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by

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Abstract

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This thesis addresses a basic question in the philosophy of action: what distinguishes intentional from nonvoluntary action? Traditional discussion surrounding this question is largely a debate between those who propose some special state of or process in consciousness (called will or volition) as an essential feature of intentional action (what I call "feeling theory"), and those who deny this. I present a version of feeling theory that is responsive to certain problems with the view which its other contemporary proponents seem generally to ignore.

Chapter I examines the feeling theories of Hobbes, Locke and Hume, and turns up important confusions and vaguenesses in their accounts, especially in regard to the question of the relation between desire and will. I find in Hume's doctrine of the "calm passions" the prospect of a solution, not only to the problem of specifying the desire-will relation (I defend a view according to which will is "effective desire"), but also the paramount problem of specifying the nature of volition. The chapter ends with a sketch of an account of volition as "unarticulated" or word-poor thought.

Chapter II attempts to answer the empirical objection to feeling theory, which simply denies the universal presence of a special action-oriented consciousness in intentional action; and it considers a common misreading of feeling theory according to which volitions or "acts of will" are

actions of will. Chapter III addresses the conceptual objection, raised by Richard Taylor, that the formula "action-equals-volition-causing-motion" fails to capture the element of "control" essential to intentional action. The concept of a volition as a species of thought that, notwithstanding its understated quality, is capable of bearing complex propositional content, and of motivating correspondingly complex action, is shown to meet the criticisms offered here.

Chapter IV focuses on the attempt of the phenomenologist Pfänder to describe the inner experience of action. A justification for the use of metaphor is presented, and the limits of such an approach are conceded. Chapter V takes up the Wittgensteinian challange to mentalism generally, and proposes a "foundationalist" treatment of the admittedly various uses of the language of action.

Chapter VI surveys some of the contemporary literature relevant to feeling theory: Davidson, Nagel, Frankfurt, Dennett, Goldman (whose views are nearest my own), and a few others. While much attention has been given to defending the causal hypothesis concerning the relation between volition and motion, considerably less attention has been given to specifying the nature of volition in such a way as to bring out the attractiveness of the concept. That is my aim.

This is dedicated to the one I love

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INTRODUCTION

I can blink an eye to get your attention, or to convey a thought silently. This intentional sort of blinking is called winking. By contrast, my eye will blink, involuntarily, to protect against a harsh light, or because there is a cinder in it. Now, the overt behavior, the eye's blinking, considered alone, is neutral between action and mere reaction. In what, then, does the difference consist?

There are two traditional, and mutually exclusive, approaches to this problem: mentalism and anti-mentalism. The former holds that action requires some special business to be transacted in the mind--conceived as an essentially non-public place--at some time before and possibly also during overt behavior; the latter denies that action has any such requisites and goes on to give an analysis of action in purely public terms or else refuses to give an analysis in any terms at all.

According to what is, in the history of Anglo-American philosophy, the dominant mentalist theory of action, this "special business" is an event in consciousness, and the connection between this event and overt behavior is causal. We have an experience of a distinctive kind; this causes motion; thus does motion earn description as action. (Mentalism per se is not committed to an appeal to <u>conscious</u> events or processes, only to <u>inner</u> events or processes. Also, it is possible to be a mentalist without being a causal theorist (see my treatment of Pfänder's theory of action in Chapter IV).)

Now, the key experience in action is called by various names--"desire," "willing," "act of will," "intention," "volition," etc., and is characterized in varying ways, depending on the particular philosopher

we consult; but this variety is limited enough, and the similarities among the theories employing these terms are strong enough, to warrant a common name. Since "volition" is probably the name most commonly given to this conscious experience, we'll refer to the dominant mentalist theory of action as "volitional theory." (It should be kept in mind that there is no single volitional theory, and that the term "volition" need not appear in a particular explication of a theory of action for the theory to be, in our sense, volitional.) And let us call its most historically influential, though no longer really dominant, opposition theory--the one that tries to account for action by appealing to public events and processes alone--the behaviorist theory of action. On the volitional account of action, then, winking may be distinguished from mere blinking by their contrasting etiologies, the one originating in an event or process in consciousness, the other occuring reflexively, a reaction of the physical organism. According to the behaviorist view, consciousness is irrelevant. It is with the volitional theory that I sympathize.

If we look to the history of intellectual fashion, we find the mentalist theory of action, and mentalism generally, dominating Western philosophical thinking right up to the publication of Wittgenstein's Investigations, from which point it sinks into a deep disfavor. Lately, though, mentalism in the philosophy of mind is showing clear signs of resurgence. The major new theory in the philosophy of mind, functionalism, is, in fact, a kind of mentalism: it is a concession to the idea that some reference to inner (though not necessarily to conscious) events and processes is necessary for the understanding of psychological terms.

The question I want to ask about intentional action is: how far,

and in what way, inward must we tern to explain it?

I want to say precisely what it is I expect to accomplish in this dissertation. To do this I will first have to say what it is I do not intend here. What follows is not a brief for any particular approach to mind-in-general: I am not sure that every psychological concept needs to be analyzed in terms of inner events or processes; perhaps some do and others don't. And though I ally myself with what I have called the volitional theory of action, the present essay should not be regarded as a full defense of this theory. I shall, in fact, argue a rather narrow, but I think rather important, point in the philosophy of action. I have pointed out that it is possible to be a mentalist about action without being a causal theorist. While I am inclined to think that the best mentalist theory of action is a causal one, namely, volitional theory, I will not be arguing this point. Others (Davidson and Goldman are notable examples) have done so, at length and, I think, well. But if it turns out that there is a decisive objection against the causal theory of action, this does not touch the other part of volitional theory, the appeal to conscious events or processes, which it is my principal aim to validate.

I believe that too much is lost if we take a purely behaviorist approach to intentional action. Nowadays this is not so startling a conclusion, so I will not be contributing very much to the defense of it. I am also sure that philosophers such as Davidson make the right move, when, in response to the perceived insufficiencies of behaviorism, they turn inward to find the essence of action. But this sympathy is also widely shared. (It may be thought that, behaviorism being rejected, the move justifies itself. After all, if looking outward won't do, where else can you look? There is, however, a semi-popular, if vague, alternative called

agency theory, which, in rejecting all analyses of action, counsels that we look nowhere at all. In my final chapter I add my voice, in no very distinctive fashion, to the chorus of those who complain that this approach is unhelpful.) The issue I hope to speak to in distinctive fashion is precisely that concerning the nature of the inner cause or "ground" (to use Pfander's acausal term) of action. I believe that action involves internal causation, as the functionalists claim, but I insist that it also involves internal <u>feeling</u>. Thus, I am principally concerned to defend what I will call the "feeling theory" of action. If I should appear to be endorsing causal theory (volitional theory) here, it is a qualified endorsement I make: this seems to me to be the most plausible of available feeling theories. Indeed, it is probably the only relatively clearly stated representative of the feeling view. (Pfänder's "ground theory" is not really an alternative to causal theory, since he means to characterize, not the real relation between volition and action, but the phenomenology of that relation. Thus, he is non-commital on the specific issue causal theory addresses.)

Now, the feeling I have in mind here is not very like the feeling Kripke has in mind when, in rejecting functionalism, he discusses the phenomenology of pain. If it were, and some critics of the theory seem to think it is (see my treatment of "Taylor's charge" in Chapter III), then the action this feeling causes would be too much like reaction--we'd be driven by the pain-likeness of the feeling--to do justice to the idea of agency, which is nothing if not an active power. Rather, we can say, at most, that these two feelings, that of pain and that of volition, enjoy a "family resemblance," the family circle encompassing whatever belongs to consciousness. If the "feels" of pain are "raw,"

as common reference to them holds, then the "feels" of action would have to be described drastically differently.

The conviction, held by many philosophers, that "feels" or feelings have to be more or less raw--something "undergone" by a generally passive body (sensational feeling) or passive soul (emotional feeling)--is a problem for me. I would wish to dispel this idea, for it seems to me an overly conservative use of the word. I believe there are many subtle feelings not appropriately characterized as sensational or emotional, and that those associated with action represent a subclass of these. There is a tradition that is more liberal in this regard, one which Mill speaks for when he objects to the "perversion" of language that restricts the use of "feeling" to emotional states or bodily sensations. "'Feeling' and 'State of Consciousness' are, in the language of philosophy, equivalent expressions: everything is a feeling of which the mind is conscious; everything which it feels, in other words, which forms a part of its own sentient existence."[1] (Volition is expressly included by Mill in this category.) But not only does the language of certain philosophers sanction this usage; ordinary language does, too. We commonly, and unobjectionably, inquire after a person's "feeling" on a subject, and expect to hear their thoughts, the expression of intelligence, not the report of bodily upset. If we adopt this wider usage, then the family circle of feelings would encompass whatever belongs to consciousness, including what are often held to be the antitheses of feelings, to wit, thoughts. So, the theory of action I'll be presenting is a "feeling" theory at least in the sense that it holds the idea of something which "forms a part of (the mind's) sentient existence" is conceptually tied to the idea of intentional action.

But I intend more by the use of the word "feeling" than this. In

the course of this dissertation I shall have occasion to refer to various philosophers' doctrines that assert the existence and effectuality of subtle feelings: Hume's doctrine of the calm passions, the Bewusst-steinslagen of the German introspectionists, James's account of intention as wordless "divination," Nagel's idea that there is a distinctive something it feels like to be a bat or a human, etc. Whether or not they actually call their theories feeling theories is less important to me than that they argue for the necessity of accepting a kind of event or process as belonging to consciousness that other philosophers refuse to accept is ever there. The theory I'm defending is a feeling theory of action in the sense that it holds events or processes of this kind are crucial to intentional action. What kind is "this kind"? I would say that volition is a species of thought--that it expresses a propositional attitude--which deserves the name "feeling" because of its special phenomenology: the peculiar "subtlety" of volition just is its capability of expressing a propositional attitude in non-propositional form.

At this point I would like to caution against a possible misunderstanding of my intentions here. I am not arguing that every use of action terminology--every use of "will" or "volition"--refers to an event or process present to consciousness. This is not a phenomenalist reductionism I offer. In Chapter V I suggest a "foundational" (as against "reductionist") role for consciousness in the language of action. I shall be arguing that we do not fully understand what it means to be an agent--we won't have explained intentional action as such--until we appreciate the delicate connection between the language of action and what I'll call the facts of consciousness. The connection is not a straightforward one, linking definite bits of language with definite bits of our mental universe on a

one-to-one basis; rather, we need to think of consciousness as supporting the superstructure of the language of action at strategic points and by variable means. I offer no list of necessary and sufficient conditions for being an intentional action; what I try to do, in an admittedly rough sort of way, is to indicate the place of "subtle feelings," and of propositional consciousness, in the life of the mind in action. My conviction is that a theory of action that fails to establish these connections with consciousness fails to capture the particular "resonance" or deep meaning the language of action carries for us. My aim in this thesis is to mark out the territory of action consciousness with somewhat more care than is usually taken, at least in the contemporary analytic literature, in order to see more clearly what it is we give up if we give up feeling theory. I hope to show that consciousness is not dispensable.

In Chapter I I consider some of the historical background of feeling theory. Though I treat Hobbes, Locke and Hume, there is no special importance attaching to the fact that these are all empiricists. Similar accounts of action can be found among the rationalists. I choose these philosophers because I find their formulations suggest important problems in interesting ways. That I give somewhat more consideration to Hume than to Locke or Hobbes is largely attributable to the fact that he points the way, better than either of them, to the solutions of some of these problems. This rather far-ranging first chapter is meant to set the stage for a version of feeling theory that is better able to withstand the objections of its contemporary detractors than the versions of any one of these philosophers taken alone. This stronger version of the theory is one that provides a more plausible account of the inner, experiential side of action than do the classical accounts. I am particularly interested in giving an

account of will or volition as a special kind of desire, not as something entirely apart from desire (which is what Locke sometimes suggests), and not as just any old desire (which is what Hobbes suggests). Since the relation between desire and will is an important problem for any action theorist, and since feeling theorists have been unable to agree among themselves as to the nature of this relation, I will need to examine some more general distinctions connected with the distinction between desire and will, namely, those between thought and feeling, and between active and passive. One thing we want to know is: doesn't a feeling theory of action, especially one that makes desire the immediate determinant of action, imply that, when we act , we are the passive victims of our feelings? Some critics of the theory (Taylor, for example) give this interpretation, which would be devastating to feeling theory were it defensible. In this chapter I begin, with Hume's help, to develop a counterargument that is, essentially, an alternative view of feeling and desire. The chapter ends with a sketch of a theory of action inspired by this alternative view.

Probably the most direct challenge to feeling theory is the simple empirical counterclaim that, often when we act, no feelings of any kind are to be found. Intentional action done from habit is thought to be a particularly strong counterexample. Chapter II argues that this criticism depends on just that restricted view of feeling rejected in Chapter I. If the dispute about feeling theory is basically an empirical one, it will, nevertheless, not admit of a simple empirical solution. Also, there is a consideration here of the claim, made by some critics of feeling theory, that volitions are--are regarded by their proponents as--inner <u>actions</u>. I am convinced that, as a statement about the nature of volitions, this is a false empirical claim, and that, as a statement of what most feeling

theorists intend, this is a false historical claim. On feeling theory, indeed, on any mentalist theory, what is outer is a function of what is inner; but this doesn't mean that what is outer merely mimics or duplicates what is inner. Our claim must be that the source of outer action's intentionality, the source of its intelligence, is something inner and intelligent. Not another action, but something else.

Chapter III brings the scattered concerns of the first two chapters to a focal point. It is here that Taylor's misunderstanding of feeling theory is brought to full light; it is here that I complete my brief defense of that less restricted view of feeling and desire. We can dismiss one conceptual objection to feeling theory--the one that says action could'nt possibly be caused by that sort of thing--if we accept this alternative view.

Chapter IV is a reckoning of an exercise in frustration. "Why should I believe there are such feelings if you cannot even describe them?" asks the critic of feeling theory of its proponent. The phenomenologist Pfänder tries mightily to meet this challenge. His successes are modest and his failures large, though honorable. I try to draw a moral.

In Chapter V I take up a question much larger than that concerning action theory, but one that subsumes it: can psychological terms (the language of action included) possibly refer to inner items? I offer no very original analysis of the nagative answer to this question derived from Wittgenstein, but put into still other words the by now common rejoinder that, even if we accept the private language argument that is the source of skepticism here, it does not follow that the uses of words and the concepts of things obey the same rules: it is possible that the former are learned by public procedures while the latter are fully understood by

scrutinizing private places. And to the charge that a word--say "will"--admits to a multiplicity of uses, I respond that some of these uses may naturally fall into a hierarchical pattern, with the "aptest" uses as the foundation. Thus, some uses would depend on other uses for their serviceability. This argument allows the possiblity of turning up numbers of harmless "counterexamples" to our theory, one of the more notable being the Freudian reference to unconscious willing.

In Chapter VI I consider some of the contemporary literature. I give an assessment of Davidson's revival of the mental cause theory of action, of Nagel's effort to put consciousness back into the center of our mental universe, and of Goldman's attempt to put consciousness back into the center of intentional action. Goldman's view is, among contemporary philosophers, nearest my own. But he never really does get around to providing a reason for thinking he's right. Why should we reject agency theory, or a functionalist theory (or any theory) that takes an "eliminative" view of consciousness, in favor of feeling theory? It is not enough to point to cases, as Goldman does, for even the most self-attentive of persons may fail to detect such subtle feelings as are involved here: you need to be very precisely oriented to be able to make them out. And it is not enough to venture descriptions (as my treatment of Pfander indicates). Descriptions and demonstratives have their place--they can make feeling theory more attractive or less repulsive--but someone has got to say just why feeling theory is the best, or best available, theory of action; and that is what I start to do here.

CHAPTER I

THE FEELING THEORY OF ACTION: SOME HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this first chapter I will sketch three versions of the feeling theory of action, specifically, those propounded by the empiricists Hobbes, Locke, and Hume; I'll indicate the vaguenesses, ambiguities, and self-contradictions these philosophers fall into, and show that underlying these difficulties is a basic confusion involving the traditional distinction between thought and feeling; and I'll urge a non-traditional way of reckoning this distinction, along lines suggested by Hume himself, that, I believe, will lead to a relatively clear and coherent version of the theory.

Classical Statements: Perplexities About Thought and Feeling

According to Hobbes, a behavior is called an action if and only if it is the outer aspect of a process, the inner aspect, and vital center, of which is a certain agitation of the conscious mind, a species of "passion" called "appetite" or "desire."

> (Either) the actions immediately follow the first appetite, as when we do anything upon a sudden; or else to our first appetite there succeedeth some conception of evil to happen to us by such actions, which is fear, and which holdeth us from proceeding. And to that fear may succeed a new appetite, and to that another fear alternately, till the action be either done, or some accident come between to make it impossible; and so this alternate appetite and fear ceaseth.[1]

"Will," the proximate cause of action--the reason or motive for it--is simply the last appetite before motion. Sometimes we act "upon a sudden"; we are directly agitated into action. Other times, we must

decide among alternatives; we must deliberate. But even here we do not enjoy an orderly succession of cool cerebrations; rather, we suffer a tumult of alternating passions. We desire, we fear, we desire, we fear... The conclusion of our deliberation is simply the last desire or aversion we feel.

Desire, Hobbes writes in Human Nature, is a "solicitation or provocation ....to draw near to (a) thing that pleaseth" and aversion a solicitation to "retire from (a) thing that displeaseth."[2] But because Hobbes is, first and foremost, a physicalist, and so describes desire and aversion as essentially "motion about the heart"---as contrasted with conception, which is "motion in the head"--it is best to describe his theory of action as a feeling theory once-removed. In Leviathan Hobbes distinguishes between desire and aversion on the one hand, which, he says, are "nothing but motion," and "the appearance or sense" of them, "that we either call delight or trouble of mind."[3] Desire and aversion are, then, not in themselves felt solicitations, though they are always associated with distinctive feelings, with "appearances." Unfortunately, Hobbes does not say how they are related to their appearance, whether as cause to effect, or whole to aspect (a partial identity). (Hobbes's physicalism poses many of the same problems posed by contemporary physicalist accounts of mind, one of the more notable being whether, and how, physical events can have "irreducibly" psychical qualities.)

Locke agrees with Hobbes that desire is a passion; but since he has no physicalist ax to grind, he doesn't need to distinguish desire from feeling, matter in motion from its appearance. Desire, Locke writes, is "the chief if not the only spur to human industry and action,"

and it consists in "the uneasiness a man finds in himself upon the absence of anything whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it."[4]

Curiously, Lock finds that desire is an uneasy feeling, which is associated with an "idea of delight," while Hobbes describes (the appearance of) desire as a "delight of the mind," a feeling of delight. There is something to be said for each characterization.

Desire is uneasiness, Locke might say, because it involves a state of privation. We can desire something only as long as we (think we) are without it, and "being without" is, when we desire, felt as an absence, an emptiness, to be filled, we hope, by the presence of the thing now absent; delight (or satisfaction) is, then, not ours yet, though we have the idea of it, in back of our uneasiness, a prefigurement of our relief.

Hobbes might reply that desire is a solicitation to approach a thing, a physical attraction, which we "sense" as a seduction, and that there is pleasure in the seduction itself, to be distinguished from the final satisfaction of a successful seduction. The latter may be a greater satisfaction, or of higher quality, but it is, in any case, different. Of course, uneasiness arises when the seduction is impeded or interrupted (when our desire is frustrated), and, it must be admitted, there is a degree of uneasiness attaching to the uncertainty about how it will turn out (will our desire be satisfied?), but this is a feature not of the seduction itself but of its being stayed from a natural course.

Thus, Hobbes and Locke do not necessarily disagree about the character of our typical experience. When we desire, both pleasure and

displeasure are present, whether as feeling or idea. Locke identifies desire as an uneasiness, with any attendant pleasure, and thought of future pleasure, cast in supporting roles; while Hobbes singles out present pleasure as the appetitive element in our experience, with thought of future pleasure, and uneasiness about ultimate satisfaction, placed in the background.

There is an obvious difficulty in any straightforward identification of desire with a single feature of our experience. If desire were a bad feeling simply, we should not be saddened, as we in fact are, when our desire is frustrated, for to have a bad feeling frustrated is good. It will be objected that "when our desire is frustrated" is elliptical for "when our endeavor to satisfy our desire is frustrated," and that, consequently, what saddens us is the forestallment of a hoped-for relief. This may be granted, and still the conception of desire as bad feeling seeking relief seems too narrow; it suggests a factitiously gloomy picture of Desire as a rapacious monster inside us, tormenting us with redundant hungers, taunting: "Slay me, or never be at peace." Clearly, if an account of desire as feeling is to be successful, it will have to include some measure of pleasant feeling (or of feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant) as a constituent. The idea of relief in back of our uneasiness must be more than mere prefigurement, its realization more than hoped for. Our experience must have an <u>anticipatory</u> quality, or else we would be just wishing and not truly desiring. This isn't to say that desiring entails believing it <u>likely</u> we will get relief, for it is obvious that we sometimes desire though we recognize satisfaction is unlikely. Rather, I mean that desiring entails our believing that the likelihood of our getting satisfaction exceeds, in some unspecifiable

degree, that afforded by mere, logical, or even physical, possibility; and that desiring shades off into wishing as our expectations fall below this minimum. This idea is vague, I know, but something like it must be true, it seems to me, if we are to distinguish between wishing (idle desiring) and (genuine) desiring.

Now, if desire were a good feeling simply, we should expect that desire intensified necessarily intensifies delight, but this isn't so: yearning (a kind of intense desiring) typically involves disquietude, sometimes to the point of frenzy, even when ultimate satisfaction is certain ("I know I'll see her next week...but I want her now!"). It may be said that in this case mere waiting constitutes a frustration, and that the bad feeling comes from it and not the yearning itself. But this misses the point, Locke's point, that all desiring involves privation, even if only momentary privation; desiring is future-looking, and so inevitably involves waiting. (Wait not, want not.) Indeed, Hobbes can be found to assert that the language by which desires are expressed "is imperative, as 'do this,' 'forbear that'...,"[5] a language apposite for the expression of dissatisfaction, but his facile identification of (the appearance of) desire with delight countermines this insight. Clearly, if an account of desire as feeling is possible, it will have to be complex.

Hobbes and Locke agree that will is the proximate cause of action. But while Hobbes is adamant that will is nothing but the strongest desire, Locke is ambivalent.

In the first edition of the Essay, he holds, a la Aquinas, that our will is ultimately determined by our judgment of the greater good. But then, in a letter to Molyneux, written while the second edition was

in preparation, Locke announces that he has "gotten into a new view of things," according to which volition is not opposed to desire, but is, rather, a species of desire, differing from ordinary desire only in being followed by action.[6] Volition is, then effective desire. But this new view isn't Locke's last word on the subject. In later editions we find him cautioning that the will not be confounded with desire. The will is "conversant about nothing but our own actions; terminates there; reaches no further," while desire's range is not limited in this way. That I can desire what I do not will is consistent with an account of volition as effective desire. That I can will what I do not desire, which Locke maintains is possible when I am "oblige(d)"[7] by considerations of the greater good, say, is not. Locke's will is a "thought or preference of the mind," no mere uneasy feeling.

Why the see-sawing? Locke wants to say that it is the uneasiness characteristic of desire that immediately determines the will, but considers that, if the greatest present uneasiness is always to have its way with us, this takes the agent out of agency: we should then be <u>transferring</u> motion merely, not actually <u>producing</u> it. In his letter Locke characterizes the will's function as purely executive--it blindly does the bidding of the strongest uneasy feeling; but then he holds that, while desire may be the "chief spur," will is the "chief judge." It intercedes between desire and motion when it sees the former has set us on an unwise course. What appears to be missing in Hobbes's account of intentional action is the intention, the intelligence, of it. What ends the alternation pro and con is never clearly stated by Hobbes. The best answer--the one that best coincides with Hobbes's body-in-motion philosophy--is that desire or fear dominates depending on which

is the more powerful motion. But where, then, is our thought that a particular action is good, or the best open to us, our preference for this action over the alternatives? The addition of a thought element complicates the theory, but it seems a necessary addition. For intentional action is intelligent action, whatever else it is. And what intelligence could there be in the bluster of passion?

So, to supply the missing ingredient, Locke substitutes a volition-thought for Hobbes's last appetite. The ad hoc quality of this move is disturbing. In our experience of ourself in action, do we actually find thought tacked on the tail of uneasy feeling, and motion tacked on the tail of thought, as Locke suggests? I tend to doubt it. But I'll reserve the skepticism till later. For now, I'll admit we need the thought to fill out the action, and that Locke has made an advance in explicity stating this need.

To be fair, Hobbes does make room in his theory for the operation of thought, though it's not clear just what operation he has in mind. In Human Nature he maintains that desire is "the first unperceived (beginning) of our actions,"[8] while in Leviathan he writes that "voluntary motions depend always upon a precedent thought of whither, which way, and what...," which is to say that "the imagination is the first internal beginning of all voluntary motion."[9] There is a tension, if not outright self-contradiction, here, and I suspect it represents a confusion about the function of imagination in action. Just how is action supposed to depend upon precedent thought. Is this a judging thought, as Locke's will appears to be? If it is, then it would be sensible to call this the beginning of voluntary motion, for such thought is our intelligent contribution to the proceedings. But it's

unlikely Hobbes means this: there is no element of preference to his characterization; this is not the conception of an action as good or bad, as worthy or unworthy of performance, but only the conception of an action as a possible end. Thus, imagination supplies the raw materials for the basic mechanics of action-production. "(The) thing that pleaseth" comes to mind first as a thing that could possibly please; only later is it taken up as a thing that actually pleases, in prospect, as a goal we are inclined to pursue. So, if we say that action begins with such pursuit, or even with some on-the-spot inclination to pursue, then the work of imagination is perhaps better treated as a necessary forerunner, rather than the first part of, action. On this picture of action, then, thought and feeling are quite distinct, and the former is clearly inferior in motive power: first we coolly cerebrate ("Xing is a possible action for me"); then we tumultuously feel (desire or fear Xing, or the expected consequences of Xing); then, because of the desire or fear, we act.

This separatist treatment, which assigns a meager role to thought in the process of action, is re-inforced by the archaic psychobiology of Hobbes's opposition of motions. The view that conception is a motion in the head, and passion a motion about the heart, merely scientizes the commonplace opposition between thought and feeling, head and heart. And since the will is the last motion about the heart--sometimes last in a long series of alternating heart-motions--the true determinant of action appears far removed from the thought that gets the whole process going. If this theory is an intellectualism,[10] as some critics maintain, it is an effete intellectualism.

But the picture isn't as clear as this perhaps suggests. For Hobbes

is really never very clear about the connection between these two motions, between conception and desire (or passion generally). Indeed, he wavers between a causal and an identity account of this connection. Thus, he can be found to assert that "the conception of evil...is fear," and to imply that the conception of good is desire, in the very same paragraph he asserts that conceptions "cause" fear and desire. He holds that motion in the head, "proceeding to the heart," is called pleasure if it "helps" the "vital motion" there and pain if it "hinders" such motion.[11] Now, the temporal lapse between the two motions suggests a causal hypothesis; but one wonders what precisely it means to say of a motion that it proceeds from one place to another. Is it that a motion in one place causes a new motion in another? Or is it perhaps the same motion in both places, starting in the head, "proceeding" downward, and coming to the heart, where it disturbs the heart-stuff and presents a wholly new appearance, a feeling to replace the original thought? But if this motion about the heart, which is called desire and presents the appearance of pleasant feeling, is somehow also a conception of good, as Hobbes implies, then I have to wonder how the original conception, which is, presumably, non-evaluative, is supposed to give rise to this new conception, this positive valuation? The disconnection is puzzling.

On the customary view of Hume's philosophy, the reign of passion in the life of man is absolute. Indeed, the "conceptions" and "precedent thoughts" to which Hobbes imputes a kind of original authority, and the volition-thoughts that Locke holds immediately precede, and truly determine action, are assigned merely auxiliary stations in the Humean kingdom of action.

Hume follows Hobbes and Locke in calling desire a passion;[12] and

will, the "immediate effect" of desire, is called an "internal impression we feel and are conscious of when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind."[13]

Hume holds that desire "arises from good considered simply," or, alternatively, "from a natural impulse or instinct."[14] Now, it might be thought that by "consideration of good" Hume means idea of good, an approving thought, and that, in such case as desire arises from this "determination of reason," the idea is master. But the general temper of his remarks suggests, rather, that "good" is meant to be read as "pleasure," and that the consideration of which he writes should be regarded as a simple noticing that something brings pleasure, a perception and not an intellection. Still, even if Hume intends a more intellectualistic construal of "good considered simply," he can't allow bare idea to rule. For, in discussing the so-called "combat" of reason and passion, he claims: (1) that "reason has no original influence," the ideas it yields being but "copies" of "other existence(s)," while passion is "an original existence," having no "representative quality"; and (2) that copies haven't "efficacy."[15] Since ideas are thus deficient in efficacy, they can't, by themselves, conquer existing passions. But, for the same reason, neither can they give rise to new passions. If an existing passion should yield to reason, or a new passion be generated by it, such reason will have to have a borrowed power for it to move us, and this it gets from the other passions with which it is associated or from the impressions of pleasure that are at the foundation of both reason and passion. (Hume does allow reason a "directing" function, but this amounts to recognizing its role in helping us choose the most economical means to already determined ends, in other words, in helping

us better satisfy pre-existing passions.) Thus, our ideas have only a derivative authority in the formulation and execution of our desires: "Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."[16]

So, Hume says desire is an emotion and will is an impression; but, unlike Hobbes and Locke, he won't say what quality of emotion (pleasant or unpleasnat) desire is, nor what quality of impression will is. He writes of passion generally that "it is impossible we can ever, by a multitude of words, give a just definition of them,"[17] and of will specifically that it is "impossible to define and needless to describe any farther." Thus, Hume maintains that, while desire and will are feelings, defining accounts of them as such are impossible--not, as his argument goes, because they are forbiddingly complex, but, rather, because they are impenetrably simple. The passions, Hume says, are simple impressions of reflection; they are simple natures and, hence, unanalyzable. Moreover, logically complete descriptions are not required for philosophical problem-solving, according to Hume, for we already know all we need to know; we know precisely what desire and will are, though our words inadequately express this knowledge. (To be sure, we can say some things about desire and will: we can describe them as more or less intense, and we can say under what circumstances they typically arise; but this doesn't get us very far inside them.)

