that the emotion is essentially a kind of perception. Take the appeal of such notions as 'construal' or 'seeing as.' Cheshire Calhoun defended 'seeing as' in criticizing my theory many years ago (in a book we co-edited).[13] As I have been revising my own 'judgment' theory over the years I have come more and more to construe 'judgment' as 'construal,' though I still think that 'judgment' has a number of advantages, not least of which is that it smacks less of reflection and is more pointedly less concerned with perception and other 'immediate' circumstances. 'Seeing as,' to be sure, is too tied to vision and thus perception, although (of course) it can be treated as a metonym (as Husserl, for instance, used the term) and extended to not only all of the senses but to all cognitive processing as well. But many of our emotions concern merely imaginary, distant, or abstract (but not therefore impersonal) concerns, and the 'seeing as' metonym is seriously stretched. Perhaps the point is better conceived in terms of 'construal,' a more consciously complex (as well as arguably voluntaristic) notion, but then I think the bias towards reflection cancels out these advantages.

Which brings me to Ronnie De Sousa's very fruitful idea of a 'paradigm scenario.' In his book, *The Rationality of Emotion,* De Sousa does not take this as a specification of cognition so much as an alternative to cognition. I have openly expressed my intrigue and admiration regarding this notion. Part of what is so exciting about it is that (unlike virtually all of the cognitive theories I have mentioned so far) it has an explicitly developmental and evolutionary bent. It takes a bold step in the direction of speculating how it is that we come to have the cognitions (or whatever) that constitute emotions, namely, by being taught to respond in certain ways (or taught what responses are appropriate) in specific situations. It thus has the virtue of being quite particularist, as opposed to those overly ambitious cognitive theories that try to draft broad generalizations that govern or constitute emotions. I would note that De Sousa as always been deeply involved in the theatre (and is pretty theatrical himself) and his theatrical shifting from emotion content to emotion context and behavioural training has always seemed to me a huge step forward in emotion research. It goes much further than superficially similar theories of 'action readiness' in that it postulates not only an ingredient in emotion and emotional experience but the

[13] C. Calhoun and R. Solomon, *What is an Emotion?* (Oxford University Press 1984).