Now, this refusal of Hume's to give a penetrating description is a source of some embarrassment to proponents of feeling theory. For unless you provide such a description, against which our experience may be measured, you leave room for the skeptic to say he experiences nothing that goes by the name "desire" or "volition". Indeed, such skepticism

is common in the critical literature. I have much to say on this subject (see Chapter IV especially), but for now I just want to indicate that Hume's ineffability thesis is no necessary part of the feeling theory of action. Other versions of the theory are more venturesome in this respect. (Whether they are successful is another matter.) Hume himself suggests the possibility for description, if not for definition: his treatment of the passions suggests we may able to communicate something of what it's like to desire and will (and, so, to act) through the metaphorical use of words. He compares the impassioned mind to a string-instrument, and gives no reason to think that the distinctive natures of the various passions couldn't also be described through metaphor, perhaps even by likening each of them to one or another of the string-instruments.

I've said that intelligence looks to be missing from Hobbes's account of action; it's apparently missing here, too. Feelings can move us; but can they motivate us? Hume doesn't even offer thoughts as forerunners.

But the picture isn't so simple. Though Hume declares that passion's determinations are masters to reason's, he can also be found to assert that the latter are, finally, "affectations of the very same kind as the former, but such as operate more calmly, and cause no disorder in the temper..."[18] Which is master and which is slave indeed? If this identity theory is accepted, then action is only apparently a product of feeling alone; really, it's shot through with thought, at least where there is no "disorder." This is a tantalizing, if vague, suggestion. We know we need the thought to make action intelligent. Hobbes assigns it a place at the head of the line; Locke makes room for it at the end. But

producing actions is not obviously like producing automobiles: it doesn't appear that we put actions together piece by piece. If thought is to form a necessary part of the experience of action, it seems it ought to be spread liberally around, rather than squeezed into a tight spot just before or just after disorderly feeling.

Desire and Will, Thought and Feeling

The division between reason and passion, thought and feeling, head and heart--sometimes looked on as a combat-- is ancient, and widely and well-respected. Unsurprisingly, the classical statements of the feeling theory of action assume this distinction, Hobbes's and Locke's uncategorically, Hume's inconsistently. According to the hallowed view, action is centrally an affair of passion; it's desire that represents passion in action; and reason, if it's present at all, must find a home on the periphery. I believe that many of the troublesome features of the theories we've looked at--the secondary role of thought in Hobbes and Hume, the ad hoc flavor of Locke's solution--are the result of a rigid adherence to this separationist orthodoxy. In fact, the distinction between reason and passion is overdone. I'm sure it's possible to characterize desire in such a way that it isn't necessary to import thought, in the form of will, say, to complete our account of action.

Desire is one of the passions, these empiricists claim; and, according to Hume, the "very being and essence (of the passions) are the sensations, or the peculiar emotions they excite in the soul..."[19] If you think of the desirous man as an "excited soul," that is an obstacle to thinking of him as a rational agent. But if reason and passion are, somehow, like "affectations," as Hume insists, then you can think a man desirous and rational at once. Hobbes and Locke find they must fragment

our experience of ourself in action to supply all that is needed for a full account. Of course, this is no logical error on their part. But it's a move that makes it that much more difficult for the theory to prove itself. If you're not quite convinced we invariably feel before we act, then it hardly helps to add that we invariably think, also. Hume suggests it may be possible to unclutter our experience, to simplify the theory. And as plausibility is enhanced by simplicity, we ought to follow up his suggestion.

Thought and Feeling: What The Poets Say

Is desire feeling? Is will thought? Could Hobbes be right, and will be the last desire? If will is the last desire, must it be devoid of thought? If will is thought, must it be devoid of feeling?

It is customary in the classical literature to treat of action only after the nature of passion in general is considered, its opposition to reason noted, and a catalog of the particular passions built up. Within this setting desire and will are given their roles. I want to reconsider the distinction between thought and feeling, and desire and will, to see where the classical philosophers go wrong and how they may be redeemed.

According to the poets, and to the popular conception that feeds and is fed by them, thought, when it's pure, is cold, and emotional feeling, when pure, is hot. Our philosophers seem to share this view.

Now, the poetic method, such as it is, inclines to overstatement; but this is justifiable; it helps us understand by writing large. Perhaps we can better understand thought and feeling, and desire and will, by examining the poetic treatment of them. The best poetry vivifies the seemingly mundane (but actually vital) aspects of our experience, and

revivifies, re-sees, those aspects of our condition we quite well know are vital, but whose claim on our attention is inextinguishable, and whose insistence cries for some show of command on our part. The writing of this sort of poetry and the comprehension of it are each shows of command, triumphs of the word, and the imagination that employs and follows it, over the perpetual disarray of our emotional self, our outrageous fortune. This it does, in part, by enlarging our experience, through hyperbole, and concentrating it, through metaphor. The distortions that result from reliance on the figurative are blessings; they are truer than the literal truths, as they capture essences, and, thereby, enable us to us to respond (for once) with our whole self: we think a resonant "Yes, that's it" when the poet has indeed Got It. And our triumph as readers consists in just this: Getting It. If we are not inspired to action, if we do not succeed in reconstituting our emotional life and making new fortunes, that is a loss, but doesn't erase our triumph: we understood, saw through the disarray to the nub of our distraction, for a moment at least. To the extent that poetry--and cliche (which is stale, but still useful, poetry)--does tell a truth, however transformed, its divinations should be of interest to philosophers, who are truth-seekers. Let us, then, explore the poetic view of thought and passion, and let us ask: where do desire and will fit into the scheme? are they correctly placed? are the distinctions sensible, after all?

To poets and poetasters alike, the undisturbed operation of thought, sober reason, is all icy calm and bloodless calculation, a white light that shows the way. By contrast, unchecked passion is a flame-storm, generating heat, not light, and obscuring the way (we are blind when we see only red). The passions are "the elements of life" (Pope), but also "vultures of the mind" (Gray); they are the life and death of us; they

are what move us--giving conviction to gesture--but, if we are not careful, they are what waste us, burn us out, emptying gesture, killing. The romantic poets are not cultists of reason, as Plato, for a notable example, is; for they do not share the conviction of reason's sovereign place in our nature and peace-affording capability. Plato, who, in his myth-making, is something of a poet himself, has it that if we but follow the way as illumined by reason, which it is our natural propensity to do, we will prosper; if we don't prosper, it is because passion, in itself a reckless sort, hedonistic and unruly, does the driving. A proper education will ensure that such perversion doesn't occur. As Hume puts the cult's creed, the life of reason is marked by "eternity, invariableness, and (divinity)," while the life of passion is all "blindness, inconstancy, and deceitfulness."[20] We are tempted, but if we follow our better nature, we overcome. The romantic poets are pessimists on this count, recognizing that our nature is too volatile a house for steady reason's enduring comfort; that reason will brighten our house for short stays, if at all; that we are doomed to the ravages of the vulture passions. Our lot is seduction, small triumph, and final betrayal.

> Bright reason will mock thee,
> Like the sun from a wintry sky (Shelley)
>
> Emotion, n. A prostrating disease caused by a determination of the heart to the head. (Bierce)
>
> Hearts will never be practical
> Until they are unbreakable (The Wizard of Oz)

This difference aside, Plato and the poets agree that reason is the sunny thing over the mountain, and passion the mucky stuff we are up to our necks in.

Thought, Feeling and Body

Thought lives in the "highest" part of us, the head (which part is sometimes opposed to "the body," as if it weren't itself a part of our body, but merely condescended to accompany it on its rounds), whereas feeling is said to live in our most vulnerable part, the heart, or in the case of the grittier, fierier feelings, "down below" in gut and groin. These assignments are interesting.

There is more physiological justification for linking emotional feeling with gut and groin than there is for linking it with heart. Love and sadness at a love's loss are commonly considered affairs of the heart; but, while young love sometimes experiences a quickened heart ("skipping a beat"), love is more accurately accounted a special sort of stirring of the whole body, insofar as it is associated with bodily feeling at all. Likewise, while we occasionally hear reports of persons whose hearts quite literally fail ("break" irremediably) upon the death of a long-time mate, the sensational quality typically linked with sadness is a particular sort of deceleration of our whole sensational self. These are not, in fact, heart-centered passions; they are, rather, diffuse, pervasive.

By contrast, others of the staple passions better deserve their poetical assignments. Fear, though often involving the disturbance of various other parts and organs of the body as accompaniments (the quivering of a lip or trembling of a hand, a pounding of the heart, sweating, labored breathing), and the response of the whole body (in action), is quite naturally represented as being, centrally, an affair of the gut. Fear "gnaws" (eats at our insides, eats at the part of us which gnaws), and may, through many years' persistence, put a hole in

stomach. (Of course, fear may as well cause us to suffer a heart attack, but as no distinctive gross sensation about the heart typically arises in us on non-lethal fearful occasions, and as such attack is rather a short-lived phenomenon, we do not assign fear its body-quarters on the basis of this link.)

Anger, and its cousin hate, are also affairs of the gut, consuming us from our core outward. (I hate your guts, the part of you which hates.) And this consumption may be felt as a burning, "hate's hidden ulcer" (Marvell). When we say we feel fear or murder in our heart, we indicate a global sensation of our body, and not a local phenomenon, if we indicate any bodily sensation at all; but when we say we feel one or the other in our gut, we can mean either that we feel it deeply (profoundly, deep down in our body), implying nothing about sensation, or that we feel it as a particular sort of (unpleasant) sensation <u>there</u>, in our gut.

Among the passions lust (sexual love) best deserves its assignment to specific organs. There are, to be sure, numerous erogenous zones of the body, but these may be distinguished as primary or secondary; what fails to comprehend that quite localized gross sensation normally engendered in the primary erogenous zone (our groin) by the presense of a sexual object, not even as a disposition to feel, doesn't deserve the name lust. Here, the boundary between emotional feeling and (mere) bodily sensation is clouded. In general, the more intimately our experience is connected with specific, localizable sensation, the less likely we are to deem it emotion. Hunger can't be an emotion because it is too intimately connected with localizable sensation; it is bodily feeling, not emotional feeling. And, reasoning according to the same principle some claim that sexual love without romantic love is love without

emotional feeling, cool, mechanical, just bodies in motion, not the expression of emotion, but the working-out of a "drive." This is a paradox, for it is a commonplace that inflamed sexual passion is among the fieriest, and most blinding, of passions. Is this judgment of emotionlessness an application of the dubious principle (sometimes invoked in political debate) of the identity of extremes? Or simple prudery? But we don't have to be prudes to agree that talking in terms of drives seems not wrong here, whereas talking in such terms about love is clearly wrong. The reason for this isn't that sexual feeling is more commanding (drives us more forcefully to action) than romantic feeling, for the case can easily be made that it is romantic love which makes the world go 'round. Rather, where the source of our action is conspicuously bodily, and our experience is charged with (brute) sensation, we tend to see human behavior as approximating the model of animal behavior, and we regard animals as packages of instinct and necessary motion; thus, we see sexual man as machine but romantic man as spiritual being. Call it Dualist's Prudery, from which even some physicalists suffer to a degree. The confusion about lust is, then at least partly the result of a conflict between our inclination to withdraw from an experience the status of emotion the more conspicuously sensational its symptoms and the observation that we have <u>sexual temperatures</u> that rise and fall.

This thermal imagery is inviting; let's play.

We could describe romantic love ("that pure and elevating passion" --Austen) as a warming which, when stoked by a reciprocal love, and made, over time, temperate and constant, is a steadying influence, a help to perception and action, lending a certain keenness; but that

when stormy and "unchecked" is perception's enemy. Sadness is a deadening and so must be a cooling, but--to preserve the identification of passion with heat--think of it as a clammy cooling (so that it feels like a warming, as a decrease in air temperature accompanied by an increase in humidity is, depending upon the proportions of these changes, felt as an increase in temperature). ("The passions are merely different degrees of heat and cold of the blood," writes La Rochefoucauld. We do, in fact, feel"feverish" in the rare event of our body temperature's falling below normal.) Sadness is a muggy mental weather that, by depressing our spirit, tends to dampen perception; occasionally, it forms into drops and falls from the eyes, dousing (visual) perception thoroughly. For capability of disorientation, fear and anger are lust's true competitors. The sudden flaring up of fear may cause a burst of perspicuity and self-possession of action if, for example, our survival depends on it. Indeed, our survival's being at stake will, where anger is appropriate, make it possible, and, in such case, anger will be our salvation. (Hobbes defines anger as "sudden courage.") Still, fear and anger can as easily drive us to raging incoherence; in the heat of their moment we are capable of anything, including self-destruction. Love rocks us; sadness kills softly; and fear and anger kill in swift strokes.

Feeling and Intentionality

There is another respect in which lust straddles the boundary between emotion and sensation. But this requires a detour from poetical into more properly philosophical analysis.

Emotions have objects, particular things they are directed upon: if I love, I have the thought of some one thing (or person) or group of

things (or persons) I love; if I fear, I have the thought of what or who I fear; etc. Now, it may be argued that emotions are distinguished from sensations by this directness, by this connection with an object-in-mind. So we could know whether lust is an emotion or a sensation by seeing whether it has such an object.

But I'm not sure it will be so easy. For, like the emotions, certain of the sensations have a directing nature: hunger is linked with food as the means of its satisfaction; thirst has drink for its object; and (perhaps) itching and scratching. The existence of this sub-class notwithstanding, there is a criterion, suggested by Plato, on the basis of which we can distinguish emotions from sensations. "(Just) in itself," Plato writes, "thirst or hunger is a desire for nothing more than its natural object, drink or food, pure and simple....When the object is of such and such a particular kind, the desire will be correspondingly qualified."[21] Thus, a baby's or animal's "considering" food as object of its hunger, being less particularized, has less the aspect of thought than ours. It may be said, then, that love's "natural object" (NO) is the loved one or thing; that fear's NO is the feared one or thing, etc; here, the NO is particular; but, in the case of the object-including sensations, the NO is general. Admittedly, I often hunger for a particular food, and, just possibly, I can have a boundless (Christian) love or (un-Christian) hate, or experience a free-floating fear that is <u>not</u> the expression of a quite definite (object-centered), though repressed, fear. Still, it is correct to say that "in itself"--as more or less vaguely unpleasant sensation--hunger wants whatever relieves that sensation; it wants food "pure and simple." Likewise, itching solicits scratching, from whatever, or whomever, is at hand. On the

other hand, a love or hate directed upon all objects equally, a fear that can't find its one true object, are each perverse exceptions, (arguably) dependent for their intelligibility on an affinity with the unexceptional. Whatever the source of their intelligibility, it's clear that they do not represent the emotions "in themselves"; paradigmatically, love, hate, and fear are not egalitarian.

Now, it may be wondered whether resort to Plato's distinction is really necessary here. After all, when a baby is hungry, when it has sensations of hunger and announces to us, through its crying, that it is in need or nourishment, should we suppose that it even faintly represents to itself the means of its relief? Does it think the non-verbal equivalent of "Let it happen that I have Gerber's"? I have been talking as if a baby does think, though at a lower power of resolution than does an adult. But perhaps this is an overgenerous attribution. What we could do at this point is draw a distinction between two kinds of hunger, two kinds of need for food: felt hungers (understood needs that may or may not be associated with sensation; a psychological demand) and hungers felt (needs as they are expressed through sensation, with or without an idea, a felt hunger, appended; a physical demand). We could then say that though our baby needs to be nourished, and feels this need as a sensation in its gut, it doesn't know enough (because its experience is meager) to understand that consuming food will accomplish this. It desires nourishment without knowing anything. Thus, some hungers have NOs without having IOs. For a hunger to have both, the sensations linked to the NO must be properly <u>interpreted</u>, and this ability to understand the meaning of one's sensations comes only with training.

But this is too neat. If our infant doesn't think, then does it

"think"? Is there an analog of thinking? If so, what precisely do the quotes mean, and when do they come off? Is there a first representation as there is a first word? And would that be a sure starting point? After all, the first words uttered are probably never the first words meant. Then are the first representations also parroted? And if so, at what point does the baby's having thoughts become the baby's thinking? If we grant its hunger a general IO, we can think of its feeding as a quasi-action. This idea has the advantage of enabling us to trace a continuity between infant and adult, which continuity we're quite well convinced exists. Thus, thought is more or less refined; in an infant it is least refined. But it is there.

If we make the distinction between emotion and sensation depend, not on the presence or absence of thought, but rather on the refinement of the thought involved, into which category does hunger fall? Judged according to the criterion of exceptionalness, hunger falls into the class of sensation--just where we would expect it to be--since I may, quite unexceptionally, be hungry for nothing in particular. Into which category, then, does lust fall? It seems lust would be a sensation, since "horniness" (lust's generalized form) is, like the hunger for nothing in particular, but unlike agape or misanthropy, an ordinary sort of experience. But this analysis doesn't go far enough. For not even the most well-defined food-hungers are emotions, while sexual hungers with particular IOs seem to be. Perhaps this has something to do with the nature of the object. I'm not sure, really. Happily, it isn't my present purpose to settle this question.

Let me, then, assert what I take to be the moral of the last two sections. Our rough-and-ready distinctions between emotion and sensation,

and between emotion and thought, are not so reliable as traditional presentations of them suppose: emotion is (more or less) closely linked with sensation; and, pace Hume, emotion, and perhaps even some sensation, does have a "representative quality," an aspect of thought.

Desire and Will: What the Poets Say

Fire, fire, fire, fire!
Lo here I burn in such desire
That all the tears that I can strain
Out of mine idle, empty brain
Cannot allay my scorching pain
--Campion

Desire burns, as a passion should. When our prospects of satisfaction are good, we catch fire and are rocketed into action, "haughty spirit(s), winged with desire" (Henry V), but when satisfaction eludes us, we are stung, our spirits deflated, our reasoning power failed, incinerating as we crash to the ground.

This picture of desire accords well with our empiricists' view of desire as passion. Indeed, for Hobbes desire is the pre-eminent passion, the foundation of the other passions. Love is, according to him, just another name for desire. Romantic love is "love of one singularly, with desire to be singularly beloved." Hate is another name for aversion, which is negative desire, desiring-not. Fear is "aversion with opinion of hurt from the object." Anger is "fear with the (sudden) hope of avoiding that hurt by resistance." And lust is the "love of persons for pleasing the sense only."[22]

According to the poets, will is passion tamed, made reasonable and set to work in the production of action. Will is "the manufacturing spot" (Dickinson), the machinery of Deed.

The star of the unconquered will
He rises in my breast
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed
--Longfellow

Will is our steely part, our armament against the world. Plato, too, locates a "spirited element" in the breast. Whether this third of the Platonic soul should be identified with what later philosophers called will is a question I do not claim to answer confidently (indeed, Hannah Arendt has argued that the will was first discovered as such by the medieval churchmen, who sought a faculty of freedom in us), but I would like to call attention to the suggestiveness of Plato's discussion, to how well his description of the "spirited element"accords with the poetic conception of will. At first he supposes it to be a species of appetite, just as Hobbes makes will into a species of appetite or desire, but then finds that "when the soul is divided into factions, it is far more ready to be up in arms on the side of reason."[23] Our breast swells with indignation at the threat of unreason; we draw a last breath that braces, filling us with the cool air of determination, setting us for battle. Plato writes that it is "the natural auxiliary of reason, when not corrupted by bad upbringing,"[24] or when as yet undeveloped, as in children. Emerson reiterates Plato's militarism: "Will is the sustaining, coercive, and ministerial power--the police officer (in man)." It keeps a watch over our unruly appetites, guiding our conduct through minefields of temptation, under the banner of reason. If it is appetite, it is appetite of a very special kind, that for rational action, which, on the Platonic conception, isn't genuine appetite at all: it is appetite's commander.

This is, of course, at odds with Hume's conception of appetite as the commander of reason (and will.) The empiricists' receptiveness to the idea that will is the creature of appetite may be seen as a response to the excessive intellectualism of the Platonic view. It is clear that the portrayal of will as essentially reason-abiding, and full with resolve, is much too sanguine, an apt rendering of a portion of our experience perhaps (there are times when we display our "will-power" and avoid temptation), but certainly not a definitive account of will. The will is not always so serene and sensible. Sometimes the iron of our will is a hot iron; we can be too fervently resolute, hot-headedly resolute, willful, foolish. Sometimes it is cold dead, and we are unable to command the movement of a muscle.

Locke's ambivalence between an account of will as desire and an account of it as something over and above desire is at least partly explained by the contradictory evidence of our own experience: we may act from strength or from weakness. When the will is strong, when we fight temptation and win, it appears to transcend base appetite as an independent faculty; but when it is weak, when our best intentions are defeated, our will seems completely taken over, made one with its conqueror.

If intellectualism errs in giving us too much wisdom, a slave-of-desire romanticism errs in giving us too little. Its portrayal of appetite as essentially reason-abusing, as a blind fury, is much to sanguinary. Yes, some of our desires are "more sharp than filed steel" (Twelfth Night), cutting us live, but many of our desires, perhaps the bulk of them, are dull-edged, thoroughly innocuous.

Anthony Kenny writes that the empiricists must have been thinking

of "feelings of yearning or longing rather than the often quite unemotional contexts in which we say 'I want'..."[25] But it should be pointed out that there are quite unemotional contexts in which we say "I love" and "I fear" and yet we don't say on this account that love and fear aren't emotions. I fear that this criticism misses its mark. What Kenny says next is more telling. Though the emotions are distinguished by the desires associated with them (in this sense desire is the foundation of at least some of the passions), still "desire, in its most general sense, is not an emotion because it is not sufficiently closely connected with feelings."[26] It is a matter, then, of the connection with feelings, presumably bodily feelings, not being "sufficiently close" in the "general" case. Put this way, desire's falling outside the class of emotion is a matter of degree. Thus, Kenny's analysis of the connection between desire and emotion is of a piece with my analysis of the connection between emotion and sensation. We distinguish among these by noting how much bodily feeling, and also how much and what quality of thought, is typically involved. We give the name "desire" to those mental states typically unconnected, or distantly connected, with feelings, while "emotion" and "sensation" refer to mental states that are more urgently, or more regularly, felt.

This distinction by reference to the general case doesn't prevent us from calling food-hunger with a general IO, or even with no IO, "desire." And we can continue to refer to lust as the desire for sex, or for a sexual partner (indeed, "desire" and "passion" are often used by themselves to signify lust). Here there is a close connection with feelings, closer than in most cases of desiring. But where is the feeling in, say, my desiring to get to work on time, which may be said to explain why it

is I routinely set my alarm for 7 A.M. and take the "D" train to my office rather than the "N"? And what about my quite spontaneous desire to catch that new Truffaut movie? Where is the feeling there? And what about my considered opinion that Ralph Nader would make a fine President; this is as much desire as my craving for coffee ice cream, yet there is no feeling of craving. Even if this were an intense desire of mine, I might call it "craving," but there wouldn't be a feeling of craving; it's just not that sort of desire. Indeed, if Kenny is right, most desires aren't of that sort.

So Plato's treatment of desire as a blousy menace, an inside agitator, is not a treatment of desire "in its most general sense." Some of our desires have their homes in gut and groin, but others of them, relatives, live in the heart (our "heart's desire" lacks the urgency of physical sensation that attaches to the "lower" desires, but it is purer somehow), and others still live in the head, as discreet opinions, good neighbors. These may be long-time residents, in which case the rush of feeling accompanying first residence, if ever such was felt, may have been replaced by quiet enjoyment of the premises; or they may be transients, just passing through, possibly boisterous, or even belligerent, but not necessarily so.

To the extent that the poets treat desire as noisy neighbors, they treat desire in a most particular sense. But we shouldn't look to poets for a comprehensive (much less a definitive) account of desire (or will or any concept); we should look to them for penetrating accounts of particular applications of such concepts. It is not surprising that they focus on the sense of desire as inside agitator, for it is of the highest practical importance for us to come to terms, even if only terms of

recognition, with what is most unsettling in us. What could the poet make of my desire to see Ralph Nader President? Why would he bother?

So, if a philosopher is beguiled by the poetic view and takes feelings of craving or yearning or longing as definitive of desire, and if he holds that such gross feeling is universally present when we act, then he is certainly wrong. Our empiricists' identification of desire with passion is one sign that they make this mistake. For desire isn't identifiable as exclusively passional, or sensational or intellectual. The empiricists' view is too narrow; but is it too narrow in the way that Kenny suggests? It is one thing to take feelings of craving as a paradigm for desire (as the quintessence of desire), and another to take them as definitive of desire and essential to action. A paradigm is the best, most typical, or most interesting (to poets, say) of a kind; a definition circumscribes the whole kind, best and worst, typical and untypical, interesting and uninteresting, all alike.

Two Kinds of Desire

The empiricists' identification of desire with passion--with a "violent and sensible emotion of the mind"--is misleading; we are led to think that desire must be violent and sensible. But the truth is that not even passion must be violent and sensible on the most sophisticated empiricist account, Hume's. The above characterization of passion is itself <u>not</u> a definition.

Locke attempts to reconcile a feeling theory of action with the appearance of feelinglessness of habitual and spontaneous action by positing "a thousand... irregular desires," barely perceptible, because low-level uneasinesses ("bare velleities"), spurring such action.[27] Hume

adopts this sophistication in his conception of "calm passion," which, being a "soft" emotion, is an exception to the general rule. But he goes even further in modifying feeling theory.

> Tis evident passions influence not the will in proportion to their violence, or the disorder they occasion in the temper; but on the contrary, that when a passion has once become a settled principle of action, and is the predominant inclination of the soul, it commonly produces no longer any sensible agitation. As repeated custom and its own force have made everything yield to it, it directs the actions and conduct without that opposition and emotion which so naturally attend every momentary gust of passion. We must, therefore, distinguish betwixt a calm and a weak passion betwist a violent and a strong one.[28]

Thus, a desire may be calm and yet stronger than a co-present desire that is violent; a quiet disposition may, if it is firm enough, vanquish momentary enticement, and determine the will after its own law. ("Passions are likened best to floods and streams: the shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb"--Sir Walter Raleigh!)

It might be thought that Hume abandons feeling theory in this passage for (1) he writes that a passion may cause no "sensible agitation" and (2) he grants a conception of desire as motive distinct from the conception of desire as feeling--thus rejecting Locke's claim that "desire... is greater or less as...uneasiness is more or less vehement."[29] But, in point of fact, Hume is not denying that we feel an appetitive something when we act from firm disposition; rather, he desires that what we feel is gust-like. If we "examine objects with a strict philosophic eye," that is, observe ourself closely and discriminatingly, we will discover the "little emotion in the mind" that is calm passion.[30]

Now, emotion may be so slight, so placid, that it is, taken for

thought, though not mistaken for thought, for reason is, on Hume's view, a calm determination of passion. (His statement that "reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions," is not meant as an admonition; nor is it an observation that, purely as a matter of fact, reason is always vanquished by passion; rather, it is an observation that a determination of the intellect, that a particular proposition is true, say, can move us to action only if its being true engages our "emotion" somehow, as by carrying with it the promise of the greater good or pleasure. Thus, inference needs preference, belief needs desire, for action to be initiated. I'll have more to say on this claim later.)

To say that thought is calm passion is not to say that all thought is calm (just as saying that desire is not "closely connected" with feelings, at least with gross feelings, isn't saying that all desire is intellectual). Thought is generally calm, and passion generally violent, Hume claims.

Hume distinguishes between the "violent" passions and our "senses" of beauty and deformity ("calm" appraisals), but admits that this is a "vulgar and specious division" ("The raptures of music and poetry frequently rise to the greatest height; while...(the passions) may decay into so soft an emotion as to become, in a manner, imperceptible") which is, nevertheless, useful for some analytic purposes.[31] (Notice that Hume says the passions may become in a manner imperceptible, implying that there is a manner in which they are perceptible; they are perceptible to the "strict philosophic eye.") The distinction between passion and reason is, likewise, vulgar, at least insofar as it represents passion as dependably brutish and reason as dependably wise. Thus it is that when passion subjugates reason, this is not necessarily a victory for raucous bad taste or the furies of unreason.

Such refinements as these tend to blur the traditional distinction

between thought and emotion, and, as a consequence, they make the characterization of action's desire as a thoughtless "spur," as a dumb feeling that has to be policed to keep from doing harm, as by the will, implausible.

Consider, now, the following passages:

From Leviathan:

> Of appetites and aversions, some are born with men, as appetite of food, appetite of excretion, and exoneration, which may also and more properly be called aversions from somewhat they feel in their bodies; and some other appetites, not many. The rest, which are appetites of particular things, proceed from experience and trial of their effects upon themselves or other men.[32]

From the Treatise:

> Desire arises from good considered simply, and aversion is derived from evil...(or else they) arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies, and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites. These passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like the other affections.[33]

These are quite similar attempts to distinguish among our desires in terms of their connectedness with valuation, with thought. Some of our desires are "born with" us, built into our constitution: hunger is built into our body;"the desire of punishment to our enemies" lacks hunger's close connection with physical upset, with sensation, but it is, nevertheless, ours instinctually, Hume claims. In each case our desire is something primitive. Others of our desires are derived from our "consideration of good and evil" (from our experience of the pleasant and painful effects of things), and some of these are particularized forms of the primitive desires, for example, my hunger for coffee ice cream

or my desire for revenge against you for saying terrible things behind my back. (My desire to see Ralph Nader President isn't a particularized form of a primitive desire; none of the primitive desires are so baldly political, I don't suppose, though one might argue that it is a consequence of my desire to help friends and harm enemies together with some of my expectations concerning Nader's actions in office. That such desire is primitive, as Hume claims, needs to be shown, of course.) It seems to me that this distinction between constitutionally- and experience-determined desires is warranted. For some of our desires are more refined, have more the aspect of thought, than others. I have invoked Plato's distinction between hunger and thirst in themselves and particularized hungers and thirsts; Hobbes and Hume simply extend the distinction to cover others of the desires. Hunger is a constitutional imperative, and, as such, has an NO, and possibly a general IO; through our experience, our trial of various foods, it is made more particular, taking on, thereby, more of an aspect of thought. Hobbes and Hume suggest other constitutional imperatives capable of developing a more intricate representational content, some of them not at all bodily. Of course, we needn't accept their candidates for such status to grant the general distinction. Sexual desire ("sexual hunger") seems a likely candidate, though, as it is born with us, Hume and Freud agree. This desire is a feature of our animal constitution; thus, when we are "horny," sexually hungry for no one in particular, our experience is much like that of a dog in heat. Now, both man and dog are capable of sexual hungers for particular partners. To the extent that lust has a particular object, its thought aspect is correspondingly heightened: it discriminates. Too, it may be said that a predilection for a certain

partner is a form of approval, a positive valuation. Though we are able to put such desire-valuations to ourself as propositions and dogs are not, it would be chauvinistic to say on this account that when a dog chooses a certain partner for sex play, it does something very different from what we do. Dogs do approve and disapprove, of sexual partners, brands of chow, places to sleep, etc., though the objects of their thought aren't nearly so numerous and various as ours, nor nearly as well-defined as ours can be. Dogs are capable of desires that pertain to particular things, but not of desires that pertain to particular things in distant times or places. Thus, we can distinguish between those experience-determined desires that require language for their formation and those that don't. Only a language-user could, at this time, desire intercourse with Lulu at her place a week from Thursday.

J. N. Findlay makes an interesting distinction between "warm-blooded, passionate, emotional wanting" and "unemotional, dispassionate, cold-blooded wanting," which is, essentially, an attempt to tie together the two distinctions we've been working at: that between desires closely connected to bodily feeling and desires unconnected or distantly connected to such feeling, and that between desires with particular intentional objects and desires with at most a general intentional object. He explains:

> The empirical development of emotional wants is not without an a priori foundation: the tendency of emotional wants to have an unpractical expression in the inner economy of the body, in disturbances of the digestive, glandular, circulatory and other facts that represent the 'night side' of conscious life, and in the sensations attendant on such disturbances. The direction towards emotionality is a direction towards detachment from the exactly cognized object and the well-regulated response.... Being such a direction, it must tend to move towards

> the least practical, least object-bound of expressions, and these are none other than the disturbances of our internal body economy, and the barely describable sense-experiencee issuing from them.[34]

Thus, some wants tend to cause great emotional upset, and these tend to be expressed as bodily upset rather than as determinate thought or purposive conduct. Others are more a part of the cognitive life than the life of emotion. There is no emotion "specifically connected with stamp-collecting," Findlay points out.[35] (He suggests that emotional upset has its roots in frustration. I'm sure this is one source of upset, but I expect we also have to say something about the perceived importance of the object of our desire: if it's a trifle, we do not bother to be bothered.)

The distinction between desire as constitutional imperative and desire as valuation made, it is necessary to say that this is every bit as vulgar as the distinctions between passion and the "senses" and between passion and reason. Indeed, it is a special case of the distinction between passion and reason when the desire-valuation is, as Hume would say, the effect of good (pleasure) considered simply, or when it is the end of a chain of reasoning whose inferential warrant is the consideration of pleasure (the desire to see Nader President is an example); and it is a special case of the distinction between passion and the "senses" when the desire-valuation involves, say, the aesthetic quality of a particular object, when it is the effect of beauty (aesthetic pleasure) considered simply (as would be my desire to hear that new Elvis Costello record again). To say this distinction is vulgar is to say that, just as the experience of a passion isn't necessarily more

upsetting, than, say, our sense of a thing's beauty, so the incidence of a constitutional desire isn't necessarily more upsetting than, say, our desire that the Yankees win the pennant.

To hold that all these distinctions are vulgar, in the sense indicated, is to undercut the hallowed view opposing passion and reason and to deny what some critics charge our empiricists accept, namely, that desire is a gross feeling, with no aspect of thought, that, causing movement, makes such movement action. It will not do to refute the feeling theory of action to point out that not every manifestation of desire is a feeling of yearning or longing. For the desirous man can be a calm soul, depending on the quality of his desire. If you are moved by a constitutional desire with little or no aspect of thought, or by an experience-determined desire that, through being frustrated, say, generates only the most unfocussed thought, then you are enslaved; but if you are moved by an evaluative desire, you are motivated.

It is common to find contemporary philosophers designating desire a variety of "propositional attitude." Reports of desire are held to relate, in a distinctive way (desire's way), agents and propositions or inscriptions. Thus, "Ralph Nader desires coffee ice cream" relates the agent Nader and the inscription "(that he have) coffee ice cream." This inscription is itself neutral between attitudes: Nader may <u>desire</u> its realization, or <u>fear</u> its realization, or <u>believe</u> it is, will be, or has been realized, etc. Properly speaking, this is not thought; it is thought's content, the mental equivalent of an inscription. Now it is desire's content, but it may also be fear's or belief's. What makes a desire a desire, and not another sort of experience, is a distinctive attitude toward, or mode of entertaining, this neutral subject matter. An intentional content is, necessarily, a part of desire, at

least of those not constitutionally-determined, but does not mark it as desire. Something else must color mere content in such a way as to give it its peculiar subjective quality, to make the thought mine, and to make it mine in desire's peculiar way. Attitudes are what give experience its quality of partiality; and we can be partial in various ways.

Kenny suggests that we can report a desire by the metaphorical use of oratia recta,[36] specifically, by using a quoted optative expression. Thus, "Ralph Nader desires coffee ice cream" could be rendered as "Ralph Nader says in his heart 'Let it happen that I have coffee ice cream.'" This is easily accommodated to propositional attitude talk. It may be said that this way of reporting a desire relates an agent, in desire's way, put here as "...says in his heart 'Let it happen...,'" to an inscription, "that I have coffee ice cream." (This strategy is applicable to other sorts of experience, too. Indeed, Kenny is here following Peter Geach, who treats reports of judgments as sayings in one's heart of a peculiarly judgmental kind. Instead of "Let it happen..." we get "It is the case...")[37]

If the argument of this section is right, then talk of desire needn't be supplemented by talk of precedent or consequent (willing) thoughts, just because desire has, or can have, a propositional content in itself. But we can agree to treat desire as encompassing both an attitude and a content without at the same time agreeing to treat it as a feature of our conscious experience, which is, after all, the heart of the theory we're considering. The feeling theorist may consent to treat desire as bipartite if he thinks this will make our experience of ourself in action whole again, and if he isn't overwhelmed by the melodrama of the poets' reason/passion distinction. But it remains to be

shown that our conscious life is, in fact, the true source of voluntariness. That is the ultimate goal of this thesis. There is much ground-clearing to be done first.

Right now I want to explore the tension between a sensationalist and an intellectualist account of desire as it appears in Hume, because, in his struggle to remain coherent on the subject, Hume presenta a thesis--that of the calm passions--which offers feeling theory the beginnings of a hope for making intelligible to skeptics that state of consciousness it supposes is at the root of all intentional action. I briefly treated this thesis in the preceding section, where my principal aim was to distinguish between contentful and contentless desires; now I want to use it to suggest the possibility that a desire may <u>feel</u> a special way and yet have the most sophisticated of contents.

Calm Passion, Attitude and Feeling

For Hume, desire and volition, like pride and humility, are passions, and so are looked on as packages of sensation. Of course, he does allow a pride-package a natural content (some accomplishment or quality of ourself, or of someone closely related to us) and a natural destination (a bit or pattern of self-congratulatory conduct). And he must allow as well that a desire-package has a natural content (some unrealized possibility) and a natural destination (a bit or pattern of striving conduct). The difference between Hume's view of the connection between desire and its object, as it is presented here, and the view implicit in the treatment of desire as a propositional attitude is that here content belongs to desire only because of the way our mind is constructed (because of "an original and natural instinct"), while for the propositional attitude theorist content belongs to desire because it is part of the concept.

Hume grants that desiring involves thinking thoughts and intending actions, but his explaining this by referring to the physical geography of our mind, rather than the logical geography of the concept, suggests a picture of desire as, in itself, a kind of benightment. It is as if desire inhabits a dark, subterranean world, deep inside us, to which thinking (which is nearer the surface) and action (which is at the surface) are connected) quite fortuitously, by narrow passageways. Had these passageways never existed--were our natural instinct to thought and action altered--it is implied that our inner world would nevertheless remain intact. This is a strange picture, indeed.

If we are tempted to ascribe such a view to Hume, that is probably attributable to his strong commitment to associationist principles of explanation. It's clear that, in some passages at least,Hume wants to identify passion, and desire specifically, as pure feeling, as feeling uncontaminated by thought. His general distinction between reason and passion reflects this sensationalist mood:

> Reason is the discovery of truth and falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the <u>real</u> relations of ideas, or to <u>real</u> existence and matters of fact.... Now tis evident our passions, volitions, and actions are not susceptible of any such agreement or disagreement; being original facts and realities, complete in themselves, and implying no reference to other passions, volitions, and actions.[38]

Thus, reason is representative, and passion is non-representative. Reason speaks of many things, but passion is mute, an inarticulate commotion;[39] it may have an outward cause or object or subject, but its inner nature expresses nothing of this. Conceivably, we could be proud and never think of ourself, or desirous and not think of an unrealized

possibility. But more: Hume has reason "serve and obey" passion in the production of action. The rationale for this debasement of reason is simple: by it we discover what is true and false, but this is insufficient to determine our attitude toward the reality represented. He writes:

> It can never in the least concern us to know that such subjects are causes, and such others effects, if both the causes and effects be indifferent to us. Where the objects themselves do not affect us, their connection can never give them any influence.[40]

So, we can't be indifferent if we are to act; we have to care. And feeling must be the source of caring. (If our mental world divides us into reason and feeling, with no remainder, there's nothing left to do this work.) So, passion is our vital center, our molten core, and if there is activity at the surface, that is owing to a disturbance beneath it. But since passion, volition, and action are original facts, and so "imply no reference" to each other, they do not need each other to be complete in themselves. Thus, pride and desire may have an outward effect, in action, but, if we go by their inner natures, you could be proud of an accomplishment and not be inclined even to boast of it, or desirous of attaining some prize and not be inclined even to strive for it. (I wonder: could you be proud and disparage yourself? Desirous and eschew what you desire?) As Hume sees it, then, pride is, in itself, a detached "Attaboy!" feeling, and desire a detached "Let it happen !" feeling, detached, that is, from even the most skimpily determined content and intent.

Now, if the intentional and action-tending qualities of desire are to be explained away as accidents of physical nature, Hume has a problem;

he has just the problem Hobbes has: to make desire and volition into credible motives for action. For if you hold that the "being and essence" of these are the sensations themselves, and that sensation is connected to thought by association alone, you suggest the possibility of having the sensation, and, hence, the action, as an effect without having thought. But this takes the rationality of out of agency. How can a man intentionally run for President, which is to say that he desires to run for President, without some thought (conscious or not) to the effect that it would be nice to be President (or a spoiler or a figure in the public eye or...)? Plainly, he can't. Desires like this one require a thought-quality or component even if some desires are pure sensations. I think the necessity here goes beyond what any associationist psychology can offer. Hume appears to be saying: when I desire I have a sensation that, as it happens, is accompanied by the idea that it would be nice if p were the case. What makes this sensation a desire, and not another experience, is its special feel--the sensational equivalent of "Let it happen..."--and not its link with any idea. The counterthesis is that there is no "as it happens" about the link between desire and thought: when we talk about desire--some desire at least--we must talk about thought. But perhaps there need be no real opposition here. If we hold that the "essence" of a desire is its contentless feeling, that may only mean that any desire whatever has this non-thought component, and not that any desire whatever can be the desire it is and lack a thought-component. Thus, it will turn out that some desires do bypass thought entirely (because they are too simple, too primitive to require thought) and eventuate in motion; but whether this motion should be called action is doubtful, and that it should not be called intentional action is certain. On the other hand, to intentionally run for President requires

both an attitude and a content, a feeling (if feeling theory is right) and a thought.

The view of passion as a thoroughly objectless, effectless proto-valuation, along with the opinion of its sharp opposition to reason that is its corollary, is, happily, undermined by much else that Hume says, particularly by his doctrine of the calm passions. For if some thought just is calm feeling, then it must be the case that some feeling, some calm feeling, just is thought. And if they're identical, their connection can't be an accident of nature. Thus, at least some of our cooler desires just are discreet opinions, representations to ourselves of a thing's worth. What's right about Hume's distinction between reason and passion is his insistence that you have to be "affected" by the truth, have a point-of-view toward it, to be "influenced" into action concerning it. What's surely wrong in his treatment is the double suggestion (1) that the partiality required must be non-rational or irrational, and (2) that the thinking we do that leads to action must be bloodless and impartial. These are caricatures, and it appears from his notion of the calm passions, and also from his treatment of belief as feeling, that Hume is aware of this. Passages such as the following smudge the firm line Hume elsewhere draws between feeling and thinking.

> An idea assented to feels different from a fictitous idea that the fancy alone presents to us.... (Belief) consists not in the nature and order of our ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and in their feeling to the mind.[41]

So belief, like desire, has an attitude to it; desire is not all attitude and belief is not all proposition.

We can now ask whether giving belief an attitude is giving it a

feeling, and whether giving desire a thought is attaching a proposition to a feeling. This is just the question I mean to answer before this thesis is completed, at least as it pertains to action's belief, action's desire. But Hume's account of belief's attitude, in terms of the intensity of feeling--rather than the quality of it--seems the wrong way to go from here. When I believe something particularly strongly, I don't necessarily feel anything more sharply than when I believe something ordinarily. And even if I do, that can't be the distinguishing characteristic of this attitude. After all, I can disbelieve something strongly, too.

Now, I think that the double claim (1) that desire can be thoughtful and (2) that belief is an attitude is non-controversial. Some desires may consist of "Let it happen" attitudes with no intentional content at all, but other desires--that to run for President, say--are attached (conceptually, not associationally) to particular thoughts, or else they would not be the desires they are; and belief, which must always involve a determinate, if general, content is a distinctive way of apprehending a content (also a distinctive orientation to action with respect to such content), whatever else it is. The further claim that the attitudes here are feelings, or dispositions to feelings at least, is controversial, of course. Say we accept all this, which is, I believe, implicit in Hume's doctrine of the calm passions. In that case, the feeling theorist will have met the easy objection to his theory, namely, that most of our desires are not the rudely disturbing attention-grabbers we commonly think feelings to be. According to crudely sensationalist accounts, desire is just an agitator, and is itself utterly thoughtless (hence the need for will). Now, we can read Hume as claiming, through the doctrine

of the calm passions, what is denied by this crude philosophy, namely, that some of our desires are in themselves thoughtful. This eliminates the need for an utterly feelingless will to complement--to control--licentious desire.

We could go on to read Hume as claiming here that when a desire is a thought this is so in virtue of its calmness alone. But this would shut out our warmer desires and the impassioned actions arising from them. If only our cooler desires were thoughtful, then we would be acting only where these hold sway. But though the very hottest of our impassioned actions may be thought of as reactions (crimes of passion are at least partly mitigated on this ground), it's just wrong to think that thoughtfulness decreases as emotional warmth increases. To presume this reading of Hume, however, is to presume that he offers an uncomplicated coupling of the thoughtful with the calm and the thoughtless with the violent; but this is belied by Hume's demure introduction of the distinction between the calm and the violent passions. In fact we find him writing that "certain variations in (the situation of the object) will be able to change the calm and the violent passions into each other"[42]: the nearer, or more immediate, the object of one's passion, the more violent the passion. Put the object at a sufficient distance and you calm the passion to the point where the "little emotion" that is left is called, "vulgarly,"[43] thought. It's not that the same object can cause one of two sorts of passion, depending upon its nearness; it's the same passion, whatever the distance. Now, the suggestion that it's proximity that really matters here is dubious; after all, doesn't absence sometimes make the heart grow fonder? But there is a sensible point in this. Hume seems to be saying: there would be no vulgarity

in calling our cooler experience thought if this were not ordinarily seen as denying it an aspect of feeling, and, thereby, distinguishing it in kind, rather than degree, from the passions proper. And so it may be wondered whether Hume would grant this vulgarity a counterpart on the other side of the passional spectrum. Might it not be the case that, in distinguishing thought from passion as we ordinarily do, we overlook our warmer experience's aspect of thought? Might it not be that more of our desires are thoughtful than are ostensibly so? Is there a doctrine of violent valuations to match the doctrine of calm passions?

Are There Violent Valuations?

When we get angry, or are smitten with desire, we are apt to suffer lapses in judgment. If we are driven enough, we are distracted, unable to see our situation clearly, unable to see the prudent response, though this would be plain to us had we our usual self-possession. In such a state, we may act impulsively; and after, sobered by the realization of what damage we've done, or what asses we've made of ourself, we come to regret our action, and apologize for it, announcing: "I'm sorry. I got carried away. I wasn't thinking." Of course, I was carried no place; this is a figure of speech. I am saying: "I must have been carried to this place: someone of my basic decency would not come here except under foul influence." But isn't it also a figure of speech to say I wasn't thinking? I am saying: "I must not have been thinking: someone as sensible as I would not act in this way unless my mind were not my own." This is a polite sham. For the "foul influence" just is my own wayward thinking. As I looked hard into your eyes, I was thinking how rotten it was of you to say those things about me behind my back, and I was thinking how fine it would be to make you pay for your treachery. And as I struck you, I

was thinking how well-deserved was the drubbing. I was thinking badly perhaps, but I was thinking. To be sure, I didn't experience a neat parade of whole thoughts on the order of "You said I was a ratfink," "That was a terrible thing to say," "You were wrong to do this," "People who do wrong should be punished," "Conking someone on the head is fit punishment for such an act," "How fine it would be to make you pay for this with a conk on your head!"...each immaculately turned out, one following another, ineluctably, ceremoniously, in a straight-arrow line of march. This would be reasoning, or the archetype, or a burlesque, of reasoning, whose premises present themselves in full demonstration dress, clean-cut figures forming a rigorous procession to a clear-cut conclusion. Against this standard, the majority of my thinking is a random concourse of the great unwashed, a ragtag of the disheveled and the desultory. I think in half- and quarter-thoughts, and in infinitesimals. When I am hopping mad, or wild with desire, I am, usually, incompletely articulate, and often completely inarticulate. I may not be able to speak my thoughts intelligibly, may not even be able to think them to myself coherently. And yet I act purposively. I will strike you because you have done me wrong and so deserve this. My thinking is as hurried and unruly as a rush-hour crowd; but it is, like such a crowd, not without direction. There's a point to all the teeming and the pushing: I have business to attend to.

If I could separate my thoughts, one from another, see consequences, think things through, I would not act as I do. But in my charged-up state no such broad-mindedness is possible. My thinking is unequivocal, single-minded, one-track, narrow. It has the inflexibility of the march of reasoning, and its result the inexorability of logical conclusion,

but lacks all reasonableness, that readiness to be self-critical, to reconsider starting points and ground rules, expose shaky premises and false deductions, give up the argument if it deserves giving up. Without such procedural suppleness, I can easily be "carried away," to the hasty, ill-advised conclusion or action.

My action is purposeive if there is thought behind it, but whether I act fully intentionally, whether my guilt is mitigated in any degree, depends on the particulars of the case: how great was the provocation? how quick was the response? how "understandable" was my action under the circumstances? (how would the "reasonable man"likely behave, would he behave as "unreasonably"?), etc. Not every crime committed while impassioned is a "crime of passion"; and the distinguishing mark of the latter is not the absence of thought; it's the presence of particularly keenly felt thought. Here the "necessity" of the ensuing action approaches that of acting on a constitutional imperative. ("I had to kill him, he destroyed my happy home"; "I had to eat, I was starving.")

Now, the course of my thinking here, in impassioned action generally, may be reconstructed, put into the form of a practical syllogism, the relevant propositional attitudes, the beliefs and desires, recorded as relations of agent to inscriptions, the action shown to follow, according to a practical logic, from these premises, and explained thereby. But it should be kept in mind that this is an ideal representation. I do not believe and desire in neat inscriptions, and I do not reason in mincing steps. The actual course of my thinking is inelegant, harried, unkempt. My beliefs and desires only rarely enjoy a fully coherent verbal existence. Of course, the more agitated I am, the less likely it is that they will be manifested in this way. My agitated thinking

may be verbalized, in whole or fractured sentences, single words, silent or spoken discourse, descants, prayers, cheers, epithets. I may fall into verbalizing, or make a special effort "to put my feelings into words," to indicate the proposition that describes my attitude, to explain myself and my action; but I needn't actually explain myself in these terms, not even to myself, to be explicable in these terms. The practical syllogism may properly be thought of as completing my thought--by filling in the words and steps missing from the actual course of my thinking--only if it is not also seen as giving the truest picture of my experience. The syllogism exhibits the principled side of my thinking, disembodies it, collects my thoughts, sorts them, spruces them up, sets them at step's length from one another, shows the logical form of my experience, the point, the business, the explicability of it. The clutter of coarse feelings I suffer, the emotional and bodily perturbations that fill out my experience, is brushed aside in this, as it only obscures the intelligibility of my action. I act in virtue of the beliefs and desires I have formed; these are the principles of my action, the reasons I act as I do. They may be, partly or even wholly, effects of what I passively undergo, my poor reaction to hearing of your treachery, say, but are not to be identified with what merely provoke them, at least not when I am acting fully intentionally.

The poet reconstructs my experience, too. But differently. In making desire into a terrible bully, and the likely conqueror of will, he suggests a false picture of the life of the mind in action. Yet he is not wrong to do this. His distortion is justified since it brings into relief what might otherwise go unappreciated, or only superficially appreciated, namely, the coercive element in our experience, the truth

of our suffering. Likewise, the syllogism suggests a false picture of the life of the mind in action, making desire into a well spoken supplicant ("Let it happen..,"), and action into the considered and just response of a magisterial will. Its rationale is that, in so doing, it brings into relief what may otherwise go ignored, or indistinctly perceived, namely, the evaluative or calculative element in our experience, the truth of our ability to remedy suffering through the prudent response. This element is evident in prototypical cases of deliberation, and in cool premeditation, but is apt to be overlooked in our more impassioned experience, where our action approaches mere reaction the more explosive it is, but also in our quotidian experience--habit's habitat--where action follows action monotonously and with such casualness that it seems entirely innocent of design. The poet shows us that we are less in command than we sometimes think we are; and the syllogist that we are more in command than we other times think we are. Neither reconstruction is dispensible.

So, thought needn't be explicit, laid bare, in our experience of ourself in action for the action to be thoughtful. I can be thinking even while perturbed; though the message is scrambled in the emotional static of the moment, it is not lost. I can think very noisily.

But also very quietly, as in habitual action, where calmness embraces action so utterly, it seems the sum and substance of our experience. When Hume refers to the passion that has "become a settled principle of action," as the result of "repeated custom," he is saying: though the thought in our calm passion hardly shows itself, it is authoritatively there: the "little emotion in the mind" when we act from habit is rich with accumulated experience. Thus, the size of a

desire-package has no relation to the value of its contents (our heart's dearest desire needn't occasion great emotional upset or long sober deliberation), nor to the distance it may travel (a desire causing little turbulence or explicit thought may determine our conduct, even our most consequential conduct, over long periods of time). The moral is that powerful things sometimes come in small packages. (Of course, we could accept the presence of thought here without accepting its presence in consciousness. That's still to be argued.)

So, a feeling theory of action fails if it could be shown either (1) that the impassioned actions arising from our warmer desires have no aspect of thought, or (2) that the habitual actions arising from our cooler desires have no aspect of thought or feeling. But Hume's doctrine of the calm passions, if true, counts against the latter objection, and the plausibility of representing our warmer experiences as valuations or calculations of a non-epitomic sort--the doctrine of violent valuations--counts against the former.

This lengthy survey of some of the historical background of feeling theory requires a summary section in which conclusions are sharply drawn. I shall attempt to assemble these conclusions into a workable outline of a feeling theory of action, "workable" in the sense that it presents an intelligible--and so arguable--claim about the nature of an agent's experience.

Sketch of a Theory of Action

In examining the feeling theories of three classical philosophers, we noticed that each explains action as the immediate effect of a conscious state called volition or will. The questions of the nature of will, and of its relation to desire, are addressed differently, and not

always clearly and unambivalently, by the three. Since it is the first responsibility for a feeling theory of action to say just what sort of feeling it proposes is crucial to action--to bring our attention to it and make it seem credible as a source of voluntariness--we should be interested to know why its proponents can't seem to get together on a characterization. To be sure, the matter is complicated by Locke's and Hume's appeals to the supposed simplicity, hence ineffability, of such conscious states as volitions; but even if we look to their accounts of will's relation to desire, we get a disconcerting lack of agreement.

Hobbes says will is just any desire eventuating in motion; Locke first agrees, then changes his mind and warns against identifying will with desire; Hume doesn't argue for their identity, but asserts that desire causes will, thus raising (and not really addressing) the important question of the degree of will's independence from desire. What's the significance of this tension in and among their treatments? Just this: the feeling theorist is likely to fail at fixing attention to the distinctive feeling-of-action unless he is careful to divert attention from what isn't a volition. Locke means to divert our attention from desire, which he describes as an uneasy feeling: we shall fail at making volition seem a credible source of voluntariness if we think of it in these terms.

The inclination to keep desire and will well apart is clear. For if desire is nothing but an uneasy feeling, then to be moved by desire is substantially like being moved by a stab of pain; but this is sheer vulnerability on our part. Pure feeling may force motion, but we need judgment--in the form of a judging will--to make motion ours, to make it intelligent, to make it action. I have argued that Locke's account of

our experience of ourself in action, as involving both a desire-feeling and a volition-thought, unnecessarily bifurcates this experience. While he is correct to warn against identifying volition with certain of our desires--the constitutional imperatives in their unparticularized forms almost certainly can't qualify as volitions--it is a mistake to think that no desires can be volitions. For some desires have propositional contents--and thus are not pure feelings--and some of these are representations to ourself of the worth of a particular course of action.

Now I shall state my thesis in dogmatic form (the rest of the dissertation clarifies and emends this spare statement). I maintain that the proximate cause or ground of intentional action is a conscious mental event--called a volition, and properly identified as a desire of the agent's--which is or expresses a propositional attitude of the form: "Let it happen right now that I..,X," where X is some course of action (or, more properly, motion) I believe is open to me. To identify volition in this way, as cause or ground, is simply to say that it is the source of action's judgmental quality.

The reason it is proper to call volition a desire is that the attitude involved in volition is substantially the same as that involved in desire: "Let it happen..." That the term "desire" connotes emotional agitation and intellectual poverty, both in the poetic and in the popular conception, is not to be denied; but, as I think I've shown, a careful analysis indicates that there are quite unemotional--in fact, intellectual--contexts in which we say "I desire." This broad sense of "desire" seems to me in no way incompatible with our idea of volition as a kind of rational endorsement of a course of action. If desire's "Let it happen" attitude can run from "hot" to "cold", as Findlay might say, then

there ought to be no objection to thinking of volition as a kind of desire, to wit, the cooler kind. The disadvantage of this practice is the clash with poetic and popular conception; the advantage is in keeping our action vocabulary trim and manageable, and in fending off any temptation to an "assembly-line" view of action, according to which smart will has to be added onto dumb desire to yield intentional action in the way a steering wheel has to be added onto a motor vehicle to yield a functioning automobile. (I'm using "rational" and "cool" in broad senses, too. As my treatment of the doctrine of violent valuations makes clear, it is possible for volition to endorse a course of action that is short-sighted and self-destructive. Volition doesn't add intelligence to desire: it adds focus on the present moment as one propitious for the execution of a desire we have, whether this is smart or dumb, oriented to the short or long run. For a fuller defense of the view of volition as "effective desire" see Chapter III.)

What distinguishes a desire-volition from other sorts of desires, then, are (a) the reference to a possible course of action, in particular, a"favorable" attitude to taking such action; and (b) the quality of immediacy ("right now") built into the attitude.

To say that a volition "is or expresses" a propositional attitude of a certain form is <u>not</u> to imply that the words "Let it happen...," or, indeed, any coherent form of words at all, need be uttered, vocally or subvocally, just prior to action. Action from habit and spontaneous action are both clear enough counterexamples to any such claim. Perhaps we should say, then, that volition "is" a propositional attitude where there are such words and merely "expresses" one where there aren't. But what then is the force of "expresses"? We can fairly well see how a form

of words--in writing, in speech, or in conscious thought--may "express" an idea (though our analyses of what this comes to may not agree), but what can it possibly mean to say that an idea is expressed though the page is blank, the voice is mute, and consciousness otherwise engaged? What sort of activity is it that is not verbal but is intellectual?

I should like to suggest that, while the state of consciousness immediately preceding (causing or grounding) action may be a fully articulated thought, it may just as well be a relatively unarticulated one, too. My concept of an unarticulated thought is that of a word-poor thought. I will have to explain what this is and where, in the background of an action, it comes from.

We have some understanding of what it means to say of a writer of philosophy, say, that he is trying to express a difficult idea but his prose is not up to the task. Of course, it is possible that he is deluding himself about the coherency of his idea--his failure to find the words suggests the possibility of some basic confusion--but it may just be that the idea is a fine point and his language is too coarsely-grained to capture it. He's not making himself clear. Now, I expect there is no particular difficulty in seeing how this same process of trying to make oneself clear can occur purely privately, in the writer's own conscious mind, as well as publicly, on a notebook page: some of the fillings-in and crossings-our that are natural parts of the process of writing are accomplished before ink touches paper. (Ryle has overdone the public side of problem-solving, while other philosophers have overdone the private side.) What does all of this have to do with volition?

Volition is the having of an idea just before action. This idea is

not likely to be publicly stated, but I'm not absolutely sure it can't be. Why "not likely"? Action does often follow written or spoken proclamations, but I doubt whether this bit of writing or speech can be what immediately precedes action: there's a lack of fluidity, it seems to me, between such verbalizings and ensuing bodily motions. Volition is a kind of setting of the whole self to act, no mere running at the mouth, however sincere. In any case, volition doesn't need to be publicly stated to be effectual. But neither does it need to be privately stated. An agent forming a volition is like our writer of philosophy in that he knows something that he has yet to state explicitly, but unlike him in that there's nothing he feels he needs to state, even privately to himself. Forming a volition is not a matter of trying to make something clear to ourself, and perhaps failing; rather, we can successfully form one without any sort of trying, and without any sort of verbalizing: we don't need to use words to make anything clearer to ourself, because all that matters is clear already, and a marshaling of words into propositions would be superfluous. Such a claim raises two important questions. What is it precisely that "matters"? And why should we think anything at all all is "clear" though there are few or no words to make it so?

What matters, I would say, is that I have come to believe that right now is an appropriate time to put some desire of mine into effect; it is in virtue of such a belief that I have the desire-volition I have. By "appropriate time" I mean a time I can act on a desire and believe I have a not unreasonable chance of securing its object. By "not unreasonable chance" I mean a chance that well-exceeds, in some unspecifiable degree, that afforded by mere logical or physical possibility: I can will to perform an action only where I have a sense of my power to

perform it (though perhaps I can will to try to perform an action while feeling it's useless to try, in which case trying would itself constitute an action I could succeed or fail at); on the other hand, success (at outer action or at trying) needn't seem a "sure thing" for me to be able to form a volition.

How might desire-volitions be generated? Deliberation and other overt practical reasonings are possible sources of volitions. Deliberation, the weighing of alternatives, is a process carried out in words that, usually at least, ends in a decision to do one thing and not another. We deliberate when we think we need to: when the issue is complex, when it is important, when it is new to us, when some new factor has emerged. Where consciousness is not deliberational, it may still be propositional. We may just run a practical syllogism through our mind before we act, some procession of words on the order of: "I desire....Hey, here's a handy means to what I desire....I desire to use this means..." Is our reciting of the conclusion of a syllogism, or of the conclusion of a deliberation, a volition? I think that depends on whether or not the quality of immediacy belonging to volition is carried by a particular recitation, or by any recitation. Clearly many practical reasonings are not immediately followed by action. Their conclusions are conditional desires, intentions to act at some later time or under some other set of conditions than now prevail. (I can recognize that a particular end or means is preferable among alternatives, or that a particular means is or will become available to satisfy an end I already have, without desiring to take action right now.) "Here's a handy means," or a comparable bit of language, certainly does signify a belief I have about my chances for success; but "I desire to use this means" signifies the presence of a

volition only if the means singled out is represented as "handy" and apt to be used right now.

But there is also the question of whether this statement-to-oneself can get quite close enough to body to provide the "fluidity" I have indicated is characteristic of action. I have already expressed the doubt that a bit of writing or speech can constitute a volition; I wonder whether inner speech is very much better placed. The fact that it is inner is a point in its favor; but I'm inclined to think of volition as going "deeper"--into our whole self--than mere speech, whether outer or inner, can go. In any case, it is clear that, in habitual and spontaneous action, no overt reasonings of any kind occur before motion commences. Thus, even if we grant that an articulated thought, the end product of some overt reasoning, is a volition, there would still be very many actions left unaccounted for. If, however, these end-products are, by their (verbal) natures, at a fixed remove from body, then we won't even have begun to give a theory of volition-feelings. We need to know what it is that initiates action where there are no verbalizations to do the job or where verbalizations are simply not up to the job. I have already said what I think fills this gap: unarticulated thought. We still need to know its nature and the means of its generation.

I have said that the foundation of a volition is my belief that circumstances are now right for the execution of my desire. How might I come to believe such a thing, if not by overt reasoning? This is a difficult question for which I can offer no full theory, no precise mechanism, in the way of a response. I shall, nevertheless, make a working hypothesis to the effect that perception--more particularly, a kind of perception I'll call "interested perception"--is crucial at the

scene of action. If the action is habitual, there may be a deliberation in its distant background, in which case the desire is already there, as a disposition (to act and to have occurrent desires, I would say); but it takes perception to supply the belief that now is a good time to invoke this "settled custom." The desire is long-standing but the perception is current, as is the intermediary judgment and the resultant desire-volition.

Whether the operation of perception, the formation of a judgment, and the formation of a volition constitute a time-consuming series of distinguishable events is a question I'm not sure how to answer. If the rather fuzzy language I've been using ("generating," "foundation," "in virtue of") is, in the final accounting, translated into causal terms, this would be so. I'm quite sure that the passage from perception to belief is time-consuming, for there is scanning and computation of a kind involved here, the sorting and processing of information; but it may be that this bottom-line belief and the action-producing volition are formed simultaneously, that, as a matter of fact, they are one and the same, and that all I'm doing in distinguishing between them is analyzing volition into its aspects. In that case, to call the perceptual belief here an "intermediary" one would signify only that an additional aspect or quality needs naming. In any case, it may be a very little time that elapses between perception and action. For there is nothing in our theory that requires the input and processing of perceptual data, nor even the intermediary judgment that circumstances are right, to monopolize the resources of consciousness. If the action is simple enough--uncomplicated or inconsequential or familiar enough--this whole series may be a relatively speedy, mostly unconscious one, with only the

last part reaching up into consciousness. In spontaneous action, the desire that lends interest to perception becomes a desire of mine more-or-less concurrently with the other factors, but it, too, need not be a conscious event. If feeling theory is right, the only thing that needs to be conscious is the volition itself; and in such cases where that is the only conscious predecessor of action, we may say that volition is the conscious result of our favorable, but unconscious, review of the perceptual input.

We seek to recreate our world in the image of our desires, and so we probe for the soft spots, so to speak, in the structure of our experience. This subjective probing is what I have in mind when I refer to interested perception. This is what desire "spurs," to use Locke's word; this is what converts that root-desire--whether it is long-standing or newly-emerged--into a volition-desire, if, that is, it should hit a soft spot. We could say that this is a covert piece of practical reasoning.

Now, I don't mean to commit myself here to any particular account of perception or perceptual objects. I'm not saying our perceptual experience is of "raw" data, which we only later measure against the categories of our interest; it may be that we are constructed Kantian fashion and every level of our experience is colored by our subjective self. My single aim here is to suggest a mechanism for generating desire-volitions where overt reasonings are absent or insufficient. What I'm suggesting is that the machinery of our perceptual self fulfills this task. Perception issues a report in the form of a belief: "It looks like we can make a go of it right now." Will issues the call to action in the form of a volition: "OK, then, let's go....Let it happen...!"

The belief that results from interested perception is one that

represents our world as it is now, together with some assessment of our ability to realign the world in the direction of our root-desire. If this assessment is positive, a desire-volition arises in consciousness, the end-result of the inner process--the "last desire," as Hobbes would say--before action. This "Let it happen" idea is one that represents the world as it will be should our mission succeed; it is our picture of the present transformed into a picture of the future, which exerts a kind of attractive force on the machinery of our motile self in the way that no wishful thinking about the future could.

To say that we will in "pictures" is not, however to say that we image before we act. My concept of a volition is one that can perhaps be illuminated by resort to the old--generally discarded--doctrine of Bewusststeinslagen, advanced by introspectionists of the so-called Wurzburg school and others. This is the concept of a thought without verbal or imagistic content.

Proponents of the doctrine claimed to find such "unformulated" thought strewn across our mental landscape, and they habitually produced lists of such "nutshell consciousnesses" or "condensed awarenesses" as they were variously called. So succinctly do Bewusststeinslagen express themselves that they have no need of literal or pictorial representation. Findlay, who defends the concept, refers to them as "conjunctions of presence with absence."[44] An account of volition along these lines would be an account of a clear conscious thought where there are no words, or even images, to render clarity.

If this seems a paradoxical concept, that is because we think either words or images are necessary to put things in perspective and prepare the way for action, that nothing else will do. But it has to be conceded that we are able to represent the world to ourself unconsciously

without words or images--in the form of beliefs and desires we repress, say (dreams and slips-of-the-tongue are symptoms of underlying thought, representations of representations, not the thoughts themselves); and though the medium of this representation is a matter of controversy, we aren't on that account tempted to deny nonconscious systems their representing power. I'm suggesting that consciousness has its ways, too; and while I would like to be able to identify that rarified medium giving the appearance of "absence"--the air surrounding and giving life to action--I'm afraid I can manage only the barest specualtion on this point (which speculation I shall leave for the very end of this chapter).

However, I can more confidently offer an approach to the structure and to the phenomenology of volition, which is an important start. In the case of both structure and phenomenology, the approach is made through analogy. For the former it is made through analogy to speech ("Let it happen..."); and for the latter it may be made through analogy to states whose phenomenology is less of a puzzle to us because our experience of them is sharper, more poignant. What follows is some sort of justification for our empiricists' classifying volition as a kind of passion or emotion, and also for Hume's insistence that its "being and essence" is, like any other passion's, a distinctive "sensation."

Though volition is a thought, it is an unarticulated thought, the sense of which is not developed by adding part to part (word to word or image to image), but is, rather, manifest all at once, and without parts, as, for example, a feeling of fear or a stab of pain is manifest all at once. The verbal message appears garbled and the pictorial message is unfocussed, but that doesn't mean there is no thought involved;

it means only that the thought is homogeneous--or at least its phenomenology is--and this is more a "felt thought" than a "thought-out thought."

That it is possible for a thought to be "felt" in this way is just the moral I tried to draw from my treatment of Hume's doctrine of the calm passions. Where thought may appear absent from consciousness, as in the Sturm und Drang of impassioned action or in the hum-drum of daily routine, it is really present, only in "disguised" form. In impassioned action it is disguised as pure feeling. In habitual action it passes for a ghostly absence. But the idea that it is pure feeling driving us when we blow up in anger at someone is mistaken; it's the heat of the moment, and the sheer violence of bodily activity, that overwhelms thought and keeps it from being spelled-out. This may tend to detract from the reasonableness of my course of action here, but in no way implies the absence of motivating conscious thought. And the idea that there is nothing I experience at the scene of habitual action that could serve as a motive for action is also mistaken; it's cool custom, and the confidence borne of repeated success, that eliminates the need for spelled-out thought. This may give my action a quasi-automatic character (I act without thinking-out) but in no way implies the absence of motivating conscious thought.

It should now be clear in what sense I intend my theory is a "feeling" theory. Really, I mean it in two senses: the broad one which Mill indicates when he argues that every state of consciousness--including thought--is "felt"; but also, and more to the point, the sense in which certain of my thoughts are sensation-like. I have asked whether certain of our sensations, like the feeling of hunger, contain an element or analog of thought, and I reached only a tentative conclusion. But the relevant

question is not this one, however much Hume's talk of "sensations" makes it appear to be. Rather, all we need to know is whether the phenomenology of certain conscious thoughts resembles the phenomenology of certain sensations.

Now, the thought that is a volition--whether it is felt or thought-out--differs from the perceptual belief upon which it is built, and indeed, from all other thoughts and all other Bewusststeinslagen, by its having a conative, or action-generating, force. There is, then, some particular feature of our picture of the future that "attracts" present motion, or some way it accomplishes this picturing that explains its special power. A volitional theory is not complete that doesn't say what it is about this conscious mental event that gets action going. Just being a picture of the future doesn't seem sufficient to explain volition's fluid connection with body, for we can know what the future is likely to hold without caring one way or another about it. (As Hume might say: our knowledge that we can produce effects in the world will not result in action--will have no "influence"--if such effects are "indifferent to us.") We are looking for the immanent source of caring, without which there can be no true motivation. (The question of why such caring must operate consciously--why it can't operate entirely unconsciously, through the influence of our nonoccurrent root-desires on the causal mechanisms of our body, say--is, of course, one that the feeling theorist must address ultimately, for it goes to the heart of his theory's raison d'etre. But he must make his theory intelligible before he--or his critics--can proceed to the question of justification. The great failing of traditional feeling theory has been its inadequate effort to explain itself, whether because of a principled refusal--the

view that volitions are simples--or because of the sheer difficulty of finding the right words; and the great failing of its detractors has been an overeagerness to take full polemical advantage of this poverty of self-expression, where a bit of generosity would be more helpful. But, of course, the onus for making feeling theory into an intelligible theory rests primarily with its proponents. That is the burden I presume to take up, and, even if I am successful, only begin to relieve, in the great part of this thesis.)

I should like to be able to say precisely what the pivotal feature of volition is, but I'm not sure I can. In order to get action going, this feature must be something of a mediator, for what is required is that our picture of the future serve as the passageway between cognition and motion. This door is marked "conation." What we're looking for, then, is some part of the world that answers to this name, and is itself part (or kin to) cognition at the same time as it is part (or kin to) motion. I should like to suggest, though with no great feeling of confidence, that the conative feature of volition just is a representing of the future in the "language" of our nervous system. I am saying that we are capable of picturing our world to ourself in a deep internal code, the signals of which are purely electrical. To the casual self-observer--as opposed to someone with a strict philosophic eye--these would appear as "meaningless" blips on the screen of consciousness; but this seeming absence of meaning would be an illusion. Such neurological activity, which is a thought about our world framed entirely without words or images, is I would say, close enough in kind to the neurological activity associated with muscular movement to serve as our missing link between cognition and motion.

We now have a sketch of a feeling theory of action--in broad strokes, to be sure. Now we are in a position to return to the literature to consider the traditional objections and, in the process, fill in a few more of the details of our theory.

Notes for Chapter 1

1 Thomas Hobbes, Human Nature in The English Works of Thomas Hobbes, ed. Sir William Molesworth, bart., 11 vols. (Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1966), 4:67-68

2 Ibid., p. 30.

3 Idem, Leviathan (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1958), p. 54.

4 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, 2 vols. (New York: Dover. 1959), 1:304-5.

5 Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 60.

6 Locke, p. 334.

7 Ibid., pp. 331-32.

8 Hobbes, Human Nature, p. 67.

9 Idem, Leviathan, p. 52.

10 R.S. Peters, Hobbes (Baltimore: Penguin, 1956), p. 133.

11 Hobbes, Human Nature, p. 207.

12 David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford University Press, 1888), p. 438.

13 Ibid., p. 399.

14 Ibid., p. 439.

15 Ibid., p. 415.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p. 399.

18 Ibid., p. 437.

19 Ibid., p. 286.

20 Ibid., p. 413.

21 Plato, The Republic, trans. F.M. Cornford (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 134.

22 Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 52-55.

23 Plato, p. 138.

24 Ibid.

25 Anthony Kenny, Action, Emotion and Will (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 100.

26 Ibid.

27 Locke. pp. 343-44.

28 Hume, pp. 418-19.

29 Locke, p. 304.

30 Hume, p. 417.

31 Ibid., p. 276.

32 Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 53.

33 Hume, p. 439.

34 J.N. Findlay, Values and Intentions (New York: Humanities Press, 1961), pp. 166-68.

35 Ibid., p. 168.

36 Kenny, pp. 206-9.

37 Peter Geach, Mental Acts (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 75.

38 Hume, p. 458.

39 Somewhat eccentrically, Hume reserves "object" to refer to the general direction of thought only. For example, pride and humility are both self-directed; love and hatred are other-directed. He uses "cause" to indicate what provokes the passion: the "quality" that excites it and the "subject" or possessor of that quality. Thus, according to this taxonomy, if Nader loves Lulu, the object of Nader's passion is some other person than himself, the quality is Lulu's wealth, say, and the subject is Lulu. More commonly, "object" is used to encompass all three. (The idea of an "intentional object" or "content" provides for the possibility that Nader loves Lulu for her wealth, though, really, she is poor as dirt.)

40 Hume, p. 414.

41 Ibid., p. 629.

42 Ibid., p. 419.

43 Ibid.

44 Findlay, "The Logic of Bewussteinslagen," in his Language, Mind and Value (London: Allen and Unwin, 1963), p. 194.

CHAPTER II

FIRST OBJECTIONS

Habitual Action As Counterexample

A typical move against the feeling theory of action is simply to declare that habitual action is a counterexample. The theory says that all action involves consciousness, some conscious thinking or feeling; and it must be granted that this isn't obviously present here. Many philosophers simply make the empirical claim that this is obviously not present here. If our nearly automatic performances are expressions of conscious felt thoughts, as my version of the theory claims, then they are to our nonhabitual actions what dry ice is to water: the water is there, only its form is strange; it is disguised.

Here's the challenge.

When I take the train I routinely take, and there are no unusual complications--no unaccustomed delays or routings--I don't feel anything special before I step onto it or during the course of my ride. I don't feel before I act; nor do I feel and act at the same time. I simply act. I take the train. Or so it seems.

The view that consciousness sometimes plays no role in action, and so can't be essential to action, has attained the status of a dogma, in some philosophical circles at least: it is endlessly repeated and little questioned (until recently). Here is a medley of variations on this dominant theme.

(1) William Alston: "With respect to a want for x, it is simply not the case that any particular conscious state...is present during all the time the want is in existence and/or operative, even

restricting ourselves to its aroused form,"[1] Alston grants that wants manifest themselves in consciousness from time to time, as "felt impulses,"[2] but holds that what he calls the "phenomenological view" of wanting is simply wrong, because often when I act my mind is "taken up with other matters."[3] That is, if the task is utterly routine, second nature to me, I may give it no mind at all. I am taking my train, but all the while I'm thinking about the weather, how the Yankees blew that big lead last night, that pretty girl seated opposite me, your saying those terrible things about me. If the task requires my concentration, as may Alston's example, planting shrubs, then I apply myself to it and not other, extraneous, matters. In neither case do I bother to think "I want to do what I'm about to do; I want to do what I'm doing." What a waste that would be! Certainly, my want is "in existence during any continuous stretch of activity which is designed to satisfy it,"[4] but, as long as the activity goes smoothly, the medium of its existence is no state or content of consciousness: I have better things to do than continually rehearse my intentions: I have to act!

(2) T. F. Daveney: "It is true that Mr. X wants to complete a page of writing before the library closes. It is also true that Mr. X feels nothing at the moment."[5] This is not self-contradictory, Daveney claims, though it would be if feeling theory were true. He grants that "on many occasions when we want something or other, we experience some feeling or introspectible urge,"[6] but holds that feeling theory is wrong, because often when we act we feel nothing, at least nothing "which could truly, or usefully, be described as a goal-oriented feeling....(It) is a common experience that when we are bent on getting something we want a great deal, our mind is much to occupied with the pursuit of our aim to be

concerned with feelings."[7] If Mr. X means to complete his page of writing, then he applied himself to it; he doesn't rehearse his orientation to that goal, he tries to reach it.

(3) Richard Taylor:

> When I speak voluntarily, I do not find within myself a volition to speak, and then forthwith find my tongue and other vocal organs moving in response to this inner change....I will to speak in speaking ....There are not two things I do...nor two things that I find happening, but just one; or at least that is all I can find.[8]

(4) A. I. Melden:

> What passes through my mind as I now act may be anything or nothing: it may be that all that happens is that without anything relevant passing through my mind, I just act.[9]

(5) Ryle:

> When a person does something voluntarily, in the sense that he does it on purpose or is trying to do it, his action certainly reflect some quality or qualities of mind, since (it is more than a verbal point to say) he is in some degree minding what he is doing....(Nevertheless, to frown is) not to bring about a frown on one's forehead by first bringing about a frown-causing exertion of some occult non-muscle. "He frowned intentionally" does not report the occurrence of two episodes.[10]

Before I say anything about the substance of these charges I want to make an important point about the terms, the vocabulary, in which they are put.

Interestingly, Daveney distinguishes between wanting and desiring, and seems to accept a feeling account of the latter but not of the former. Now, there is ground for some distinction. Note that a child learns to use "I want"---indicating a preference thereby--before he learns to use "I desire." There is definitely something about the

second expression that is "richer," more sophisticated (more affected?); but whether it's what Daveney has in mind is questionable. Consider: "sexual desire" connotes a dynamic presence, while "sexual want" connotes a pathetic absence, not of feeling, but of sex. In general, talk of "desires" (as a plural noun) is unproblematic, while talk of "wants" is artificial and sometimes even misleading. (Harry Frankfurt thinks that talk of "wants" is "acceptable" if "graceless," while talk of "want" (as a singular noun) is an "abomination.")

The reasonableness of making some distinction between wanting and desiring notwithstanding, it is seldom attempted in the literature: what one philosopher calls a desire another gracelessly refers to as a want, and philosophers who use one term often do not even mention the other. In this, then, Daveney is eccentric. Does much hang on the distinction? That depends, of course, on what problem one is trying to solve. If the question is: does our experience in action have that distinctive felt character the feeling theorists insist on? then I suppose there's little need for such subleties. Daveney could as easily say that some wants are felt and some aren't as that desires are felt but wants aren't. For the same reason, it shouldn't concern us at this point that Ryle speaks of volitions, Taylor of volitions and acts of will interchangeably, Alston of wants but not desires, or Melden of wants and desires interchangeably. (I could quote additional philosophers and generate still more terminological confusion.) The question all these philosophers primarily address, and which they all answer in the negative, is whether the feeling certain other philosophers insist is action's efficient cause may be found. It is another question whether, this feeling's having been found, its proper name is volition or act of will or desire or want, or intention or motive or xboingt. Indeed, I can't

resist the suspicion that there are altogether too many terms competing to name altogether too few entities. There's nothing very surprising in this: the language is replete with expressions whose meanings are more or less roughly equivalent. So there's no reason to think that a fully satisfactory theory of action will find a place for each and every expression that has ever, is now, or will ever be used (successfully) to say something about action.

It should be noted, first off, that our primary question is really separable into two questions: do we feel a special feeling before we act? and do we feel a special feeling as we act? Classical feeling theory is often represented as a mechanical-causal theory, along lines proposed by Hobbes, according to whom the motion of a limb, say, is the outward effect of a motion about the heart, the "sense or appearance" of which is a special sort of feeling. Wham, bam: motion begets motion. Put in this way, the theory beckons us to turn our philosophic eye to that part of our experience immediately preceding outward motion, and that part only, to see if we can in fact sense that inward motion Hobbes claims is unfailingly present when we act. Thus, Taylor takes up the claim that action is a "response to something else" occurring just prior to it, and Ryle the idea that an outward motion is brought about by first bringing about the motion of "some occult non-muscle." But Alston's observation that our appetite for a thing exists throughout any activity designed to obtain it raises the question of whether desire thus "aroused" manifests itself as feeling through the course of such activity.

Now, Hume writes suggestively that the impassioned mind has "not the nature of a wind-instrument, which running over all the notes immediately loses the sound after the breath ceases; but rather resembles a string-

instrument, where after each stroke the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays."[11] The passion-volition which is the proximate cause of motion does not stop there, it seems, but spreads out past the point of a motion's origin to encompass its development. This suggests a role for volition as not merely initiating cause, but also guiding cause. Of course, Hume nowhere rules out the possibility that these secondary volitional vibrations are ineffectual, mere traces of what went before; but it is not unreasonable to conclude that the "stroke" of volition which initiates action doesn't carry the full burden of producing all the motion needed to satisfy a desire: just as the latter vibrations of a string continue to produce sound, so the latter vibrations of a volition (a tone played on a heart-string, Hobbes might say) continue to produce motion. Put aside for the moment any perplexity to do with the theory's causal aspect. We can say this much at least: that on Hume's model of the feeling theory of action, the locus of appetitive feeling is not confined to a cramped moment before I act, but is rather expanded to take in more territory--that belonging to actual motion, not merely its solicitation. Whether out of deference to Hume, or the wisdom of thoroughness, Alston does indeed turn an eye to our experience during the "stretch of activity which is designed to satisfy (a want),"

It might be thought that this adulteration of an atomism of action, far from making feeling theory more palatable, only increases the risk, and the likelihood, of its insufficiency, for it requires that we find feeling in two places, as it were, whereas before we needed to find it in only one. And that was a tall enough order. Indeed, Taylor and Ryle look for it in that cramped moment--hardly an arduous search--

and, failing to find it there, conclude that the theory is wrong. But a reading of the theory incorporating Hume's doctrine of the calm passions turns apparent risk into advantage. To be sure, it's an advantage of a faintly disreputable kind--that derived from a less straightforward falsifiability.

Were Hobbes, Locke, and Hume committed to the view that the "passion" that gets action going is of the passionate, or intense, sort we should not blame critics of the theory for treating this feeling as something which, if it exists, must consume the whole of our attention at the moment of acting. Indeed, any unchecked passion, one about to have its way with us, may reasonably, on the hallowed view opposing passion and reason, be expected to dominate us, congest our experience entirely and overwhelm our good senses. When Hobbes describes deliberation as an alternation of "appetite and fear," he insinuates a picture of rowdy altercation rather than one of sober syllogistics. It isn't surprising, then, that the classical theory is often represented as a crude mechanical-causal theory, according to which the motion of a limb is the outward effect of a commotion about the heart, a "momentary gust of passion" (as Hume puts it) that blows through our soul. According to this version of the theory, we are blustered into action; and if Hume's doctrine of the resonance of passion, tendered in his string-instrument analogy, is added to a version of feeling theory not simultaneously incorporating his doctrine of the calm passions, we get a theory implying not only that we are blustered into action but also that we are blustered at least partway through it (until the gust "gradually and insensibly" dies away). Critics of such an account will look for a big hot wind in the moment before we act, and also in the course of our acting;

failing to find it in either place--after a search not appreciably more arduous than that conducted by the cramped-moment specialists--they will conclude that the theory is wrong. Thus, Alston detects no "felt impulses" (and Daveney no "introspective urges") occurring either before or during many of his actions, and finds that, instead of being ever occupied with thoughts of what he is aiming to accomplish, his mind is often on "other matters" entirely (while Daveney often "feels nothing" at all).

Taylor and Ryle fail to give feeling theory the benefit of two doubts; Alston and Daveney fail to give it the benefit of just one. This is progress of a sort.

Think of the balloon over a comic-strip figure's head. It can be filled with words he speaks out loud, with words he speaks silently to himself, or with words, or punctuation marks merely, that reconstruct word-poor feelings ("sob" for sadness, "?!" for shocked disbelief, etc.). Alston and Daveney seem to be saying that when an occurrent and conscious desire is effective in generating motion, it is something whose verbal reconstruction must fill the balloon of consciousness to the virtual exclusion of other possible balloon occupants: instead of "sob" we'd have "Let it happen..." Desire fills me, or thoughts about the mechanics of the activity at hand fill me, or, if the activity is simple enough, thoughts about "other matters" fill me; and if I'm feeling particularly lazy, the balloon will be all empty. The idea seems to be that I can't be occupied with various matters at once if I'm to be able to act; they may alternate filling me, but no two can occupy me at the same time. The incompatibility isn't logical; it's teleological; that is to say, one gets in the way of the other.

If our task requires attention to details of procedure, then, to be

effecient agents, we must keep from letting our mind wander, not only to extraneous matters, but also to consciousness-monopolizing desiring; these are extravagances we can't afford. If our task is easy, both consciousness-monopolizing desire and thoughts about the mechanics of what we are doing are unnecessary burdens: we can let our mind wander where it may. It is only when there is nothing I must do that I can afford to think about what I want (eventually) to do. If, as I act, I am bloated with self-regard (thinking "Do I want to do what I am doing?...Yes, I do!" or feeling an approximation of this), the effect will be inhibitory. An occasional reminder to myself is an expedient, like stoking a fire; constant, obsessive reminder is self-defeating fuelishness, not merely a waste of good desire, but a sure means of setting the fire out of control and so extinguishing its usefulness. What Daveney calls "contemplative wanting" is, when intensified, felt as a pressure to succeed (sort of a heart's desire-burn), and, in the absence of a chill will that could relieve it, channel it, transform nervous energy into work, this pressure subverts our best laid plans. The dissipative power of this sort of self-regard is well-known to us: what is neurosis but a hyperapprehensiveness about one's future, induced by the too-painful thought, now repressed, of some ignominy in one's past, and resulting in chronic ineffectuality in the present? (I nervously ask myself: "Will my future be like my remembered past?" and answer: "Not if I can help it." And the tragedy is I can help it. Pyric victory?).

Both Alston and Daveney are insistent about the impracticability of having impulses or urges, and acting, too: if Alston is actually to get his shrubs planted before it begins to rain, and Daveney get through his page of writing before the library closes, it won't help any if they are

convulsed with impulses and urges, To be sure, if they were "concerned with feelings" (Daveney's words) as they act, this would put an obstacle in the way of their pursuits--and such a psychical storm would as surely keep Alston from his planting as that threatened rainstorm.

But is this really what self-respecting feeling theorists suggest goes on when we pursue our aims? Of course not. Volition is not any kind of "concern" or second thought about our course of action; it is rather, a succinct commitment to action. It is a simple, and considerable, mistake to interpret feeling theory as holding that for every action there is a psychic disturbance that occupies an appreciable part of our attention before and/or during that action.

Acts of Will and Actions

Versions of feeling theory that give the name "act of will" to the crucial bit of consciousness behind action court another, somewhat related, kind of criticism to the one just considered. If it is claimed that feeling invariably precedes action, the skeptic will charge that this is plainly false: no such attention-getting disturbance is universally detectable at the scene of an action, nor is feeling of any kind required for action: indeed, it is inclined to inhibit efficient action. To which the appropriate response is that we are not talking about something that needs to be attention-getting and disruptive. If, on the other hand, it is claimed that an "act" of some kind (something we do rather than something we undergo) invariably precedes action, the skeptic will charge, here as well, that no such thing is obviously present and that it is not needed, anyway. He may go on to argue, as Ryle has, that no such thing could conceivably precede action in every case, indeed, in any case. For if an inner act of will is required for every outer action,

and every act requires an act of will, then there must be an act of will preparing the way for the one preceding outer action, and so on ad infinitum; but then we could never get outer action started.

Thus Taylor insists: "There are not two things I do" when I speak; there is only the speaking. And Ryle concurs: there are not two things I do, "bringing about a frown-causing exertion of some occult non-muscle" and bringing about the exertion of a flesh and blood muscle, when I frown; there is only the frowning.

But the epistemological criticsm is telling only if an act of will is an action of will. Is it? Melden, who also writes of volitions as if they were actions, trades on this convention, without asking the attendant question: "A familiar doctrine is that...I move my muscles by performing an act of volition which in turn produces a muscle movement." "Act of will" is a curious expression; what constitutes a suitable application is far from clear. But "act of volition" is a grotesquery. How is "act of will" used?

We may be inclined to use this expression where our (outer) action is the result of our coming to a decision after effortful deliberation, itself a mostly inner sort of action. There may be a temptation in such case to identify the act of will with the action of deliberation (after all, how many separate actions could be involved here?). But this should be avoided, for deliberation is, in its central part at least, an alternation, a weighing of this against that, of pro and con, a back and forth motion (which may be felt by us as a Hobbesian tumult or a Humean quietude), while an act of will is a resolution, a settling on this or that, a turning (decidedly) pro the idea of some particular course of action, usually in the face of strong resistance. Hume says that action

is a matter of "knowingly (giving) rise to (a) new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind." Deliberation is action of the latter sort; its heart is its distinctive method of generating a new perception; the act of will, if it is any part of this process, is the perception generated. It's the result or end part of this action. It's the very coming to a decision--not the road taken, but the arrival.

There is one other use of "act of will" that strikes me is as natural as, perhaps more natural than, this one. Instead of referring to a pre-action resolution of intent, it can refer to action itself, where that action involves substantial effort. Thus, we can say of someone who has overcome a great obstacle that his accomplishment required an act of will without necessarily implying that he put himself through an arduous deliberative procedure ending finally in a decision (a "gutsy" decision) to act as he eventually acted. "Act of will," then, can naturally refer either to what sometimes initiates action or to action itself, even if no new perception initiates it.

To deny that "act of will" refers to what initiates action is, however, not tantamount to asserting that action has no inner cause or ground. For it may turn out that <u>some</u> inner state or event always initiates action without it being the case that an "act of will" always does. Whether they are thought of as effortfully arrived-at resolutions or effortful motions, acts of will have the look of specialized manifestations of will, making their winning appearances just when the going gets tough. That's just how we use the expression. So it is awkward at best for feeling theorists to give this name to the atom of feeling they claim is universally present when we act. Of course, one can stipulate a new meaning--use an old term to refer to a lately discovered fact--but

why create unnecessary confusion? If there is such a feeling, you've got to be able to refer to it somehow; but "act of will" so naturally calls up the idea of effort, itself no universal feature of action, that it makes a most unsuitable choice. "Volition" is better; though it, too, is already a part of the language of action--think of the expression "of his own volition"--there is nothing in its accustomed usage that obviously contradicts this new usage. (Here is my point about the language of action theory over again: it is not the busines of the feeling theorist to discover some part of the putatively causal process of action for "act of will"--or any given expression in our language of action--to name. A given expression will play a central role, a peripheral role, or no role at all, depending on the look of the whole theory.) Whatever we decide about the appropriateness of using "act of will" in the way some feeling theorists choose to use it, the primary question here remains: has action an inner cause or ground, specifically, one that is conscious? When the living is easy, when there are no fateful decisions to make and no dreadful dragons to slay, and we act, can there really be nothing "relevant" passing through our mind?

Endeavors and Exercises: The Superintending Operation of Thought

To be fair, the mistake of treating the feeling theorists' atom of action-causing feeling as itself an action of ours is, like the mistake of treating it as a gust of passion, lent a degree of plausibility by some statements of the theory.

There is in Locke's account of will a suggestion that outer action requires inner action. We are told that will is a "power to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest, and vice versa...," a power,

indeed, "to begin or forbear, continue or end" such motion, and that volition, or willing, is "the actual exercise of that power,..."[12] If by "exercise of the will's power" we are meant to understand "triumph of the last desire," as Hobbes intends, then Locke could escape the charge of lending support to Taylor and Ryle's interpretation. For on such a reading the will's power is a kind of fiction: it is merely executive, that is to say, entirely derivative, as a throne's power may be derived from what lies behind it. But if the will has a veto power, if it can legislate, be a force genuinely independent of the clamorings of base desire, then it might be thought that the "actual exercise" of such a power is itself as much action as is, say, the actual exercise of our legs' power to transport us. This reading is encouraged by Locke's description of will as "barely a thought or preference of the mind ordering, or as it were commanding, the doing or not doing such and such a particular action."[13] Doesn't command need a commander? Is brutish desire fit to command?

Now, according to Locke, action performed without willing is involuntary. Thus, if the will's power is its own, this inner exercise is a permanent quasi-deliberative operation, prevailing throughout the domain of voluntary action (as against deliberation proper, a maneuver only selectively commenced). If the will's power is its own, this means it can overrule desire, and if it should approve desire's legislation, this is no idle approval, but the true source of the law of the land.

Hobbes can mislead, too. He can be found to assert that the "small beginnings of motion within the body of man, before they appear in walking, speaking, striking, and other visible actions are commonly called endeavor."[14] Thus, it would seem there is endeavor before endeavor, inner

before outer action. Deliberation is an alternation of such small beginnings of motion, first this way, then that, a competition of mutually excluding endeavors. And will the triump of one of these.

Now, it would be the worst folly to treat volition as action purely on the basis of Hobbes's account of deliberation, so easily calls up an image of armies of little men in our head, of a war of occult agents (as Ryle might put it), each with their separate allegiance and mission, should be sufficient to indicate either it's intended to be taken as metaphor or that it has a different meaning for us than it does for him. There is reason to believe the latter is the case. Hobes, as well as Leibniz, uses "endeavor" interchangeably with the Latin word "conatus," dach carrying the technical meaning of: that force behind a body's motion through the length of a point and an instant of time. (It's a mystery why they choose to give this philosopher's meaning to a word the common meaning of which is attempt or effort and the derivation of which is from the Old French for duty, deveir.) On the other hand, Hobbes first uses "endeavor" in Elements of Law (Chapter 7) to refer to that motion peculiar to appetite; later the use of the term is broadened to include all sorts of motion. Is endeavor distinctively mental or not? And if so, could it then be an invisible push that comes before every visible shove, an action before action?

We know that Leibniz's philosophy gives a power of sentience to all of nature: even those parts of the world that appear most irredeemably dull show some sensitivity--not mere susceptibility--to the action of the rest of the world, and a corresponding power to answer this action with

"small beginnings" of action of their own. For Leibniz, conatus or endeavor is clearly a mental process. Thus, every body is a mind, if only a momentary one, and no natural motion is utterly nonrational. Now, Hobbes is identified with a view seemingly directly contrary to this, namely, that mind is really body and action really motion. But perhaps his use of "endeavor" in connection with appetite constitutes a tempering of this cold philosophy.

Hobbes might be saying: human action is a mechanism all right, just not a dull one; every mind is a body, but no human action is utterly nonrational. Hobbes's talk of precedent thoughts is a concession to intellectualism, but whether it's correct to see his talk of endeavor as belonging to the same tendency (Are the precedent thoughts identical with endeavors? Or is it that the former cause the latter?) is, I grant, open to serious question.

Call this the generous reading of Hobbes: what precedes action--though not itself action--shares with action a quality the word "endeavor" suggests, namely, the quality of knowing what I'm about, of having a sense of myself, of having a firm idea of what it is I'm aiming to accomplish. If acting intentionally means knowing what I'm doing and why, then being on the point of acting intentionally means knowing what I'm about to do and why. In this, perhaps overextended, sense we could say that what precedes action is action- or endeavor-like. (But, of course, if feeling theory is true, it's just this sense of oneself as about to accomplish something that is the source of action's action-likeness.)

The conventional and ungenerous reading of Hobbes attributes to him a view of action as radically disjointed: first comes the thoughts of opposing aims, then comes an alternation of (or altercation among) dumb desires, one desire to an aim, the last (or brawniest) of which tumbles us into outer motion. What starts out serenely--the contemplation of an aim--ends riotously: we want to know what went wrong, why it can't all be worked out reasonably, peaceably. Well, my theory suggests it can. Endeavor talk suggests a degree of alertness, of sustained alertless, on our part that is foreign to this disjointed view. We begin to think of desire as an actual exercise of a power we possess: rough play is replaced by the idea of desire at steady, productive work.

Even Taylor agrees that action is a show of control--over a limb, say. But desire--and will, the triumphant desire-- is a feeling, Hobbes insists, and so would seem, on the hallowed opposing feeling and thought, an unlikely exemplar of control. Feelings are just the sort of thing that needs controlling, as by thought. But how then do we understand Hobbes's assertion that action depends always upon a precedent thought? This, taken together with his sometime intimation that our precedent thought, or conception of good, is really the same thing as appetitive feeling, suggests that thought is not restricted to the "first internal beginning" of action, but is, rather, an enduring feature of the inner aspect of action. A feeling theory of action not corrupted by vulgar distinctions might then hold that we feel before we act, but this feeling is not nasty and brutish; it is, in fact, a curious species of thought.

Reading Hobbes this way has the advantage of tying together his seemingly incompatible intellectualist and sensationalist sympathies.

The other, causal, reading may have the advantage of clarity, but it is conspicuously short on credibility: we are seized by a thought, which causes an inarticulate commotion, which, unless we are seized by a second thought causing an equal and opposite commotion, causes motion. Where does the thought go when we are busy feeling a commotion? The disconnection between our rational and appetitive selves is overdone, surely. There is, of course, no logical error in this disconnection. But we'd like a fuller story, a few more clues, the promise of a solution to our mystery: where does the thought go? What is its role, really?

Now, if the thought preceding action were always deliberative, there would then be an inner show of control for every outer show of control, as the volition-as-action theory requires. But Hobbes doesn't claim this: action may "immediately follow the first appetite" or thought, "as when we do anything upon a sudden," without thinking twice, as it were. So, volition is not identical with the action of deliberation.

What's so special, then, about the thought preceding action? We know that thought has the capability of being brought under control, as by deliberation. Is that a clue? Just as a limb may move either as an expression of our power to move it (we act) or on its own power, as the result of a muscular spasm, say (we are acted upon), so a thought can be the expression of our power to direct it or merely a link in the chain of events, the effect of A, the cause of C. (Notice that it is the <u>direction</u> of thought we control in deliberation, its calculating character, and not the caliber of the volition that is its end product--the latter is the result of the logic of our calculation.) But this capability of being brought under control can't be what gives volition its action-like quality, for it is shared by the least action-like of

our experiences. We can, for masochistic or therapeutic reasons, bring on and sustain a heated emotional reaction by keeping on attending to what we know is likely to inflame us; and we can, with a bit of skill, temper or even extinguish the fiery feeling, through analysis of it--we may come to see it is unjustified or self-destructive or both--or merely by diligently applying our attention elsewhere.

It is axiomatic that when the course of thought does not take the form of a deliberation, when it is not the fruit of our endeavor, this course isn't an expression of our power to direct thought; but it is still possible for it to be the expression of some other power we have. The course of thought is in itself neutral between being an expression of our power to direct thought and being a mere B-event (a causal middle-man). But granting it is a B-event isn't tantamount to asserting that it is an unwitting perpitrator of, say, the motion of a limb. For the course of thought as B-event is itself neutral between being the expression of our power to think and being mere dumb reaction. (In other words: middlemen can be more or less canny.)

When thought is triggered by electronic stimulation of the brain (EBS), it is less a show of our power than thought arising spontaneously, that is, thought not actually subject to second-level control. If the thought triggered by EBS is complex, sophisticated, it is no more a show of our own power, because it is no more our own, than if it were simple, witless. If we act, move a limb, in virtue of this thought, we act as instruments of a foreign power: we are controlled and not controllers. Likewise, when thought is the result of what G.E.M. Anscombe calls mental causation--I see a face at the window and I am startled; I fear for my safety--this thought is less a show of our own power than is

thought arising spontaneously, because it is more starkly reactive. Probably, though, it is more a show of our own power than thought triggered by EBS, because its reactivity is less starkly mechanical (no electrodes, no wires, no button-pushers, no agents at a distance). If we act--cut and run, say--in virtue of this thought, our motion is less action than reaction.

Anscombe calls this a case of mental causation to distinguish it from intentional action. She admits, though, that the distinction is not a sharp one, and that in deciding whether or not an action is genuinely intentional "one would probably decide by how sudden one's reaction was."[16] Now, that "probably decide" is interesting: it suggests a doubt on Anscombe's part (a reasonable doubt, I believe) whether, our habit of decision-making notwithstanding, suddenness is quite the proper criterion here. The implication of our habit seems to be: without sufficient time (to think?) before we act, we don't so much act as react. This is probably right, if only we append the following: (1) what is just sufficient time for the quick-witted will be hopelessly insufficient for the slow-witted--thus, a sudden response will be a case of mental causation if the agent is not on the ball (because he's taken by surprise), not because of suddenness alone; and (2) for any agent, his various doings exhibit varying degrees of being on the ball, varying degrees of action-likeness--thus, we should expect a gray area between full-fledged agency and mere reactivity: our decision to call a particular gray-doing action as against reaction has an air of arbitrariness.

It may be said, then, that we are most distinctively human when we act deliberatively, when there is second-order control, when, that is, we not only know what we're doing as we're doing it, but have determined beforehand, after giving the matter serious thought, to do it. (Harry Frankfurt has argued a position loosely akin to this, namely that human

beings are distinguished by their ability to care about their will. Thus, when we form second-order desires about what we have done or are inclined to do, we do what no other agent is able to do. I've been suggesting that when we act on a desire approved by us in advance, the quality of our agency is unique.) But this sort of control is an extravagance of voluntariness: it isn't required for action. If action has to do with our control over the motions of our body, then this condition is met by (at least some of) our casual, non-deliberated behavior, purely in virtue of the superintending operation of our thought. Thus, even if Locke intends finally that "actual exercise of the will's power" not be understood in the way Hobbes appears to understand it, that is, as the triumph of the strongest desire, this doesn't mean that it must be taken to refer to an inner action of ours. It may refer, instead, to an inner activity, which requires no prior action or activity to get underway, and which is a fit source of action's voluntariness.

Now, this idea of exercise is vague. You can get thought from a man by subjecting him to jolts of electricity; try this with a stone and you get nowhere. A human capability is exercised in this way, but is human action thereby initiated? Of course, this isn't what Locke has in mind in his account of will. What is required for action is that the thought behind it be the source of our control over our motion: "actual exercise" is consistent with exploitation, with our being victims and not agents (unless, that is, "actual" is read generously as indicating our exercise of our power). The exercise of our power to think to move in a certain way need no more be an activity of ours than must the exercise of our legs' power to transport us be a case of our walking. (Subjected to a sophisticated form of EBS, we may be transported through the use of

our legs, but not through our use of them.) What Locke must say is; a particular motion of our legs will be an action of ours when it is the result of our exercise of our power to think to move in that way; and such an exercise of this power will be a demonstration of self-control, the sort of control implicit in our ability to perceive our situations--the actions open to us, the relative merits of these various actions, etc.--even if it is not a demonstration of that sort of control characteristic of action itself. But how could it be control of the same kind as action?--only on pain of infinite regress. It is, rather, the source of the kind of control action is. Action just is the actual exercise of our ability to alter the world according to our own lights, to change our situation for (what we perceive to be) the better. But no alteration, however felicitous, will be our doing unless we preside over it, unless we light the way.

The will should not be considered "as acting," Locke writes, but, rather, "barely as an ability to (prefer or choose)";[17] its exercise is "a very simple act,"[18] rather like a gentle nod of approval, only one that is entirely inner and unself-conscious. It is a light we shine as a matter of course, a simple radiation of our action-oriented nature, not an ostentatious display of fireworks for special occasions.

So, the careful Lockeian is sure to observe, on the one hand, that action requires the modicum of proprietorship which distinguishes our exercise of thought-power from any old exercise of it, and, on the other the counter-balancing point that it surely doesn't require this proprietorship to be absolute (that is, under second-level control). Indeed, the careful action theorist of any persuasion is sure to make some such dual observation, though outward-looking theorists will be remarking on motion

itself, and not on the thought or feeling supposed to be the power behind motion.

It might seem that Locke abandons feeling theory in his account of will, especially if will is granted independence from desire; but this isn't a likely conclusion. First of all, there is nothing in his intellectualism which is flatly inconsistent with sensationalism: though he doesn't say explicitly, he could be a sensationalist intellectualist about will, in the manner that Hume's doctrine of the calm passions suggests Hume is. But more: to see Locke as abandoning feeling theory at this point is to do for him what the conventional reading of Hobbes does for Hobbes: saddle him with a view that so disconnects our rational from our appetitive selves as to strain credulity. He is an easy target if he holds: first we are made uneasy, stirred to desire, by the thought of an absent good; we stew a bit, when, all of a sudden (it seems), we are seized by the thought "How fine it would be to move ourself just so, that we may make this absent good present!" Where, one wonders, does the uneasy feeling go when we finally get around to preferring one motion to another? After all, if there is uneasiness, it is derived from our thinking we lack a good--or so Locke implies--and this thought remains, or should remain, until we actually come into the possession of this good. One possible explanation for any sudden disappearance of feeling, or at least of uneasy feeling, is that its source is, not the belief we lack a good, but, rather, the disbelief we lack the ready <u>means</u> to it (or, better, the lack of a belief that we've got the means). If this is right, the uneassiness we feel will be abated, perhaps eliminated entirely, when we are content we have the practical knowledge to get what we are after, even if not time yet to put that

knowledge to productive use. Just then, just when we come to feel we will likely have our way, melancholy ends, and hopeful enterprise begins. The exercised will might then be regarded as a transformation of the uneasy feeling Locke holds is characteristic of desire into a relatively self-assured feeling---really, a thought--that you are accomplishing, or are about to accomplish, something that will keep this unpleasant feeling at bay.

Whereas Hume explicitly states that our knowingly giving rise to--accomplishing--a motion is "an internal impression we feel," Locke says only that it involves a mixture of passive and active powers. Whether this is an admixture (will added to desire, the former dissolving the uneasiness that is the essence of the latter), or an intermixture (a colloidal suspension of desire--though in a dispersed form--in the added will, the uneasiness persisting,) Locke doesn't say. And he is blatantly self-contradictory on the related question of whether the will-thought is itself a substance apart from the desire-passion it is added to. Perhaps it stands to this desire-passion as the liquefied form of a substance stands to its solid form, a transstatiation rather than a transsubstantiation. This is suggested by his claim that will is but effective desire. But, as we have seen, he makes other, contrary, claims.

Let us now summarize the conclusions of this chapter.

I've considered two criticisms of feeling theory that, I believe, derive their initial force from basic misreadings, or uncharitable readings, of the theory. To the empirical objection that consciousness is not, as a matter of fact, occupied with self-regarding thoughts or irradiated by sharply-felt impulses as we act, my response has been that these are not the kinds of events feeling theorists typically have in

mind. To the epistemological objection that volitions can't be actions because this would generate a vicious regress, my response has been that that also is not the sort of thing feeling theorists have, or ought to have, in mind. The misreading of feeling theory in this way is, however, suggestive.

To be sure, volition is no action, and no inner action (no deliberation, say) need precede every outer action; but still, I should like to say that some kind of act or activity of ours needs to precede outer action. I would agree with Locke that volition is "barely a thought or preference," but this is not enough; it is necessary to add that such subtle thought arises from the agent's exercise of his own power, specifically, his power of interested perception. Thus, there is an activity or process preceding action even where deliberation is absent; this is a process of thought since it involves the intelligent review of perceptual information; this unconscious review leads to a judgment, which, when favorable to action, results in (or is identical with) a conscious event, a volition; and this end-product of the process is a "little emotion" in the sense that it is so succinctly expressive it tends to be overlooked.

In Chapter III I'll consider a conceptual objection to feeling theory that is tied to the empirical objection already discussed. It will turn out that I've already set up the machinery for a response to this objection: the view that volition is or expresses the result of an intelligent activity of ours is to come to our rescue.

Notes for Chapter 2

1 William P. Alston, "Motives and Motivation" in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1967), 5:402.

2 Ibid., p. 403.

3 Ibid., p. 402.

4 Ibid.

5 T.F. Daveney, "Wanting," Philosophical Quarterly 11 (1961): 136.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 137.

8 Richard Taylor, Action and Purpose (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 67.

9 A.I. Melden, "Action" in Readings in the Theory of Action, ed. Norman S. Care and Charles Landesman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 33.

10 Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), p. 74.

11 Hume, pp. 440-41.

12 Locke, pp. 313-14.

13 Ibid., p. 313.

14 Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 52.

15 Frithiof Brandt (Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature, Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1927) asks: "What, " according to Hobbes, "remains when we disregard the progress of the body through space?" And answers: "The tendency to progress, perceptible by the senses as pressure..." (pp. 311-12) Notice how Brandt's question resembles Wittgenstein's well-known question, the inspiration for much behaviorist and neo-behaviorist theorizing on the subject: "What is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm? (Are the kinesthetic sensations my willing?)" (Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, New York: Macmillan, 1958, para. 621.) To Wittgenstein the force of thes questions is purely rhetorical; the obvious answers are, respectively, "nothing" (at least nothing outside of other overt motions like arm-risings) and "no." Brandt, answering for Hobbes, speaks of sensed pressures, which talk could easily be accommodated to talk of kinesthetic sensations. It is no small problem to say just how you wring mentality from kinetics, knowing what I'm about from the perception of infinitesimal motions (an identity theory? a causal theory?), but at least there's an issue here. (The opinion that there is no issue--can't logically be one--is founded on a non sequitor, having to do with the import of Wittgenstein's private language argument, that is central to behaviorist-type thinking. I'll return to this point later.)

16 G.E.M. Anscombe, Intention (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 23.

17 Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," Journal of Philosophy 68 (January 14, 1971), pp. 5-20.

18 Locke, p. 321.

19 Ibid., p. 320.

CHAPTER III

FEELING AND AGENT

Taylor's Charge; Locke's Ambivalence; The Way Out

In Chapter I I argued that our empiricists' tendency to make desire determine will--in Hobbes's case, to identify it with will--is objectionable only if we think desire must be a violent passion, as the romantic poets think of it. In Chapter II I argued that an "act of will" needn't be an action for it to be, in Locke's words, an "exercise" of power" on our part. My conclusions up to this point suggest the possibility of giving an account of action that assigns desire a dominant role; thus, if the right sort of desire is present, and this causes motion, then that is sufficient for action. Though we may give the name "will" or "act of will" or "volition" to what immediately determines action, this needn't imply the intercession of some "higher" faculty. Will would then be, not simply the last desire, but the last thoughtful desire. In this chapter I want to further develop this implication of my first two chapters. But why do I take so much trouble to analyze the distinctions between thought and feeling, desire and will? Why bother showing that a desire-dominated model of action is plausible?

It seems to me that the empirical objections commonly levelled at feeling theory--to the effect that thought and feeling are sometimes obviously not present when we act--are not purely empirical, but, rather, conceal important conceptual confusions about the nature of thought and feeling, desire and will. I believe that the discovery of the calm desire (that the plausibility of the idea of it) bridges a conceptual gap critics of feeling theory depend on when they press the usual empirical

objections. The conceptual objection that opens this gap is explicitly stated in the following passage from Taylor. (His charge is directed at "volitional theory," but he might as well have written "feeling theory.")

> Let us suppose...that the volitional theory were true....What, accordingly, one would find, or certainly should be able to find, anytime he performs an observable act, is...(an) internal alteration in his mind or soul, followed by the observable change of his body....It is said that those who are subject to epileptic convulsions are forewarned of an impending convulsion by a certain feeling. They sooner or later learn, upon the advent of this peculiar feeling, to expect their bodies to begin behaving in certain ways. All of us, moreover, know what it is like to feel a sneeze coming on. There is a certain feeling which, we have learned, is always or often followed by that convulsive exhalation called "sneezing." Hardly anything could be less like a voluntary act than things of this sort; indeed, they are good paradigms of involuntary behavior or automatic responses. And yet if the theory of volitions were true, voluntary behavior would not differ in kind at all from this kind of behavior--only in its underlying subjective cause.[1]

Though Taylor writes "the only trouble"[2] with supposing volitional theory true is the empirical trouble of actually finding in ourselves the peculiar underlying cause of action. ("I am quite certain no such thing ever occurred within me,"[3] it is clear from this passage that it bothers him exceedingly that feeling theory seems to picture action as "not differing in kind at all" from paradigmatically involuntary behavior such as sneezing and epileptic seizure. I get that raise-an-arm-feeling; boing! it's raised. Where, one wonders, am I--where is the self, where is the agent--in all this? That's the problem. Taylor writes: to act intentionally is not "to perform or to undergo some inner observable twitch or convulsion of the soul in the hope or expectation that this will somehow produce a desired twitch or jerk of the body."[4]

Having already dismissed the idea, on purely empirical grounds, that inner action always precedes outer action, Taylor proceeds to argue that no other inner event will serve as cause of action, since these are no more than "convulsions" of one kind or another. The attraction of the dichotomy of inner events suggested here is probably the cause of Locke's see-sawing between two accounts of will. When he worries that a desire-determined will makes us transferers, not producers, of motion, he anticipates Taylor's concern that, in such case, "I shall not be acting at all, but will instead be the passive and helpless victim of internal or mental events and their behavioral consequences."[5]

But the empirical objection that inner action is absent is successful against an inner event theory of action only if inner action would be the only fit inner source of action's voluntariness. We could grant that dumb desire (a mere constitutional imperative, an animal urge, say) is unfit without granting that nothing else inner, save the inner action that is deliberation, would be unfit. Indeed, the idea of our own thought as superintendent of action, which I've been trying to develop, and which Locke himself suggests, appears promising as a middleground between the two vastly different kinds of inner events Taylor considers. We could grant that dumb desire is unfit without granting that action's desire is unfit. Indeed, Hume's idea of the calm desire, which I introduced in Chapter I, seems to bridge Taylor's gap.

But why should anyone think Taylor's charge has merit? One thinks this only if he is convinced, through too deep an immersion in romantic poetry perhaps, that desire is always convulsive and in need of controlling. It certainly appears that, sometimes at least, Locke thinks this. Hobbes gives desire a dominant role in action; but Locke has second

thoughts. For a motion to be an action, it must be the expression of an "active power," Locke rightly claims. But desire is passive because it is dumb, thinks Locke. If desire, conceived in this way, were always allowed free reign, we should be no better than the lower animals, who can learn no measure of self-control, and are kept from self-destruction entirely by the force of blind instinct. To save agency, a cooling agent must be applied to burning desire. Seductress desire needs to be chastened. Our inside agitator needs restraining; by a level head. Whence this levelheadedness? Why, the will, of course. Hobbes's lowly last appetite must be rehabilitated, made the source of our active power, the true manufacturing spot. Action requires will's imprimatur, our intelligent assent.

The problem with Locke's rehabilitative effort is that he doesn't go far enough in it! He wants to enable will to control desire, but while he is given to proclaiming will's active power, he is, contrariwise, ever asserting that it is "conversant" only with the motion it actually produces. But what sort of preference is it--what sort of active power--that doesn't involve the consideration of alternatives? If will can't range over alternative actions, and give its blessing to the most deserving of these (even if the most deserving runs counter to the urgency of desire), then, it seems, we are back at claiming that the last or most pressing desire is what moves us and that the will's power is merely executive. (Indeed, Locke cautions against taking words like "prefer" or "order" literally: these "will not distinctly enough express volition, unless (one) reflect(s) on what he himself does when he wills."[6]

Now, Locke allows that men do sometimes "suspend" the execution of a particular desire, "till they had looked before them and informed

themselves whether that particular thing, which is then proposed or desired, lie in the way to their main end, and make a real part of that which is their greatest good."[7] This seems to indicate that, while the will can't itself conduct such an examination (it's not an agent), it is sometimes responsive to the counsels of our reason. We, who are agents, can notice that the execution of a particular desire, whose intensity of feeling now exceeds that of any other co-present desire, would likely lead to our ruination, or to the undeserved ruination of another; if we are rational and moral agents, we are alive to such matters, and we are stopped from acting on destructive impulses.

Two points: (1) This is not a rejection of the view that the most pressing desire moves us: for Locke maintains that our will is not alive to such matters unless we desire it to be: "(The) greater good, though apprehended and acknowledged to be so, does not determine the will, until our desire, raised proportionately to it, makes us uneasy in the want of it."[8] That such a future-regarding desire comes most naturally to us, at least as it pertains to our own future happiness, doesn't alter the clear implication: "Whatever necessity determines to the pursuit of real bliss"--namely, the motive to relieve uneasiness--"the same necessity with the same force establishes suspense, deliberation and scrutiny of each successive desire."[9] Thus, if we are stopped from acting on what is our strongest desire, that is because, after giving the proposed action some thought, it is no longer our strongest desire; a contrary desire has, in the meantime, been fortified by that "inclination and tendency of (our) nature to happiness,"[10] by the increment of a desire for long-term relief from uneasiness. (2) This couldn't possibly form a rebuttal to Taylor's charges, if only for the reason that the "suspense,

deliberation and scrutiny" we are sometimes capable of are, as I have already, repeatedly said, specialized operations: the voluntary is a class of action of which the deliberated constitutes a sub-class. If Locke, or any feeling theorist, intends to save agency by making the will responsive to reason, he has to argue that the will is responsive to reason even in the case where there is no deliberation.

He has to argue that our ability to look before us and inform ourselves whether a particular desire is worthy of fulfillment can be exercised non-reflectively; where there is no deliberation, no drawn-out mulling-over of alternatives, it must be that we act on a quick calculation, in a flash of discernment. Whether Locke actually makes this argument is not entirely clear--his insisting that the will' preference is "a very simple act" is suggestive; but if he doesn't intend this, he ought to: it's the most promising explication of his suggestion, and, I believe, very near to the truth.

Taylor argues: referring to an "internal or mental impulse" that precedes the motion of my hand doesn't explain this motion "as an act until the point is made that the internal event which caused it was something of mine."[11] This seems right; as does his point that the proprietorship necessary here to something more than the impulse's occuring in me (this is "consistent with its not being mine at all"--our EBS case is a counter-example). But he goes on: "What we must (say) is that these inner changes are themselves within my control, that they are things that I can make happen, things which are up to me to perform or to decline to perform."[12] Now, if anything is clear in this, it is that what Taylor says we must say is (1) certainly untrue (we needn't deliberate to our desire to be acting), and (2) if true, incoherent

(Ryle's regress starts up, and every action would require an infinity of prior actions).

The way out is to acknowledge that the dichotomy, dumb impulse or controlled thought , is a false one, that, in other words, there is more than one way for an inner event to be "mine." Taylor appears to argue: what we must say is that I have decided, after giving the matter some thought, to move my hand in this way; and this decision, which I "made happen" through my giving the matter thought (my inner action), is the cause of my hand's moving (my outer action). Taylor knows quite well that this is foolish; having asserted that this is the only line open to the feeling theorist, he can then go on to explicitly assert its foolishness, and dismiss the whole approach as hopeless nonsense. No--worse than this--as <u>insulting</u> nonsense. The <u>integrity</u> of the agent is made to seem fatally compromised by feeling theory: to act intentionally is not to twitch and jerk inside, and then twitch and jerk outside again. Rather it is to act "with a knowledge of what one is (doing) and why";[13] and this is supposed to require that one's motion be "within one's immediate control."[14] I want to urge what I believe Locke can be read as urging (if we read him in a spirit of generosity), namely, that we don't have to choose between describing action as if it were like sneezing and describing it as if it were always the result of long, hard thought. The alternative is to say that it is knowledgeable twitching and jerking: we are percipient (not blind) mechanisms, whose movements have none of the herky-jerkiness we associate with contraptions like robots because of the versatility of our body and because of the richness and subtlety of our perception. Thus, our motions are within our direct control simply in virtue of the superintending operation of our thought; but the

proximate causes of our motion (our volition-thoughts) needn't themselves be superintended by still other thoughts. We know what we're doing, and that we're doing it, but we needn't have arrived at this position of command through the action of deliberation.

The conventional reading of feeling theory and the typical, facile, objection to it are each distortions, the former implying that we are less in command of ourselves than we in fact are, and the latter implying that this self-command can only be won through the perfect denial of our vulnerability to needy feeling. The real message of Locke's attempting to define desire as uneasy feeling is that acting without a hint of suffering--without a sense of want--isn't acting at all, but bare automatism. The real problem for the feeling theorist is to show that a sense of want, or some self-assured adaptation of it, is felt at the moment of acting, or during the course of it, and that this feeling is what distinguishes action from automatism, behavior that is directed to a goal from motion that ends where it ends because it's run out of steam.

A sophisticated feeling theory, one worth taking seriously, must begin with the suggestion that the inner changes reputed to be at the core of action are not (necessarily) within second-level control--though they may be said to be in my control insofar as they are not the effects of button-pushings and the like--but that they are, nevertheless, the source of my control over the movements of my body. Volitions are not things I make happen, but the natural expressions or exercises of a power I have, specifically, the power to see advantage. The exercise of this power must be what saves us from the tyranny of dumb desire.

If Locke is reluctant to commit himself wholeheartedly to the view that will is effective desire, it's because he is afraid such a view

compromises our freedom. Indeed, his caution against confounding willing with desiring forms part of an argument designed to solve the free will problem. As usual, Locke is ambivalent on how to solve it, arguing first that we are free where there are no external impediments to our will (a position consistent with the view that will is effective desire), and, later, that we are free where will intercedes between desire and motion (desire determines will "for the most part but not always..."). Clearly, Locke is concerned that agency, and, hence, freedom disappear if we regard will as mere desire, or as mere effect of desire. He is asking: how can freedom come from vulnerability? And answers by supplying a counteractant, the curative, deliberative will, which suspends the normal course of events so that we may scrutinize alternatives. Thus is frailty turned to strength and the threat of unfreedom quelled.

But the fear that is the rationale for this drastic therapy is ill-founded; it presumes again the dubious idea that we must choose between the sneeze and the dissertation. If "effective desire" is understood as involving a "third way," along the lines I have suggested, then we can put the agent back in agency without putting an agent, or an infinity of agents, inside the agent. Whether this solves the free will problem is doubtful. But the failure is unobjectionable, for these are, probably, separate problems: the fact of our agency and the freedom of it need separate proofs. We are true agents if the inner change that moves us is ours, but are we on that account free agents? It seems to me that we need to know something more than the simple fact of our having acted to be able to answer the question of whether or not we're free. Freedom may require only that the resultant movements be unimpeded, as Locke originally argues, or, more stringently, that our proprietorship

over this inner change not itself be a result; but, whatever the proper criterion--the compatibilist's, the incompatibilist's, or some other--it will have to guarantee more than bare voluntariness.

Will as Action's Desire: Reunifying Our Experience of Action

Locke is hesitant to say that will is effective desire because he thinks this slights action's calculative side, what makes us producers as against mere transferers of motion. Desire, a passion, is supposed to "spur" action, but some other power, a power of discretion, must come into play, to see whether we are rightly spurred, set off in a sensible direction. If, according to our own lights, our advance is fair and just, this power will sustain it; and if it's the wrong road, we can refuse to follow. Without such an active power, there is only the triumph of the strongest passion, the success of the sharpest spur, might making right. A theory of action that fails to accomodate our shrewdness deserves Taylor's chiding. Locke looks to make this accommodation, but, at least in some passages, goes too far in making it.

In giving will a life independent of desire, Locke invites a view of will as faculty he must later repudiate. He writes: to think of the will as a faculty among other faculties leads to the "confused notion of so many distinct agents in us, which had their several provinces and authorities, and did command, obey, and perform several actions, as so many distinct beings."[15] Such a view violates the integrity of action by breaking the agent into little bits. Locke is aware that his intellectualist portrayal of the will might be taken to imply that will is the real agent in us--as against being the real source of <u>our</u> agency, which is what he intends--and so explicitly cautions against such an inference: But what is left of will if the faculty account of it is rejected? An

operation among other operations? First comes desire, then comes will, then comes motion. But this violates the integrity of action by breaking it into little bits. Moreover, it seems very far from our actual experience, which, except for those actions deliberated to, appears quite unitary.

Here is Locke's dilemma--and it is any feeling theorist's dilemma. On one horn is the falseness of saying that action is slave to dumb feeling; and on the other is the falseness of saying that we produce motion by independent and successive operations of the mind (call it the assembly-line model of action).

The beginnings of a solution can be found, I believe, in Locke's own treatment of will. He writes: "...(the will) is not one power that operates on another: but it is the mind that operates, and exerts these powers; it is the man that does the action, it is the agent that has the power, or is able to do. For powers are relations, not agents."[16] Perhaps Locke means for us to think of the distinction between desire and will, and the division of labor between them, as myths of a sort, rather along the lines of Plato's chariot myth.

The mind isn't really divided up into separate powers, steed against steed against charioteer, pulling at one another; this is what Hume would call a "vulgar and specious division," useful for clarifying the various dimensions of unitary experience. When the mind is put off a rational course, by the abruptness or forcefulness of external events, or by the insistence of its own prejudices, the action that results has an impulsive or compulsive character; and our experience seems mostly desire, with will as a wholly determined afterthought or else with no will at all. When, on the other hand, we are given sufficient time to think

(this may be a very little time) and the subject isn't so sensitive as to rouse a thoughtless, purely prejudicial response, the action that results has more agency in it; here our experience seems mostly will, with desire as a mere prompting or else with no desire at all. There is a temptation to think of the process of action as involving first the prompting of desire, then the determining afterthought that is will, and then, finally, motion, as if there were an action-producing assembly line inside us, contriving action by separate and successive operations: desire demands, and our thoughts of absent goods, the raw materials, are processed into appropriate motions, with will at the far end of the line, at the manufacturing spot, to conduct a final inspection and give a stamp of approval. (When we act impulsively or compulsively, this final inspection is perfunctory, and approval comes by a rubber stamp.) But this temptation is to be avoided, Locke seems to be saying. The experience of the mind in action isn't fragmented in this way: even though our experience can vary dramatically, here full with desire, there full with will, these are not genuinely separable powers, operating independently, and in action successively: it is the man, and not a fraction of his mind, that does the action. It's wrong, then, to think of will as interceding between desire and motion, for this presumes a picture of the mind in action that sees it in fractions, which are fictions, and not whole, as it must be seen. It's not as if will, our rational part, is more or less vigorous; rather, we, as agents, are more or less rational, and that is all. We speak of there being will behind our motion when there's a sufficient degree of rational control over this motion, but this is just linguistic habit, entailing nothing about the ontology of action.

Locke writes that desire determines will except in the case where I

am "oblige(d)"--by the apprehension of a duty owed another, or by the inborn principle that bids us think of our own future happiness (a duty owed ourselves)--to break off the path of least resistance, the path of the strongest desire, and do what is right. But, by his own admission, if we succeed in suspending the normal course of events, this is only because we desire it so; a calm passion vanquishes a violent but weaker one, Hume would say. We confound desire and will, Locke writes, at peril of losing our freedom; but, as we have seen, distinguishing them as he does risks the forfeiture of our agency--a power of our whole self--to a little self inside us. A sensible alternative is to elaborate the distinction between desire and effective desire in such a way that any offensive connotation (effective desire implies blind mechanism) is removed. It will have to be explained that what makes a desire effective varies: where there's that sufficient degree of rational control over our motion, which can be manifested in a flash, desire is called rational, and we can then say we've willed our action; but where desire moves us through sheer intensity, it is effective but not rational, and our motion is less action than reaction.

Daveney makes a distinction between inclinational and intentional wanting that could profitably be substituted for Locke's tentative distinction between desire and effective desire. Daveney writes: wanting conceived in the inclinational sense takes in what I would do "without being pressed, obliged, persuaded, compelled";[17] wanting conceived in the intentional sense is compatible with my wanting to do something because I feel it my duty. (In the latter use, "want" means "intend" simpliciter; whereas in the former it means "conditionally intend.")[18] Daveney's rationale for the distinction is simple, and I think, sound: "(saying

'Mr. X wants...' seems merely to be giving Mr. X's aim or intention, and the matter of whether he acted from inclination is left open..."[19] This conception of intentional wanting as comprehending only what I actually intend to do--once all that is pressing, obliging, persuasive, or compelling is taken into consideration--is near to Locke's conception of the will as being conversant only with its own actions.

It may be objected that there is an incoherency here: intentionally wanting is compatible with my wanting to do something because I am compelled, but compulsion spells the absence of intentionality, the absence of control of our motion. If I hand over my money because you will shoot me if I don't, this is a show of <u>your</u> control over my motion: I am doing <u>your</u> will. A natural response is to say that in such a case I see an advantage in doing your will, namely, saving my life, and that, if intentional action just is acting on a perceived advantage, whatever else it is, then my handing over my money to you is no less action--though it is a less <u>free</u> action--than my buying a pleasure for myself or my giving it to charity because I feel it my duty. This sort of compulsion spells the absence not of intentionality, but of a kind of freedom. Kant advises that the truly moral man makes himself the center of his convictions: he does his duty because he sees the rationality of it, and not simply because it is expected or compelled. Thus, I am not truly moral unless my heart is in it, unless there is conviction behind my motion. I must do my own will to be acting freely and responsibly. But the distinction between inclinational and intentional wanting doesn't offend this requirement: if it's kept in mind that we can be "pressed" in importantly different ways (what appeals to our reason may be contrasted with what appeals to our vulnerability), the distinction is unproblematic.

When I make myself the center of my convictions, intentional and inclinational wanting coincide. But if the only alternative to handing you my money is to risk death, that is when I'm most vulnerable: I really can't help but turn it over; I'm not free to refuse. Still, I'm the one that hands it over, out of the conviction that if I don't act in this way you'll act on your threat. I don't want to die, so I comply. This is, of course, a vulgar distinction I am making between what appeals to our reason and what appeals to our vulnerability--because reason and vulnerability are not neatly detachable from one another (one seeks a conclusion in an argument as one seeks the solution to a problem)--but there's enough truth in it to repay solicitude. I've acted intentionally, though not inclinationally, not freely, not from the center of myself.

What makes giving up my money something I do voluntarily, albeit reluctantly, is the very fact that I'm convinced I must do this. I can do one of two things under the circumstances--give up my money or risk giving up my life. The fact that neither is appealing in itself is no reason for thinking that when I finally choose the lesser evil I will have done so involuntarily; if that were a necessary condition for voluntariness, then many fewer of our actions would be voluntary than we now believe are. (Aristotle argues along the same lines: "...the things done from fear of greater evils...are mixed (actions), but are more like voluntary actions; for they are worthy of choice at the time when they are done, and the end of an action is relative to the occasion."[20] The philosopher's idea of a "mixed" action that is yet "more like" a voluntary than an involuntary one dovetails nicely with our pre-theoretical idea of a man's being "reluctantly willing" to perform an action. Such an action is

"in the absence perhaps involuntary"--unfree?--" for no one would choose any such act in itself," but, "with reference to the moment of action,"[21] where it counts, it's voluntary.)

So, giving up my money is a voluntary action because it appeals to me more than the alternative does; but compliance doesn't always involve finding something appealing, even in this relative sense. Not all sorts of compulsion are consistent with voluntariness. The compliance of an EBS subject to the button-pushing of a mad scientist is not the subject's action just because it is not the result of his exercise of his power to act. Even if what is directly generated in him by these means is the thought or feeling that such-and-such bodily motion would be appropriate about now, this will not be his thought or feeling, and so the resultant motion will not be an action of his. The important difference between the two cases is that here the normal channels of decision-making are bypassed.

These distinctions shed light on a case Taylor describes. We are asked to suppose that a man is caused to have a volition "by the injection of some drug into the spinal column..."[22] The bodily motions that result from this drug-induced inner change will, Taylor insists, "be things with which (the drug-taker) has nothing to do, things that occur in spite of him, motions which he is entirely helpless to prevent--and all this despite the fact that they are, on the theory before us, his own acts."[23] It will not do "to say these motions are indeed his acts, but not his free or voluntary acts, on the ground that the causes of them are themselves caused; for on the theory before us, all causes of changes are caused..."[24]

Now, I want to agree with Taylor that the drug-taker acts neither freely nor voluntarily (for the same reason that our EBS subject acts

neither freely nor voluntarily). But I reject the implication that it is any necessary part of the theory before us that "free" and "voluntary" mean the same thing; and I also reject the implication that this theory is unable to distinguish between those causes of changes in us that are sinister (injurious to voluntariness) and those that are benign. The robbery victim (reluctantly) voluntarily parts with his money, because this is the lesser evil; the scope of his agency is constricted, and so what he intentionally wants will be opposed to what he inclinationally wants, but he is still very much an agent. The drug-taker and the EBS subject act involuntarily, because they do not get a chance to consider whether their action is good, evil or indifferent. If what is directly generated by these artificial means is an approving thought, then it may be said that there is some considering going on, but it is not the subject's considering; it's not his merely because it's going on in his head. The important difference between the two kinds of case is that here it can't be said that one and the same agent wants one thing inclinationally and another (perhaps opposed) thing intentionally.

Finally, it can be maintained that will is effective desire. Where my inclinational wanting is unchallenged by conscience or circumstance, my intentional wanting will mirror my inclination wanting. But where my looking before me, to see whether I ought to act as I'm inclined, leads to a negative valuation--because it wouldn't be safe, because my conscience is repulsed, or simply because the time's not opportune--my intentional wanting will reflect this re-valuation, showing a reverse image of my conditional intention. If I'm a conscientious man, and this sort of self-correction is a regular feature of my experience, then it may be said that I have a conditional intention, an inclination, to

suspend the so-called normal course of events. (One is tempted to call it the lower animal course of events, since self-correction of one kind or another is normal to humans and other higher animals.) Thus, I will generally do what I perceive to be right, or prudent, just because I want to do this sort of thing.

The virtue of this substitution, of two kinds of desire or wanting for desire and will, is that it lessens the attraction of thinking of will as faculty-of-action. Instead of thinking of ourselves as enslaved to inner agents, we are seen as one with our willing; and, far from compromising our integrity, this view confirms it, by making willing, or intentional wanting, the (idealized) point of our receptivity to the counsels of reason. (We are, after all, rational animals.)

It remains to be argued, of course, that this intentional wanting is, or necessarily involves, what Taylor calls inner change, and more, that it involves felt change. But the charge that such a view is an insult to agency can be substantiated only by showing that, at least for some actions, no inner change preceding or accompanying them is thought-rich enough to be a motive, or the expression of a motive, for action. That is, it must be shown that the inner change reputed to initiate or sustain action is like the inner change Taylor describes as "what it is like to feel a sneeze coming on," not merely in respect of its causal relation to motion, but also in respect of its capability of being "mine." Or else it must be shown that, purely in virtue of this inner change's itself being a result, neither it nor the motion that it provokes is mine. To argue the latter point is, it seems to me, to confound agency and (the incompatibilist's view of) freedom. While to argue the former requires more than showing that the inner changes

preceding or accompanying action aren't always fruits of deliberation. Taylor worries that, on the volitional theory, voluntary behavior differs from involuntary behavior "only in its underlying subjective cause." But that's what's supposed to make all the difference! The question is: why should we think it doesn't?

Notes for Chapter 3

1 Taylor, pp. 66-67.

2 Ibid., p. 67.

3 Ibid., p. 68.

4 Ibid., p. 77.

5 Ibid., p. 73.

6 Locke, p. 320.

7 Ibid., pp. 348-49.

8 Ibid., p. 335.

9 Ibid., p. 349.

10 Ibid.

11 Taylor, p. 73.

12 Ibid., p. 74.

13 Ibid., p, 77.

14 Ibid., p. 71.

15 Locke, pp. 314-15.

16 Ibid., p. 322.

17 Daveney, p. 140.

18 Ibid., p. 141.

19 Ibid.

20 Aristotle, Ethica Nichomachea in The Works of Aristotle, trans. and ed. W.D. Ross, 12 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), 9:1109b.

21 Ibid.

22 Taylor, p. 90.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THAT CERTAIN FEELING (What Can I Say To Make You Understand?)

I have said that the reluctance of Hume and certain other feeling theorists to venture descriptions of volition is something of an embarrassment to feeling theory: if it's not describable, then perhaps it's not there to be described at all. I have been somewhat less cautious than Hume in this regard--for one thing I am not constrained by the view that volitions are simples--but my attempt at description has been through metaphor and analogy, and this is also something of an embarrassment. I should like to be able to meet volition head on, but can't seem to. In this chapter I want to consider the general question of the possibility for describing events such as volitions; and I want to say what difficulty in this endeavor means for feeling theory.

Feelings that are sensations are obviously amenable to graphic description. Most of us can agree that burning sensations are like burning fires. We borrow the language of conspicuous and public events for our description (of course, poets are better at such borrowings than the rest of us). And there is nothing wrong with such borrowing: the fact that we must resort to indirect description casts no doubt on the existence or effectuality of burning sensations. But feelings that are thoughts keep a relatively low profile--so low that their very existence is a matter of controversy--and here the poet-philosophers really have their work cut out for them.

Hume believes that volition is a simple and that, therefore, pointing to volition is our best hope for knowing it. But what sort of

pointing is this? I advise you that, if you want to know what it's like to act, you look carefully into yourself to see what is going on when you act; and, I believe, if you look carefully enough, you will soon be able to pick out the feeling I'm thinking of. Obviously, this sort of pointing, and your following my pointing, is no simple business. When G. E. Moore points to a yellow spot, you can walk up to the spot or bring it closer to you, put it in a good light, turn it or yourself this way and that; but when I point to a volition you are its spot. What do you do then? What does it mean to look carefully here? Are there separate places, out-of-the-way places, that must be searched? Is there a bit of investigative know-how that I have that you lack but could be taught? Or is it just a matter of looking harder, straining with your philosophic eye to see what is plainly open to those (few, perhaps) with 20-20 philosophic vision? An important question here is: how do we know that volition is unanalyzable, not separable into parts? How do we come to know that a simple is a simple? Perhaps we try and fail, and try and fail again, and then conclude that, if it can't be done by observers as sharp as we, it just can't be done, period. Or else we know it right off, without attempting analysis. Yellow seems the sort of attribute one doesn't even try to break down. Where would one begin? A particular yellow spot may not be homogeneous, but if one understands yellow to be a sort of heterogeneity, one misunderstands: you are unlucky in learning if, having encountered mostly impure instantiations of yellow, you draw the conclusion that yellow is a splotchy complexion. But perhaps volition is another matter; perhaps it is deceptively simple. How do we go about finding its parts, then? For one thing, it is supposed to occur in time, specifically, just before

(and possibly also coincidental with) action; so there is a place to begin: you might try to look extra-carefully into yourself, as volition is supposed to be occurring, to see whether the first part of the time it takes to occur differs in any way (in respect of its phenomenal or intentional quality, say) from the latter part. At least it make sense to try.

The German phenomenologist Alexander Pfänder promises an "analysis" of willing into its "constitutive elements."[3] According to him, willing is a fact of consciousness, "a purely inner act, "[4] whose precise nature is revealed through introspection. "To analyze a fact of consciousness means to divide it into parts or elements..."[5] If we can break volition into its "parts," then we may be in a better position to describe it, or to judge descriptions of it, for then we should not have a characterization resting on a single shaky metaphor. I'd like to consider Pfänder's "analysis" in some detail, for it is an object lesson of the extreme delicacy--and limited value--of describing volitions. What follows almost--but not quite--justifies the exasperation of feeling theory's detractors. "Not quite" because the limited value of this endeavor is a very real one, indeed.

Pfänder's "Analysis"

We are told that to understand the nature of willing, one must first understand the nature of striving. (Pfänder's striving corresponds to feeling theory's desiring; in fact, in a clear echo of Locke's fear, Pfänder warns that, their similarities notwithstanding, striving and willing should not be confounded: striving is a "usurping of the ego...(while) (p)henomenally, the act of willing appears precisely <u>not</u> as an occurrence caused by a different agent but as an initial act

of the ego-center itself."[6] Thus, willing is not the triumph of the strongest striving, at least not phenomenally.) To understand the nature of striving in turn requires that we see it as sharing a special intentional quality with certain other facts of consciousness, yet differing importantly from these in respect of its phenomenal quality:

> In a given case, let there be an object in our consciousness which arouses a striving; let an orange be perceived and arouse a striving to eat it. Then what is before us as a knowable fact is first of all a certain consciousness of an object. This consciousness contains at least a certain relation in which at first an ego as subject simply confronts an object qua object. But from this ego as a center different kinds of centrifugal "movements" can go toward the confronting object. One of these centrifugal "movements" is the act of attending, or figuratively speaking, the centrifugal radiating of the light of consciousness toward the object, which is different from apperceiving, from mentally reaching out, seizing, selecting, abstracting, separating, and collecting. Under certain circumstances attending and apperceiving are joined by questioning and pointing --likewise centrifugally directed but different--and in addition, finally, by asserting, the thought-forming mental projecting, and setting apart.[7]

Thus, striving to eat an orange is like attending to it or apperceiving it just in so far as it entails being conscious of it, which, in a queer echo of Hobbes, Pfänder describes as a movement. But each variation in movement gives a different appearance, corresponds to a new fact of consciousness. (To be fair, Hobbes's first beginning of animal motion is a real movement; Pfänder's is in quotes. Remember: he is giving a phenomenology of action.) He continues:

> Now if the object toward which the ego in its objection-consciousness is somehow turned centrifugally arouses a striving in the ego, such arousing is experienced as a centripetal ignition,

> a lighting of an <u>impelling</u> striving, which issues from the object which confronts us--a process which is obscure in its course and bursts into a bright flame only in a special part of the ego. Put differently, the whole situation has more the character of an attraction (or repulsion), which issues from the object, moves centripetally toward the ego, attacks it at a certain point, and moves back centrifugally....What is...constitutive for each striving is an inner polar duality, i.e., in it a centrifugal current is fused with an opposite inner resistance to form a genuine unit with a definite character of tension.[8]

Willing, like striving, "has centrifugal direction," but differs from striving in that it is "not blind per se but (contains) in its essence a consciousness of what is willed."[9] Two difficulties: an obvious circularity ("...what is willed"), and the curious claim that striving is "blind per se," when he has just asserted that consciousness of an object is the first part of striving. The second difficulty can be side-stepped if we keep to his claim that willing may be distinguished from mere striving by the "special type of relation which it can have toward certain conscious facts, a relation which is to be designated as a relation of motivation."[10] The first may be avoided if we take him to mean that this relation holds, not between willing and certain conscious facts, but between ourself, or ego-center, which does the willing, and these facts. What is constitutive of willing is then, a special sort of consciousness, or better, a special relation we have to the consciousness willing shares with striving and striving shares with attending. Thus, all the various conscious facts share an intentional quality, but differ, one from another, in phenomenal quality. This is just a phenonologist's version of the theory of propositional attitudes: the attitude is a "definite character of tension."

So, willing, like striving, begins with consciousness of an object, but develops differently:

> A person enters a room, perceives the chill in it, and decides on the basis (Grund) of the perceived chill to leave the room....(The) perception of the chill prevailing in the room is essential....The perceived chill acts centripetally upon the ego... (causing) the ego-center to turn toward it, not only by noticing and apperceiving, but also by listening inwardly or mentally (geisting). This mental listening contains a questioning intent (Zielung) or attitude (Haltung)...which can be formulated in the question, "What shall I do?"....Into this listening, hence centripetally and, as an answer to the question-behavior going toward it centrifugally, rings out the demand of the chill, which is heard by the ego-center....(The) perceived chill really (becomes) the ground for the act of willing, when the ego, in performing the act of willing, uses the demanding chill as its support, when it grounds the act of willing on the demand and "educes" (eduziert) it from the demand.[11]

In striving the relation between the motion running up to the ego and the motion radiating out from it is purely causal; but in willing the relation between the two motions is one of ground to act. Here, the ego is an absolute beginning of motion. Thus, the relation between striving and willing can't be causal: Pfänder says it is a relation of "incentive" to act.[12] Striving inclines the ego to "decide in (its) favor,"[13] to make into an action what the ego is under threat of suffering, but for there to be genuine action the ego must assume full command. And this requires an independent positive valuation of the action striving would have us perform. "(The) ego-center experiences... (the) demand as an obligating 'spiritual'bond,"[14] that is, a sense or conception of action's, or some particular action's, being appropriate to one's situation. "(The) act of willing is necessary in the sense of an ought-to-be but not necessary in the sense that its performance was (causally compelled)."[15] But, of course, Pfänder is careful to explain that it is the absence of a phenomenal external cause of willing

that he means. He grants that there may be a "real" external cause, but insists this is not his business: "a phenomenological investigation cannot supply an answer to this question....(for the) relation of real cause and effect here is not a directly experienced relation."[16] So: the phenomenal cause of striving is an object external to the ego; the phenomenal cause of willing is the ego itself; the real cause of each is unknown.

Now to the analysis of willing:

> In performing an act of willing the ego proposes to itself a certain way of behaving of its own, namely, to do something or not to do something. The proposed behavior of the self is to be called the project. Thus a first part of the performance of the act of will is the intent of the will (Willensmeinung) or the consciousness of the project (Projektsbewusstsein) which aims at a certain future behavior of one's own ego. For some reason the proposed personal behavior is then considered valuable; hence, there is a positive valuation of what the voluntary intention is aiming at. At times there is an additional consciousness of oughtness, the opinion or the knowledge that one's own behavior thus conceived ought to be....But as long as only the factors thus far mentioned are present, the essential and decisive element, in order to transform the whole situation into a performance oc an act of willing, is still missing. For what is still absent is the characteristic practical proposing. This proposing issues from the ego-center, not as an occurrence but as a peculiar doing in which the ego-center centrifugally, from inside itself, performs a mental stroke. This stroke does more than merely approve. By it the meant behavior of the self is proposed but not yet actually executed.[17]

The implication is that action is, at the point of willing, all but executed. (Pfänder admits that "the practical proposing can be problematic, as in wishing, or hypothetical, as in hypothetical willing," but contrasts these with "true, genuine, willing," in which the proposing is "real and unconditional."[18]) Thus, willing begins with the setting of

our aim, but its soul, it seems, is a setting of ourself; it is no mere theoretical (idle) proposing, but a practical (action-pregnant) one; it's a mental stroke anticipating the physical stroke that is action. He continues:

> The act of willing is, therefore, a practical act of proposing filled with a certain intent of the will which issues from the ego-center and, penetrating to the ego itself, induces in it a certain future behavior. It is an act of self-determination in the sense that the ego is both the subject and the object of the act.[19]

The general agreement between Pfänder's account of willing and one of Locke's two treatises on the subject is apparent. Their motive in tendering a hard distinction between willing and desiring or striving is the same: to assert the dominion of our true, rational, self, the distinctively human part of us, over our animal, purely appetitive, part; in other words, to guarantee agent integrity.

According to them, willing is a sort of preparation we undertake--our advance into a state of readiness--to perform an action we've marked out as worthy of performance. To be moved by desiring or striving alone is to move as iron filings move when in the presence of a magnet, that is, purely in reaction to an object's attractive force. (What "inner resistance" there is in such case derives from the weight, the drag, of the attracted stuff: some egos are loaded down by ponderous super-egos, some are not unreasonably scrupulous, others are unloosed by over-vigorous ids.)

Now, it is possible for us to be moved in a direction we approve, so that we are doing what we consider worthy, without actually being the source of this doing, without genuinely acting. For example, we

think it would be a good idea to touch a friend's shoulder, to help allay his grief, and, just at the moment it has the desired effect, we do this, but, as it happens, our motion is not a result of this good intention, but is, rather, the result of a muscular spasm. We've done something previously marked out as worthy of performance, but we've done it automatically; we haven't acted. Striving, as I understand Pfander, is unlike suffering a muscular spasm in that it engages the ego," attacks it at a certain point," precipitating in consciousness a peculiar centrifugal--outward-tending--motion; spasm bypasses the ego entirely. Striving and spasm are alike, however, in that both are "usurpers" of the ego: the latter impels motion by overwhelming it. In striving we may be said to advance to a state of readiness to do something--the ego is mobilized --but unless this advance is ours, what we do as a result will not be an action of ours. To be moved by willing, to be genuinely acting, it's necessary for the ego to be the source of its own mobilization: it must be self-employing. Only then will we be true producers, as against mere transferers, of motion.

I have already set out my opinion that the distinction between desire and willing is overdone, at least as it embodies the traditional distinctions between (dumb) feeling and (articulate) thought, passion and reason, "attractive force" and "worthiness." The question at hand is whether the above represents a satisfactory analysis of the phenomenology of willing, of action.

Pfänder tells us that we "can consider as the conscious fact of willing the entire psychic process which begins with a deliberation of the will..." and ends with "the realization of what is willed." That part of the process that begins with the "decision or resolution," the

product of deliberation, and runs right up to (but doesn't include) action, he calls willing proper.[20] The whole process is, it seems, analyzable into stages. First comes our perception of an object. Then the object "causes" the ego-center to put a question to itself: what course of action shall I take with respect to this object? "At first there is merely a cognitive acknowledgement" that some particular action is in order. The proposed behavior "is then considered valuable." Finally, comes the decision of will, the "practical"[21] acknowledgement that is willing proper. Here the object's demand for action is answered, as the ego reverses the prevailing motion, from inward- to outward-tending. Pfander doesn't say whether this essential part of the total process, the pith of willing, is itself divisible. But since he describes it as a motion radiating outward from the ego, he could be thinking of this stage as itself taking time, and thus as varying in some quality through time. (Pfänder writes that striving has a "definite character of tension," by which he appears to mean some distinctive way it feels. Presumably, willing also has a definite, though different, subjective character. Perhaps, then, the feeling of willing inclines to greater and greater self-assuredness from the point of its initiation, as we become convinced there is little or no serious inner resistance to it. We feel better--less uneasy--about our ability to realize our aim as our stroke of willing proceeds unimpeded by contrary mental strokes.)

In any case, incredulity is a natural response to the claim that this succession of phenomenal episodes occurs each and every time we act. One can be forgiven for rearing back in shocked disbelief, thinking: "All this?! All this going on, and I missed it? What a dunce I must be!" Or, more likely: "What a dunce is Pfänder!"

For a feeling that keeps a low profile, for a feeling that doesn't so much occupy consciousness as softly color it, Pfänder's analysis is rather heavy-handed. The arsenal of descriptive phrases he employs in his analysis of striving is particularly oppressive. From the physical sciences we get: "centrifugal radiating of the light of consciousness," "lighting of an impelling striving," "centripetal ignition," "bursts into a bright flame," "attraction (or repulsion)," "centrifugal current... fused with an opposite inner resistance"; and from the military arts come "attacks (the ego) at a certain point," "penetrating to the ego itself." His characterization of willing is less concrete, less noisy, which is no surprise (in willing we are the attackers, so nothing happens to us that could be described in terms of flames and currents), but no less intimidating. Here Pfander resorts to religious or existential terminology: "a questioning intent," "to do something or not to do something" (that is the question), "rings out the demand," "the project," "obligating 'spiritual'bond" (that is the answer). Altogether too solemn, don't you think? As if every time I raise my arm to brush my teeth I must suffer an identity crisis. If willing is a feeling, it is a more modest feeling than this heavy machinery can keep from mangling. This is overkill, like shooting flies with a bazooka: if you're lucky enough to hit your mark, you've smashed it past all recognition. If this is analysis, it is analysis by ponderous metaphor, murky mythology, vulgar distinction. There isn't much to choose between Locke's short list of metaphors ("command," "order," "prefer") intended to characterize volition-as-simple and Pfander's long list of metaphors intended to characterize volition-as-complex. We still need convincing there's something invariably there--in consciousness-at the scene of an

action, much less a series of things. Pfänder's inflated vocabulary isn't quite the precision diagnostic tool we need.

But wait. If willing is a modest feeling, it liable to defeat all but the most delicate of imaginations. Let's be more patient. More generous. It's possible, I suppose, that only a few persons with especially acute philosophic vision can spot the succession of phenomena leading up to action; let's say Pfänder can spot it, but may just lack the verbal facility to convince us of this fact. Then the rest of us would be in the position of the small boy who must depend on the tall boy to tell him what is happening on the other side of the tall fence. If this is how it is, one wonders whether there is a chance for the underprivileged many to grow to full introspective power, by doing a vision-sharpening exercise or by coming to learn a helpful something about the nature of the introspective object. Now, Pfänder gives no rules for the exercise or direction of the mind in this regard, but he does give at least one warning (in uncertain terms, to be sure) against its misdirection.

There is the suggestion in Pfänder, as there is in Locke, that the phenomenon supposed to precede action is itself an action. He writes that an act of willing is "not...an occurence but ...a peculiar doing," and adds that the ego is its "original performer."[22] Clearly Pfänder is trying to capture here the element of control, of self-determination, that he, along with Taylor and anyone else who thinks sensibly on the subject, recognizes is the mark of intentional action; but from other things he says, we should keep from concluding that the source of our control, this peculiar doing, is an action. In the first place, it should be pointed out that he writes of acts of willing and not of acts

of will: the former carries no hint of their being an independent faculty, like a little agent inside us, charged with this special function; indeed, willing is said to emanate not from the will, whatever that is, but from the ego, not from a part of ourself, but from our whole self. More to the point, we are told that the ego's questioning itself "is not a deliberately articulated posing...": "it simply means that the ego lives in this practical questioning attitude."[23] I take it this means that the question "What shall I do?" is neither articulated nor deliberately posed, at least not necessarily: we are in a what-shall-I-do attitude or frame of mind, but this needn't be realized in words, and it needn't be something we affect, a pose we strike or a position we take up. There is, then, no action of question-putting that must be undertaken before genuine action can get underway. From here it is only a short jump, unobstructed by anything else Pfander says, to the conclusion that the ego's answering itself, in the"essential and decisive" stage of willing, is not a deliberately articulated responding: it simply means that we live in this practical answering or proposing attitude. When Pfander says that willing is a "peculiar doing," he isn't suggesting it is an action of ours; for doing is neutral between action and reaction (when I trip you accidentally, it is, after all, something I do--who else?). The peculiarity here lies in the fact that the ego's answering itself is very little like ordinary question-answering, as the ego's questioning itself is very little like ordinary question-putting: neither need be articulated, neither need be undertaken. So, if in hunting down the elusive volition, we look into ourself expecting to find action there, passing noisly, or even quietly, before actual motion, we are on the wrong trail and shall miss our prey.

Volition is an activity of ours--or, I would say, the conscious result of an activity of ours, the conscious result of a (covert or overt) practical reasoning. It is a "call to action". ("Let it happen right now") and is the undertaking of an action; it is not itself an undertaking.

Pfänder's Folly?

Pfänder describes willing as if it were a kind of self-interview for the same reason that Locke uses such words as "prefer" and "order" and "command" to describe it and I refer to it as a "call to action": lack of better words. What each does is borrow from the bountiful purse of predicates apt for describing public events just those predicates that seem (to them) also to purchase descriptions of these putatively private events, whose own purse is, alas, empty. (In the so-called private language argument, Wittgenstein shows why the private can never pay its own way.) Now, it would be a fault of impatience, and of ungenerousness, to insist that just because the private can't pay for its own descriptions, it is a kind of underclass of event--idle, parasitic, unworthy of our serious consideration--or worse, that there really is no such class of event at all, the idea of it being merely an ideologue's fiction. (Philosophical behaviorists often seem to be dismissive in this worst way; Wittgenstein, only sometimes so.)

If we believe there are such events, then it is only natural to look for a description of them. And if no description can be found, not even by the most expert observers and wordsmiths, then that is a reason for beginning to doubt ourself. But what counts as finding a description?

Wittgenstein writes: "knowing (something) only means: being able to describe it." But Wittgenstein certainly doesn't mean by this that we have to use one set of terms as against another. Indeed, if words don't come, a picture may do. (For Wittgenstein, pictures can be words, too; that is, they can serve the same function. Whatever gets you through.) Hence, he claims to know that "Wednesday is fat and Tuesday is lean,"[24] and explains:

> Here one might speak of a "primary" and "secondary" sense of a word....The secondary sense is not a "metaphorical" sense. If I say "For me the vowel e is yellow" I do not mean "yellow" in a metaphorical sense--for I could not express what I want to say in any other way than by means of the idea "yellow."[25]

The implication that if we resort to metaphor there must be some other way (a "literal" way? another metaphor?) we could have gone is, perhaps, eccentric; but the underlying point is well-taken: just because what I want to say could only be said by using words in a way that differs from the way they are "primarily" used, that is no reason to treat what I'm saying as second class fact or the form of my expression as second class description. Only an ideologue demands that for us to think of a thing as real and effectual we must know a literal description of it.

Here is a chance for those of unexceptional philosophical vision, the underprivileged many, to learn a helpful something about the nature of that introspective object feeling theorists call willing, if only they can allow the use of every investigative tool at their disposal, including the use of words in secondary senses. (Now it remains for the critic of feeling theory to show that the object of a description whose words are being used in secondary senses couldn't constitute the essence or

"vital center" of action, whose public aspect is, of course, wholly describable in words used in their primary senses. The argument has to be: even if there is an inner, private, side to action--even if we grant what most critics of feeling theory are unwilling to grant namely, the empirical thesis that there is thought/feeling running up to and along side all our action--the connection between this inner side, (in Melden's words) "what passes through my mind as I now act," and the public side is purely accidental; what passes through my mind here can't be (Melden again) "anything relevant." This is just the behaviorist argument I take up in the next chapter.)

So, has Pfänder found an acceptable description of willing? Hard to say. To those initially skeptical of the existence of introspectible willings, Pfänder's wordsmithing is, at best, just so much fancy--or clumsy--footwork. Sheer vividness of expression can't produce in us the confidence that a thing exists, only the idea that, if it existed, this is what it would be like. We must discover volitions for ourself. Of course, it's possible that the particular form of such expression will start us to thinking in a new way about the object of our inquiry, will redirect our attention so that we may discover it for ourself the more easily. Perhaps we can be coaxed into looking into another part of ourself, or into expecting that what we will find there is not the sort of thing we might initially have been led to expect to find there, but another kind of thing entirely. Here is our chance, if only the words could guide us. Now, Pfänder's aim in giving a description of willing isnt to win over the non-believers; he pretty much takes it for granted that willing is an introspectible object, and sees it as his task to say as finely as possible --using words in their secondary senses because there is no other way--

what the nature of that object is, But in doing so, he gives a picture of willing-as-introspectible that is very different from the one critics of feeling theory dismiss as not able to accommodate the central fact of agency, namely, the fact of our being in control. The critics' argument, once again, is: if volition isn't action--and it can't be, or else we'd have a multiplication of points of control, with the buck stopping at no point--then it must be the sort of thing, like a twitch or a jerk, for which a diagnosis is required; and this is paradigmatic as a source, not of action, but of reaction. The picture of willing one gets here is so stinted a representation of what feeling theorists have tried (sometimes half-heartedly and always with great difficulty, admittedly) to say as to give the impression of self-servingness. Where critics of feeling theory look for volitions to arrive at one time and no other (the moment just before action), in discrete and sizable packages clearly marked for what they are, feeling theorists have actually sought to deradicalize the atomism of action that is implicit in Hobbes. And where the critics think of these packages as empty of real content--media without messages --feeling theorists have actually sought to lend acumen to the mechanism of action the conventional reading of Hobbes makes appear dull and lock-step. Locke and Hume don't deny that action is mechanical, that we are caused to act in the way we do; they hold instead that it isn't <u>blindly</u> mechanical, asserting that the proximate causes of our action--felt thoughts that are the results of interested perception--are fit and proper sources of intentional action.

As we have seen, Pfänder denies that willing has a phenomenal external cause and that it is itself the phenomenal external cause of action; he thinks it's not his business (as a phenomenalogist) to say what its

real causal relations are, and likes to talk instead of willing as the "ground" of action. So, Pfänder and the empiricists do not necessarily agree that the relation of willing to action is causal. Nevertheless, Pfänder does remark on the "intimate interpenetration" of thinking and feeling, and writes that both are "ingredients of willing." He can be bolder in making such pronouncements than either Locke or Hume. because he is unencumbered by an atomist metaphysic, according to which there is a smallest part--primitive, indivisible, elemental--of anything you can name. Action involves a mixture of active and passive powers, Locke holds, but the constituents of this process are themselves supposed to be either wholly active or wholly passive, thinking or feeling through and through. Desire is feeling, willing is thinking; desire "spurs" us, gets us going, willing polices, keeps a close watch to see that we are proceeding according to its law; and never the twain shall be confounded. We have already seen Locke's own inability to maintain this too neat division of labor.

The empiricists, put in the best light, and the phenomenologist can agree, then, that there is a feeling preceding and accompanying action that is what distinguishes action from reaction, and that it is a legitimate source of intentional action just for the reason that this feeling is a kind of thought which, as Pfänder puts it, has no phenomenal external cause and is not itself the phenomenal external cause of action. This last stipulation says no more than Locke means to say when, warning us against thinking of the will as a fragment of ourself, he writes that the man is the agent. This simply means: his willing is his own (no electrodes, no wires...); his motion is his own; the man is in control.

The question of whether Pfänder, or anyone, has found an acceptable

description of willing is really two questions: is the picture comprehensible? (can we make out the story it tries to tell?); is it true? Ryle and Taylor are able to make out the picture of willing; and they conclude it isn't true because there's not enough of our shrewdness contained in it to explain action. The thinking feeling theorist will want to remedy this insufficiency by redrawing his picture in such a way that his action-causing or action-grounding tension is filled with a definite intent. But not with an articulated intent: the peculiar question-answering that is the essence of willing, according to Pfander, is "not deliberately articulated," the peculiar commanding that is willing, according to Locke, is "barely a thought or preference"; just a suggestion will do. Now, Pfänder might have said that this answering is "barely" an answering; and Locke that this commanding is "not deliberately articulated." One may well wonder: could Pfänder agree with Locke that willing is as like commanding as it's like answering?; could Locke agree with Pfänder that willing is as like answering as it's like commanding? It's hard to construct equations when words are being used in secondary senses. How far is willing from ordinary answering or commanding? (Are these apt metaphors?) How far is answering from commanding? (Are they kindred or mixed metaphors?)

We are on notoriously unsteady ground, that treacherous marshland of murky metaphors and misted-over distinctions that is the native territory of the philosophic romantic (mystic or occultist to his fastidious opposite). It's no surprise to find the philosophic classicist--the reductionist, the atomist--scampering away from this morass, to the surer footing and clearer vistas of unyielding logical geographies and boundaries.

Having rejected mentalist ghost-chasing, Ryle embraces a reductionism whose terms are all on the surface ("All there is to action is patterns of motion"). Having rejected both mentalism and behaviorism, Taylor embraces the idea of "agent causality," according to which action is itself primitive, invisible, elemental ("All there is to action is action; that's all folks!") (Note a similar strategy in how the contemporary anti-mentalist, who carries behaviorism's legacy but shrinks from its wildest implications, handles the problem of how we know our own mental states. Observation of patterns of motion, the way we know others' mental states, won't do: too unlikely. What's left? "Autonomy," Norman Malcolm explains. Only this isn't a very edifying explanation. We want analysis, definition, something...) What we have there, finally, is a stand-off between two dubious sorts of unassailability: the crudities of Hobbesianism have been smoothed over, but how can we know whether the sophisticated feeling theorist has got an adequate picture of willing and action if he is going to refer to such paradoxical realities as felt thoughts?; the classical behaviorist solution has itself fallen into general disrepute, but how can we know whether the contemporary anti-mentalist has replaced behaviorism with an adequate picture if he is going to insist on such impossibily self-contained realities as action-simples? The former admits that thinking and feeling are hopelessly interdependent, yet manages to see in this befogged mentality (tension filled with intent) a solution to his problem. The latter, convinced now (finally!) that a given behavior or pattern of behavior is compatible with any number of mental acriptions--because of what Donald Davidson has called the "holism of the mental realm"[26]--retreats from the threat of this interdependence to the position that action is

self-sufficiently compact, pristine, unanalyzable. Either the parts of action are indistinct from one another, or else it has no parts: that's our choice!

Can we make out Pfänder's story? Locke probably could. I think I can, too. But, of course, a story can appear coherent and turn out, at closer inspection, not to be. Or it can be coherent but not true. The story that willing is a brute propulsiveness, like that familiar sneezy feeling, is coherent but, we all agree, not true. The story that willing is thoughtful but not thought-out, subtle but forceful, and capable of propelling in a flash, is harder to fathom, and, consequently, harder to appraise as to its truthfulness. The charge that The charge that proponents of volitional theory do not bother to give a description of willing is not a fair one: some bother, some don't. There are descriptions and hints of descriptions to ponder. What is missing is a clear consensus. It's not the absence of description we should be lamenting, but the absence of a method for determining whether a particular description is adequate or not.

Most sensitive people agree with Wittgenstein that Tuesday is lean and not fat. The way we know that this description is a good one is that most sensitive people do in fact accept it; there is no need for method. There is, however, no description of willing that most sensitive people agree upon. Now suppose large numbers of otherwise sensitive people resisted answering the question of whether Tuesday is fat or lean, claiming it's no more intelligible than asking whether the square root of two is red or blue. What would that show? That they are less esthetic than we who are able to answer? Or that we are

hyperperspicacious, understanding things that aren't there to be understood? It would show neither infallibly. What would decide the matter then? Well, if it could be known there's something there to be understood, if it could be proven there really are ghosts in the house... But there is no method for this. (How could we show that Tuesday must be fat or lean, that it can't be fat or lean, that it is in fact fat, or that it is in fact lean?) We are stuck with our sensitivities and our purse of metaphors, and the hope that, by spending wisely, we can win friends and influence people to think as we do.

This is the dilemma of the action theorist who is convinced there is a "subjective underlying cause" (Taylor's words) or ground of action about which it is sensible to ask whether it is thought-out or felt.

Some critics of feeling theory seem insulted that anyone should suggest they are missing what's right under their philosophic noses. (Melden writes that feeling theory's central claim is "an implied charge of dishonesty directed at those who refuse to give their assent."[27] But it's poor cosmetics to cut off your nose to save your face. The real problem is just this: what the feeling theorist offers and what his critic is prepared to accept are so far apart, there is no room for bargaining. For this reason, the feeling theorist's soft-sell-by metaphor will likely be an unprofitable venture, and a dispiriting one for buyer and seller both. But is it disreputable, as some of the criticism, especially the tone of it, implies? Not simply for the reason that it fails. After all, sometimes such verbal investments do

pay off: the other fellow finally comes around, concedes he sees what you mean, and also that --now that he's had the chance to think on it-- there is a reality corresponding to what you are saying. The thinking man's feeling theorist is offering a product that (he tells us) is highly refined; his atom of action-causing feeling is unostentatious but character ful, succinctly expressive and instantaneously effective--an aroma, and not the big stink Taylor's man is huckstering. Some buy, some don't.

How else could it be disreputable for the feeling theorist to suggest his critic has simply failed to smell out this essential fact of action? Well, if the proposed essential fact, or the theory into which it fits, can be shown to entail some gross logical or conceptual error, what used to be called a "howler," then that would be cause for sanctimonious sniffing.

Now, if the proposed essential fact is understood as Taylor's volitional theorist understands it (as a brute propulsiveness), we can easily agree this is grossly inadequate: we'd be trying to explicate a paradigm of control in terms of a paradigm of uncontrol. (Category mistake anyone?) And even if the theory into which this unthinking propulsiveness is fitted provides for an operation of thought, to give action its aspect to rational control--as does the assembly-line model (Hobbes stations at the beginning and Locke and Hume put it near the end of the line)--this would still not do; for we should then be violating the integrity of agency by breaking it up into bits. Not only does all this seem far away from our actual experience, not only is it empirically unsatisfactory, but it also seems to miss the very point of agency: it's a sort of conceptual confusion to think that this is our actual experience, however unrecognizable it may seem. Not because

things can't differ from how they seem. But because action can't be this way and still be action.

But if this is the obvious error in Hobbesianism, what is the obvious error, where is the insult, in the more sophisticated version of feeling theory?

Though there may be no reasonable hope that metaphor-mongering (of even the most refined variety, as practiced by the best poets) will suffice to verify some version of a feeling theory of action, still it has a definite place in the debate between feeling theorists and their critics. For the critic is in the habit of saying things like "I experience nothing of that sort." To which it is entirely appropriate for the feeling theorist to reply: "Sir, you misunderstand me: it's not <u>that</u> sort of experience I mean, it's <u>this</u> sort." Of course, this response doesn't have the knock-down force that showing an opponent's logical error has (the critic is likely to counter with: "Even so...," or "Now I don't understand you at all!"); still, it has the virtue of showing that, just maybe, the critic has been too hasty (not dishonest) in dismissing feeling theory, and that, therefore, the debate is not so easily ended. This may be a small virtue, but even a small virtue can be the start of something big.

Of course, no feeling theory of action that likens the feeling of action to the feeling we have before we sneeze <u>could</u> account for action's aspect of self-control. But no self-respecting feeling theorist claims such a likeness. This puts a new burden on the feeling theorist, to say precisely what move he is making if not the obvious one. Hence, the resort to a strategy of metaphor; and hence, the apparent stalemate.

But it's a point we have to reach: the game only gets interesting once we've attempted to redraw the picture of feeling theory that emerges from a cursory review of the classical literature or from the great bulk of the critical literature. The fact that the new picture is on the abstract side is apt cause for some regret; but it's not being immediately (or even finally) and totally comprehensible is no apt cause for defeatism: better to be nearer a difficult (if unattainable) truth than in firm possession of a simple lie. But how do we know we're making any progress toward such a truth? Metaphor is a strategy of desperation, an inducement to rampant intuitionism, the last refuge of obscurantist scoundrels. ("Willing is like answering." "Desiring is like asking." "Willing is lean." "Desiring is fat." And so on.) What we'd like is a reliable <u>method</u> of judging the feeling theorist's claims. To scramble around in a muck of mixed metaphors is unappealing sport to the intellectually scrupulous. We must, of course, recognize metaphor's limited usefulness in settling the central questions of action theory--there is no method of deciding among competing descriptions; nor is there a method for determing whether there is even anything in need of description--but we can't leave metaphor entirely behind. The worth of metaphor, properly employed by the philosopher, is in its power to <u>suggest</u> what cannot be straightforwardly described: you do what you can with what you've got. (Even Wittgenstein should approve: we can substitute "use words in primary senses" for "straightforwardly describe," and "use words in secondary senses" for "suggest.") The pity, from the philosopher's point of view, is that while this may be art, it isn't proof. What I'd like is a proof; what I'd settle for is the workable suggestion of a view of action, <u>plus</u> a reason for thinking that a theory along the lines of this suggestion is more attractive than the competition.

Notes for Chapter 4

1 A.I. Melden, Free Action (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 46.

2 Wittgenstein, Part 2, p. 186.

3 Alexander Pfänder, Phenomenology of Willing and Motivation, trans. Herbert Spiegelberg (Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 7.

4 Ibid., p. 15.

5 Ibid., p. 7.

6 Ibid., p. 20.

7 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

8 Ibid., p. 17.

9 Ibid., p. 21.

10 Ibid., p. 20.

11 Ibid., pp. 27-29.

12 Ibid., p. 25.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 38.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., p. 34.

17 Ibid., p. 22.

18 Ibid., p. 23.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 7.

21 Ibid., p. 28.

22 Ibid., p. 20.

23 Ibid., p. 28.

24 Wittgenstein, Part 2, p.215

25 Ibid., p. 216.

26 Hume, p. 399.

27 The jewel that we find, we stop and take it
Because we see it, but what we do not see
We tread upon, and never think of it
--Measure for Measure

28 Melden, pp. 47-48.

CHAPTER V

THE SPECTRE OF WITTGENSTEIN: AN EXORCISM

Feeling theory has been dismissed for both empirical and conceptual reasons. To be precise, for the one empirical reason we have been considering (that no distinct feeling of action is in fact discoverable), and for two conceptual reasons, one of which we have begun considering (that no feeling theory can do justice to action's aspect of self-control), and the other, more general, of which still needs our consideration: that no distinctive feeling of action is <u>in theory</u> discoverable, because of the general implications of Wittgenstein's private language argument.

Now, this last lobjection, if substantiated, renders the first two superfluous. There is a fatal flaw in feeling theory if, the private language argument being accepted, it is interpreted in the way behaviorist followers of Wittgenstein interpret it. I will be arguing that the behaviorist interpretation is a non sequitur.

Implications of the Private Language Argument

The classical empiricist philosophers built the world up out of bits of mind: ideas, sensations, impressions, the atoms of perception. Of course, Berkeley is an extremist among the empiricists, holding that the world is one with mind, and that the category of mind is both epistemologically <u>and</u> ontologically primary. But the core of empiricism doesn't imply this extremism: it is the view that mind is epistemologically primary. In this the empiricists take their cue from Descartes' dictum that the mind is more surely known than the world.

From bits of mind, from the mental goings-on that we directly apprehend--indeed, of which our self is essentially constituted (according to Hume)--we infer (Locke) or are naturally, if non-rationally, inclined to project (Hume) an external world. The centrality of the theory of perception in this tradition, which dominated western philosophy until the twentieth century, is easily understood. It is what we should expect of a tradition that deems the elemental units of perception the foundation of knowledge.

The revolution that was philosophical behaviorism dethroned the theory of perception, made it subject to the theory of meaning. What is philosophical behaviorism, and how does it differ from psychological behaviorism?

The psychological behaviorist holds that mental phenomena and their bodily expressions--behavior--are alike world-derived, that is, internal and external responses to external stimuli; and that a sophisticated psychology will attend most closely to the external--public--members of this group, in order that patterns of input and output may be detected, recorded for their theoretical interest, and manipulated to our practical advantage. Thus, behavior is viewed by the psychological behaviorist as not simply the effect mind has on body, but as, fundamentally, the effect world has--the effect our "environment" has--on body. Mind is the man in the middle. (The philosophical determinist tendency of psychological behaviorism is apparent; but the careful determinist (as I try to be) will point out that it is a misrepresentation of his theory to talk of helpless middlemen. We are, I would say, the sum or product of the world-from-our-point-of-view and of the stuff of our body (of nature and nurture): there is no separate self, no possibly causally independent

man to be made a monkey of. So long as we don't make the absence of causation a requirement, there is plenty of room left for agency, if not for freedom.)

Now, since speech is a kind of behavior, the psychological behaviorist must also hold that our talk about mental phenomena, the language of mind, is world-derived. The philosophical behaviorist will agree with these words, but his meaning is different.

The philosophical behaviorist shares with the psychological behaviorist a reductionist belief that the problems of mind are to be resolved by tracing connections between observables. But the justification for the reductionist belief at the core of philosophical behaviorism is not the merely empirical observation that the way in which we talk about mind is world-derived, the consequence of training. The philosophical behaviorist's thesis is stronger, utterly philosophical (non-empirical). Wittgenstein's private language argument is intended to establish the claim that language generally (and the language of mind particularly) is necessarily founded on social practice. This is not to say that a language, which is a system of rules, may not originate with a single speaker, but only that, whatever its origin, whether it is devised by a single speaker or a community of speakers, it must be teachable, through having public criteria--tests--for the correct application of its rules.

If this is right, and the words we use to describe our life (our mental life included) get their meanings from the form of our social life (specifically, from the public procedures that ensure coherent usage), then a philosophy (such as empiricism) that makes the self a percipient essentially must be mistaken. In the new philosophy, the self as social

actor replaces the self as solitary percipient.

The argument, as it pertains to the language of mind, runs roughly as follows. On the assumption (a) that learning and understanding a word requires that we follow a rule of usage (public or private), the empiricist belief (b) that the key words of our language of mind have purely private referents implies the conclusion (c) that it can never be known certainly whether two speakers mean the same thing by the use of the same word. But this is just the sort of thing that is commonly known certainly, it is held; so (b) must be rejected, unless some form of the argument from analogy can be sustained. But no such argument can get off the ground, for if there are no public criteria for correctness, it can never be known certainly whether a single speaker means the same thing by the use of the same word at different times. Why? Because of the fallibility of memory. Thus, the language of mind--including the language of action--must be world-derived, or world-founded. And thus, the idea that we are essentially inner lives--that action needs an inner aspect--is discredited.

There are a number of problems with this argument: (1) A community of speakers is only less liable to failed memory than is a single speaker: it is not immune. (2) It's not clear we'd have to resort to some variant of the argument from analogy: a best-theory-available argument (along lines proposed by Hilary Putnam and others) skirts Wittgenstein's objection. (3) The claim that there are some things we commonly know certainly (or even anything we ever know certainly) is, to my mind, still capable of being resisted. (For a notable instance, Peter Unger resists it--intelligently, provocatively.) The question of whether Cartesian-like doubt is coherent doubt--whether there are kinds of doubt--is an open one. Last, and most important for us, there is the matter of that non sequitur.

Wittgenstein claims that knowing means being able to describe, and also that successfully describing requires the possibilty of public checks. I think that each of these claims is debatable; but right now I want to point out that, even if these are accepted, it does not follow that successfully describing requires that the object of description be a public observable. (If Wittgenstain doesn't intend this conclusion--it's not clear to me whether he does--the behaviorist tradition he nurtured surely does.)

Wittgenstein argues that we need public checks on our use of words to guarantee coherency. But there is no reason why this condition can't be met by expressions doing the duty of describing "nonpublic accompaniments" or "inner sides" of public activities. There is no reason why we can't know something--for instance, that action is initiated by a will-impulse--without the object of our knowledge being open to public scrutiny, so long as we're able to cite a public check. What's the check here? Just the assent of others who likewise feel the propriety of explaining action in the way we do. Pfänder, who prefers to describe willing as a kind of answering, would likely assent to Locke's describing it as a kind of commanding. The fact that the need to appeal to a real but nonpublic will-impulse is not universally felt, and that, therefore, such assent is not universally given, is no proof of the incoherency of the enterprise. Say they are playing a language game, if you will. We don't all have to play for the game to be rewarding. Johnny trips, scrapes his knee, looses a cry, and snivels "I hurt"; mother understands. Alex feels a chill, goes to close the window, emits a sigh of relief, and dissertates (he's in an analytic mood) "I felt chilly and (sort of) asked myself what I could do to warm up, and then I noticed the window was open and (sort of)

decided to close it, and then I closed it." Johnny understands, though mother might not. Why should the rejection of the possibility of a private language imply that Alex can't talk meaningfully about inner (sort of) asking and answering?

To be fair, there is nothing in what I've just said that shows our will-impulse must be a felt impulse--what is non-public can still be non-conscious--or even that we have will-impulses at all, only that the acceptance of the private language argument doesn't preclude appeal to will-impulses, as theoretical entities at least. If we're looking for an explanation of action, then it is permissible for us to think that its explanation could be hidden, could be a non-public will-impulse. Talk of will-impulses is intelligible as long as there is a community (even a small community) of speakers for whom this language arouses "understanding," that is to say, as long as it is a shared response to (perhaps a very specialized) training. It may be that some other variety of talk is preferable to will-impulse talk--on grounds of explanatory comprehensiveness, say--but that is no ill reflection on the intelligibility of a theory of action that contains such language.

In "Operationalism and Ordinary Language," Chihara and Fodor argue that nothing in Wittgenstein's outward-looking philosophy precludes appeal to theoretical entities. Wittgenstein claims: "(An) 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria." The authors reply that the "justification of existential statements" doesn't require reference to public observables; it can "depend rather on appeals to the simplicity, plausibility, and predictive adequacy of an explanatory system as a whole."[1] So, "the formation of a cloud-chamber track cannot be a criterion of the presence and motion of charged particles,"[2] because other explanations are

for them are possible; nevertheless, we engage in charged particle talk because we think it shows explanatory promise. Likewise, I would argue, the rising of my arm, even if it's coupled with my attestation that I raised it, cannot be a criterion of the presence and effectuality of a will-impulse--because other explanations are possible (I'm lying; I'm deluded; I'm acting, but action is impulseless and "agent-caused," etc.) Nevertheless, some of us engage in will-impulse talk because we think it shows explanatory promise. Sometimes at least, "an 'outer' syndrome stands in need of an inner process."[3] Charged particle theory and will-impulse theory may just turn out to be the best explanations available; proof of this is a separate matter from proof of their very intelligibility.

Wittgenstein demands that we explain "This" and "so" differently if we are to say anything meaningful by "'This' feels 'so'." But now I'd like to ask: must we command a form of expression that explains what action is like for us for there to be something that action is like for us? I don't think so. After all, there is, I am certain (along with Thomas Nagel[4]), something that it's like for a bat going about its normal business (whether we call this bat action is debatable), yet we don't ourself command, or expect any bat commands, even an approximation of a description of this feeling. But this is not, after all, a crucial question. For even if command is a necessity, universality of command--unanimity of assent to a form of expression--certainly isn't.

It is tempting to think of "speaking a language" as if it were a unitary competence (around here we all speak English, right?) and the "form of life" a language reflects as if it were a monolith (we all live in this place together, right?); but while there may be a sense in conceding a shared minimum competence, based on a common denominator of

experience, we had better make a place in our theorizing for the diversity (of trainings and responses) amidst the uniformity. The community-at-large may be blissfully insensitive to needs felt keenly by relatively sophisticated sub-communities. The rich, we hear, are different from you and me; and they talk different, too. Theoretical physicists may squeeze grapefruit alongside us at Waldbaum's, but down at the office they are in the habit of using words in ways even readers of Science News find impenetrable. There's nothing wrong in this, of course; their work presents problems we untrained types are only dimly aware of, if we're aware at all. Special problems, special vocabulary. It's only natural. So, also, do philosophers have special problems. For instance, Melden and Pfänder share the need for an explanation of action. This means they will naturally speak in terms non-philosophers can expect to have difficulty comprehending. This doesn't mean they will likely speak the same sub-language; nor does it mean that, if they do comprehend one another, they will come to the same conclusions. Whatever Melden thinks, he and Pfänder enjoy an honest disagreement over how their shared need is to be met. Scientists sometimes disagree; so may philosophers.

Thus, there are forms-of-life and sub-forms-of-life. It may even be that a particular form-of-life has a natural affinity for a particular constellation of sub-forms. In that case, the specialized trainings required for participation in a given sub-community will itself be founded on the more general training required for participation in the community-at-large. But not everyone is capable of achieving sophisticated competences to the same degree. We are just not equally talented. So, while a particular sub-language may naturally reflect a form-of-life, not everyone

initiated into this form-of-life will be capable of seeing this reflection. Meaning may be use, and use may depend on form-of-life, as Wittgenstein claims, but, whatever the truth of this doctrine, some uses are less directly dependent, or less obviously reflective, than others. This is what makes poetry (and phenomenology and theoretical physics) possible.

I'm sure Wittgenstein never intends to slight the power of poetry (indeed, the Investigations is a revolt against the referentialism of the Tractatus, at least partly inspired by the observation that language serves a variety of functions, the poetic included; also, his talk of secondary senses makes it clear where his basic sympathies lie); but form-of-life talk is dangerous. It's supposed to get us to looking outside ourself, to realizing that the form of even our most personal thought is supplied by the exigencies of our public associations. But if you get too used to looking outside yourself in this way, you are liable to fall victim to behaviorist entrancement, and give up one suspect reductionism (the world from bits of mind) only to take up another (the mind from bits of world). What is "directly known" changes; the inclination to see a one-to-one correspondence between mind and world remains the same. Wittgenstein does not quite embrace such a reductionism. While he has his moments of weakness, he is usually careful to avoid suggesting so simple, so extreme, a theory. While empiricists and behaviorists hold that mind (and the language of mind) meets the world bit by bit, the Wittgenstein of the Investigations holds that mind (and language) meets the world as a whole. To try to find the essence of remembering, say (in private contents of consciousness or in patterns of public performance), to try to define remembering (in inward-looking or in outward-looking terms), is to presume that remembering is one thing, which is to presume that the word "remembering" means one thing. But this denies the limitless variety of uses to which "remembering," or any other expression, may

(in principle) be put. The "parts of language" do not match up, one-to-one and without remainder, with the parts of the world. Thus, it would be inaccurate to call Wittgenstein a behaviorist and leave it at that.

Arthur Danto, for one, calls Wittgenstein a behaviorist and leaves it at that. He claims that Wittgenstein's solution to "the problem of action" precisely inverts Berkeley's solution to "the problem of perception": "For the Wittgensteinians, the existence of covert inner events(volitions, say) was as odious as was the existence of covert external entities (material substrates, say) to Berkeley."[5] So, "to be is to be perceived" (the motto of phenomenalism) is matched by "to act is to move" (the motto of behaviorism). But, if we insist on calling Wittgenstein a behaviorist, fairness to him dictates that we at least distinguish between two sorts of behaviorism: definitional behaviorism, according to which mental ascriptions are translatable into descriptions of observables, and non-definitional behaviorism, which eschews translations and definitions, "iron laws" of behavior (or behavior and circumstances together). The meaning of a particular description is thoroughly context-dependent, according to Wittgenstein, so there is no hope of compiling a dictionary of mental terms (no hope, in fact, of knowing whether a term is "mental" as against...?) a priori, independently of our mastery of a particular form-of-life. And even after we've developed this mastery, our definitions, our rules for the use of words, will be no more than codifications of standard uses: we can--we will--treat them as if they were a priori truths (especially those most intimately connected with our form-of-life-view), but uses are the key, and uses are (in principle) changeable.[6]

It is only when Wittgenstein belabors the notion of a "criterion"

that he gets to sounding like a definitional behaviorist. For what is a criterion if not a definition? The debate persists. Here is a contribution.

If we think of a definition as specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for a particular ascription, and a criterion is supposed to fall somewhat short of this, while still deserving to be called a kind of necessary connection, then perhaps we can say a criterion specifies a sufficient condition for ascription "in the normal case." But it is not the sort of sufficient condition a "symptom" is (symptoms are only contingently connected with processes); a criterion would be at least partly definitive if the world were a simpler place; indeed, it <u>is</u> at least partly definitive, so long as we don't think of definitions as immutable.

Chihara and Fodor:

> (We) can roughly and schematically characterize Wittgenstein's notion of criterion in the following way: X is a criterion of Y in situations of type S if the very meaning or definition of "Y" (or, as Wittgenstein might have put it, if the "grammatical" rules for the use of "Y") justify the claim that one can recognize, see, detect, or determine the applicability of "Y" on the basis of X in normal situations of type S. Hence, if the above relation obtains between X and Y, and if someone admits that X but denies Y, the burden of proof is upon him to show that something is abnormal in the situation. In a normal situation, the problem of gathering evidence which justifies concluding Y from X simply does not arise.[7]

Is this what I'm saying? It's close, at least. The important thing here, it seems to me, is that this very sensible reading of "criterion" leaves room for the mentalist to counterattack. For if behavior can't define mentality, but only provides a criterion for it, in the sense just explicated, then even the most complex set of bodily motions will not guarantee that action is taking place. If it can be shown that something is abnormal in the situation, for a possible example, that there is no

will-impulse, no action consciousness, present, then the inference from behavior to mentality fails. Of course, this raises the question of just what sorts of abnormalities really do count here. Frankly, I don't expect many Wittgensteinians will readily assent to my candidate. ("Doing itself seems not to have any volume of experience. It seems like an extensionless point, the point of a needle. This point seems to be the real agent. And the phenomenal happenings only the consequences of this acting. 'I do...' seems to have a definite sense, separate from all experience."[8] Wittgenstein seems willing to grant that there is a feeling of action, but this is only a symptom, not a part of the real thing.)

I said earlier that the burden is on the anti-mentalist to show that the object of a description whose words are being used in secondary senses couldn't constitute the essence of action. The private language argument is often employed with this purpose in mind; but all it does, really (if, that is, we should account it successful), is show that even the loftiest--most grandly poetic--of descriptions sits on a groundwork of shared responses to training.

But doesn't the private language argument defeat the very idea of looking for an "essence"? After all, if "remembering" or "acting" is susceptible to a variety of uses, as (to use Wittgenstein's metaphor) are the tools in a toolbox, then what sense is there in trying to say what "remembering" or "acting" basically means, what remembering or acting essentially is?

But how powerful is this metaphor, finally? Let's talk about hammers.

"Hammers" and "Actions," Hammers and Actions, Words and Things

We could use a hammer to drive in a nail, as a weapon, as a door-stop,

to signal a turn (by sticking it, instead of a bare arm, out the window), to crush an empty can, or to open--somewhat unaesthetically--a full one. Clearly, some uses of a hammer are apter than others. Indeed, a hammer is a nail-driver, whatever else it is. It wouldn't be absurd to say a hammer's essence is its nail-driving capability, and that its other uses are in some sense secondary. There wouldn't be hammers if there weren't ever any nails in need of pounding.

Now, clearly, hammers are not entirely like words in this respect. In each case, we could say: first comes the need, then its fulfillment, the tool or the word. But tools are designed to fulfull needs (you want to put a nail into the wall; you know you'll require a device that is hard enough to withstand the force required, light enough to swing so that such a force may be built up...); words fulfill needs almost automatically, If you're stipulating a use, you may check to see whether the word you intend to employ isn't being overemployed and that your intended use doesn't contradict some other established use--you do want to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding--but the process is less demanding of an ingenuity at fitting means to ends. So, a tool is typically designed to do one sort of thing, with the other uses it is eventually put to being more or less serendipitous. The history of a word doesn't typically follow such a sequence. A single word can have two or more duties without serving one master. A hammer is a nail-driver, whatever else it is, but "hammer" means "nail-driver" only if that's a standard use of the word. If the history of the language were a bit different, it would mean something different, or nothing at all. This is to say that the conventionalist element in language-formation doesn't have an exactly similar counterpart in tool-fashioning. So, it is incorrect to say that

searching for meanings (apart from uses) and searching for essences are similarly doomed enterprises. We can agree that a word can mean anything without agreeing that the uses to which it is actually put are incapable of forming a hierarchy (as the uses to which a hammer is put form one, from aptest to most inapt). Thus, we are in a position to hold that, while "acting" means what it means depending on the history of the language, acting is what it is, whatever else it is. Though "acting" may not have a unique meaning, acting may yet have a distinct essence.

Just as it is possible for us to have the word "hammer" without there actually being any device that pounds nails, or any need to pound them, or even the nails themselves, so, too, might we have the word "acting" without there being that X factor, the essence of acting (control? conscious control?); the words would then resonate differently from the way they do now. "Hammer" resonates quite clearly; the depths of its signification are easily explored; we know what a hammer is, basically. What we'd like to know is just how "acting" resonates (does it suggest Wittgenstein's extensionless point or, rather, Findlay's conjunction of presence with absence?); we'd like to know what acting is, basically. Even after Wittgenstein is heard out, it's still sensible for us to ask.

It is now possible to argue the following. While there may have to be a social foundation for the <u>learning</u> of language, there may still be a subjective foundation for the genuine <u>speaking</u> of it (indeed, for any action whatever). Is this a paradox? Findlay thinks it's resolvable: we've been taught the uses of mental terms in public contexts, but:

> ...we only fully <u>understood</u> the use of such mental terms by ourselves executing certain directed conscious acts, by having knowledge of thus executing them, and by supposing others to do likewise. In understanding, therefore, we in a sense <u>reverse</u> the relation obtaining in linguistic

> instruction: the thought, brought into discourse by the word, serves to explain and illuminate the latter....That the processes which give a sense to expressions should also go beyond what is in the grossest sense ostensible is by no means absurd: it is indeed necessary to say this, since the line between showable and unshowable is vague and arbitrary.[9]

I'm not sure that this is the ground for the possibility of a subjective foundation for understanding, for we can admit degrees of showability and still see a wide difference between what is "in the grossest sense ostensible" and what is in the grossest sense inostensible. And isn't this just the difference between public activities and non-public accompaniments or inner sides of public activities? In any case, I think Findlay is on the right track.

By observing the public activities of others--the when and the how of their use of the word "pain," say--a child will come to regulate his own activites in a like manner; this is what Findlay and I mean by learning a language. But there is every reason to suppose that, in noticing what happens in the outer world when people use "pain," the child also notices what happens in his inner world when the the linguistic community agrees he is using the word correctly. So, a child can't learn to use "pain" unless he is outwardly attentive, but if he is minimally inwardly attentive, he will notice that a particular inner syndrome (or family of syndromes) is regularly associated with his approved usage, and he will naturally suppose (because this is the simplest theory) that what is going on in him when he successfully engages in pain talk and pain behavior is also going on in others when they are so engaged. Pain without such goings-on just isn't real pain, we think: the association is that regular. So, "pain" couldn't mean anything to us if it weren't for learning procedures that are public and arrived at by convention,

but "pain" soon begins to resonate distinctively, begins, we could say, to develop a foundational or core meaning of "that stabbing or splitting or throbbing or...Xing sensation no one else feels." That the core should show itself last is by no means absurd. For cores not uncharacteristically show themselves after prolonged excavation. Language, as a reflection of our form-of-life, gives shape to our perceptions, but it is also a tool for the excavation of hidden realities, of essences, if you will. The gist of form-of-life talk is that language creates reality, but surely, it does this only in an attenuated sense of "creates": the way we view the world does depend on the way we talk about it, but it must also depend on the way the world is. Words help us explore the world that gives rise to our perceptions. And we may have to dig deep to find an essence. So, a word should no more be confused with the uses to which it is put or with the parts of the world it helps us manipulate than a tool be confused with the uses to which it is put or with the materials it is applied to.

Unconscious Willing: The Language of Action In A Strange Land

Now, to say that there is a subjective foundation for action, that there is a special consciousness that goes along with genuine action, isn't to say that the language of action couldn't be properly used where this quality is absent. For instance, it would still be permissible to speak of "unconscious willing," as a Freudian speaks, even if we set it down as agreed that willing is the key ingredient in action, that action consciousness is the key ingredient in action, and that, therefore, willing is this special consciousness. Willing is a special consciousness essentially, but it could also be other things, say, whatever it is in us (a disposition, a physiological state, etc.) that causes the

same outer syndrome as willing-as-special-consciousness causes.

"Willing" can have the core meaning of "that quality of consciousness distinctive of action (that is like answering or commanding or...Xing)," while at the same time mean nothing directly to do with consciousness, so long as enough of us agree to this extension of the terminology, and so long as we are careful to set the context of our attribution. Of course, we shouldn't be indiscriminate in our agreements; that would clutter the language with homonyms and snarl communications. The Freudian divergence from the core meaning of "willing" is acceptable, but not all possible divergences are. Sometimes we need a good reason for licensing a new training with an old expressions. In this case, not only does our unconscious willing cause the same outer syndrome as would be caused if it were conscious--this condition could conceivably be met by a physiological state that in no way invites identification with a mental state--but it also has a peculiar (if indirect) connection with consciousness, suggested by the following comparison, made by Freud, between our unconscious idea and an uninvited guest: "...I must set a permanent guard over the door which I have forbidden this guest to enter, since he would otherwise burst it open."[10] Our unconscious willing is not simply unconscious, but repressed, that is, ever struggling to break into consciousness, but (thus far) frustrated in its endeavor, because of the sturdiness of our defense mechanisms, our guardians of mental peace. Thus, it is implicit in a Freudian's use of the expression "unconscious willing" that this hidden motivation would be transparent to consciousness except for the likely painful consequences of our coming to know it, except for the strategies we employ to keep from experiencing this pain.

But what form does it take when it is hidden? Though this is a matter of some controversy, it is probably a mistake of literal-mindedness to think of Freud as holding the unconscious mind to be a place where ideas hide in the way in which the conscious mind might be said to be a place where ideas show themselves. As it would be a mistake of over-simplification to think of him as holding that ideas are repressed or not, without any in-between. It is best--most in keeping with Freud's pretensions as a biologist--to think of unconscious motivations as physiological states of an organism that cause the same outer syndromes as would be caused (other things being equal) if they were conscious; and they are states of our body only because consciousness shuts out certain ideas. Now, suppose our uninvited guest has a foot in the door or is standing in our front-hall. The less successful the repression, the nearer to consciousness a motivation gets; the nearer to being fully formulated this idea becomes, the greater the anxiety that is felt. ("Heavens, there's an intruder in the house!")

A secondary meaning doesn't have to be so well-connected to a core meaning; sometimes we don't need a good reason to license a new training, just the absence of a good reason not to. What is permissible in this regard depends on the possibility for confusion and on the promise for illumination. It's permissible to speak as Freudians do because we need a means for distinguishing between physiological states that have this peculiar connection to consciousness and physiological states that lack it (though both may give rise to the same behavior). Outward-looking theorists have at times tried to use the notion of unconscious willing against feeling theory, citing such motivation as a counterexample to the

claim that willing is essentially a quality of consciousness. But if we keep the above distinctions in mind, nothing of the sort follows from the practicableness of employing the language of Freudianism. (The foundational role of consciousness in talk about repressed ideas is apparent in the way Freudians characteristically portray what is necessary for model therapeutic success. The psychoanalytic patient must come to avow his true motivation; but this avowal should not be a matter of inference. He should not be coming to conclusions about himself through using the method his analyst uses, that is, by taking an external standpoint, dispassionately observing patterns of input and output. Instead of standing outside himself, instead of intellectualizing, he must subjectively feel the truth of these conclusions. The required experience just is the repressed idea brought undisguisedly to consciousness.)

Now we are in a position to think there can logically be a hierarchy of meanings of "willing," the foundational meaning of which has it refer to the felt cause of action. Of course, we haven't offered a reason for thinking that this is the true foundation--it could be that Findlay is wrong and "the relation obtaining in linguistic instruction" is not reversed in understanding--but at least we've shown there can be a foundation and that it can be something inner and subjective.

Findlay and Foundationalism

What would be a reason for thinking this is the true foundation? Here is a passage from Findlay that is a provocative statement of the need for a hierarchist view of the kind I've been proposing.

> ...(In) the case of all those forms of intelligent activity which are not accompanied by distinctive experiences,...it is not a mere mythology which imagines them to be guided by a continuous stream

> of judgements, decisions and other appropriate experiences. Though such experiences certainly do not exist in most cases, it is more or less as if they existed, and to stress this fact is to improve one's understanding of what happens. The philosophy of mind is to this extent "teleological" that in it we do not understand a frame of mind by considering the minimum necessary or sufficient conditions for its occurrence: we must consider the conditions that would realize it in its fullest form. The mythology which locates conscious experiences behind each turn in our intelligent performance may be said to be a necessary and valuable mythology since we can only understand such performatory intelligence by regarding it as in some way existing in the interstices of, or as doing duty for, or as moving towards an intelligence that is fully conscious. For the intelligence manifest in action is essentially dispersed over a large number of successive acts, which need not be close or continuous in time: though it falls under co-ordinating plans or concepts these are nowhere brought to focus, not present in their entirety in a single instant of time. It is only as subject to a concentrated unity that a dispersed unity can be fully intelligible: there is a mystery about intelligent action unsteered by guiding experiences that we seek to lessen by mythically postulating the existence of such experiences. We can at least say that a being whose performances show consistent domination by very high-level projects and concepts must at times be capable of consciously grasping such projects and concepts, and tha it is only as doing duty for such moments of grasp that its less conscious performances can be adequately understood.[11]

Intelligent activity comes in various forms. Some of it is deliberated to; some of it is executed after we experience an episode of desiring (without that episode's having been deliberated to); some of it is habitual or spontaneous (with no volume of experience apparent); and some of it is, at bottom, unconsciously motivated (its conscious motivation being mere facade). Now, there is no "mystery" about the first two categories of activity. There may not always be fully formulated thought or gross feeling preceding action (as some outward-looking theorists charge some inward-looking theorists with claiming), but where there is such high-profile experience, it is easy to see how this helps explain the resultant activity: I weigh the pros and cons, I make my choice, I

act; or, I have a yearning, I act. But where there is no such experience, what explains my action? Well, willing--or desiring or some other agreed upon substitute--does. But not willing as fully formulated thought, or desiring as gross feeling. We know that neither is present. Without raising the question of whether anything else (unformulated thought?) is present that might serve the same explanatory function, we can readily agree that it "improves our understanding" of "action unsteered by guiding experiences" to think of it as following, according to a practical logic, from practical premises. That is, my thinking here, whether it takes conscious form or not, may be reconstructed, put into syllogistic form, with my propositional attitudes, my relations to inscriptions, decorously laid out. The prototypes for these attitudes may be wholly conscious thoughts ("concentrated unities"), but this doesn't mean that all tokens of the type "willing" must be of like substance. Even when my actions aren't guided by whole conscious thoughts, still, if they are intelligent, if they are truly actions, they had better have reasons, and these we can call "willings" or "desirings." Some of the "mystery" remains: we still want to know whether there is anything to these attitudes beyond their place in the practical syllogism (are they dispositions? physiological states? low-profile experiences?). But some has been removed: we've begun to understand what happens here by likening the logical form, if not the substantive content, of one sort of action to another, already understood (at least relatively better understood), sort. Findlay's suggestion that we think of "performatory intelligence" as if it were the expression or result of motivating thoughts in their "fullest form" is a natural supplement to the theory of propositional attitudes: if you

want to know what habitual intelligent action is, think of propositional attitudes; and if you want to know what propositional attitudes are, think of whole conscious thoughts. Thus, if you want to know what habitual intelligent action is, think of whole conscious thoughts. I want to get to the office, so I take the train I routinely take (believing that this train will get me there as it has so dependably before). Likewise for spontaneous action: I want the coffee ice cream, so I order it (believing that ordering will accomplish this). And for action that is unconsciously motivated; I'm afraid to succeed (though it seems to me I'm afraid to fail), I want to keep from succeeding, so I keep from trying (believing if you don't try you can't succeed).

The mythology Findlay recommends is justified in the same way any philosophical mythology is justified, by its power to help us understand a subject matter, by putting a lie to useful work. In this case, we know that part of what makes intelligent action what it is, and not dumb reaction, is that it displays a strategy of ours, an awareness (whether explicitly conscious or not) of some lack, a determination to remedy it, and a belief about what such remedy will require. Now, "awareness " "determination," and "belief" could, in a given instance, be explicated in purely behavioral terms--we could agree to speak these words where all but the corresponding consciousness is present--but Findlay's hierarchism goes beyond this: the network of action terminology of which these form a part is intelligible, has the resonance it has, only because we give consciousness a foundational role. We could have this same network, and apply it exclusively to characterizing behaviors, but then it wouldn't mean for us what it does now.

So, what is left when we subtract behavior from action? Findlay's

phrase "performatory intelligence" seems to imply that the intelligence is in the performance and doesn't have to be anywhere else. But this Ryleanism is not for Findlay. There are two facts about consciousness, about its connection with action, that are crucial. First, it's not as if reference to guiding thoughts helps explain habitual intelligent action where some other reference might do the same job; rather, it helps because it's necessary ("It is only as subject to a concentrated unity that a dispersed unity can be fully intelligible...") Precisely why it's necessary is not entirely clear from the above passage. Just preceding it he writes: "There is an irremovable inconclusiveness in the self-deliverance of frames of mind in action beside which their self-deliverance in the form of experiences usually seems conclusive and complete."[12] What's missing when we subtract behavior from action must be the source of this seeming conclusiveness.[13] Sometimes when we perform this operation we get a unitary experience, an episode, and the presence of an episode (of desiring, say) seems sufficient to erase any doubts we or others may have about our intentions; behavior implies, experience confirms. But sometimes no episode appears as remainder, and this is a problem for the feeling theorist. Now, this would be no problem for Findlay if he can keep from claiming that consciousness informs all intelligent activity. It's possible to hold that appeal to a mythology of whole thoughts helps explain habitual action, without holding that less than whole thoughts are present where whole thoughts are absent. But Findlay doesn't go this route. Though much action is unsteered by guiding thoughts, all that is true action is steered by a

guiding consciousness:

> In (the acts of walking, talking, signing documents, riding in vehicles...) there is, for the most part, a consciousness of what we are doing that is continuous with other states of consciousness--thoughts, fantasies, etc.--that are not thus overtly enacted, and the doing is rather an enriched, fulfilled way of being conscious of things than something which supervenes upon the latter and completes it from without.[14]

A few brief comments: (1) The last clause is an effort to forge a connection between consciousness and motion that is not like the one between rehearsal and performance Ryle is so critical of. It is not a denial of the steering or causal role of consciousness. (Findlay assures us: "...there is not the opposition that has sometimes been believed between mental activity and causality. Mental activity is, in fact, a special case of causality, causality in which conscious orientations play a dominant part.")[15] (2) I've spoken as if feeling theory needs de-atomizing. Findlay, too, wants "orientations" and "sides," not "episodes" or "accompaniments." But I know the criticism will be that this is obscurantist. We know what episodes are, but do we know what orientations are? I'm not sure. Findlay has much more to say about them, but I'm not sure I understand the putative difference in quality. Hobbes works with relatively large--awkwardly large--atoms of insight; perhaps we need only resort to smaller elementary particles. In that case, our experience in action would be very finely-grained, have the appearance of being continuous, but still be discontinuous and, hence, analyzable (in theory). This would be a help. But then, isn't there a bit of mythology, after all, to the doctrine of episodes? Don't we have to decide how to count them up, where they begin and end? How many episodes are there in a Reggie Jackson home run? Do we really know what episodes are?

This is a subject for another dissertation. (3) That "for the most part" seems a hedge against a full-fledged feeling theory, but I don't see how it can be a serious qualification. Findlay agrees with Ryle that "to refuse to call an activity 'mental' unless first rehearsed or briefed in shadow-fashion is readily to fall into an infinite regress," but, contra Ryle, he accuses those who make such a refusal of "ignoring the conscious orientations carried out in each bodily motion."[16]

These orientations are present whether we notice them or not. They must be there, or else our action would not be intentional, would not be intelligent; and they must be the source of our intentionality: Findlay rejects every other candidate, dispositions included. (Interestingly, Ryle does say that in action I am "minding" what I'm doing--paying attention--but denies this is a case of causality on the grounds that my minding is no rehearsal, no episode.[17] As we have seen, Findlay, too, rejects the willing-as-rehearsal view; but he could as well condemn outward-looking critics of such a view for ignoring the role of conscious orientations in action. Ryle sheds no light on the nature of attention in action--doesn't try to--probably because behaviorism seems to him to imply it is (to use Melden's phrase) "nothing relevant," unnecessary.)

So, here is the second fact about the connection between consciousness and action that distinguishes Findlay's hierarchism: the necessity of consciousness as guiding force. Where there are no episodes, there had better be orientations, or else we are not genuine agents. And orientations, like episodes, are seemingly conclusive self-deliverances, only they are harder to notice and describe.

I'm confident that Findlay would find the kind of experience I have tried to describe in this thesis near to what he has in mind when he speaks of conscious orientations or of the inner sides of frames of mind.

But why should we believe that such experience is the true foundation of our action vocabulary? What is my reason for thinking that feeling theory is better than its competition?

Mental cause theories of action seem to be enjoying increasing appeal lately, as the attraction of behaviorist approaches has lessened. There are even some feeling theorists among the mental cause theorists. Now I'd like to review some of the contemporary literature, to see whether we can find a reason for believing mental cause theory in general and feeling theory in particular.

Notes for Chapter 5

1 C.S. Chihara and J.A. Fodor, "Operationalism and Ordinary Language: A Critique of Wittgenstein," Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 411.

2 Ibid., pp. 410-11.

3 Ibid., p. 414.

4 Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like To Be A Bat?" Philosophical Review 83 (October 1974): 435-450.

5 Arthur Danto, The Analytical Philosophy of Action (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 46.

6 I think it's instructive to see Wittgenstein as trying to do for the verbal community what Marx tries to do for the economic community; and to see definitional behaviorism as a perversion of Wittgenstein in much the same way that certain species of economic determinism are perversions of Marx. Wittgenstein, like Marx, wants to put philosophy back on its feet: our intellectual life doesn't begin with the perceptions and ideas of isolated individuals, but with the activity of groups. But it is one thing to insist on a social foundation for language (or a socio-economic foundation for culture) and quite another to insist on the ineffectuality, even the unreality, of all else. Really, it's the existence of covert inner events Wittgenstein finds odious, not the existence of inner events as such. There are clear cases of "inner processes"; it's just that they need outer syndromes for us to be able to talk about them. Similarly, Marx doesn't deny the influence of forces more psychological than "productive" (for instance, the fetishism of commodities); it's just that the distribution of productive wealth is, in the broad view, paramount. So, you do not call Marx an economic determinist and leave it at that. Let's not make too much of the comparison, though. My point, essentially, is that, in their least oppressive presentations, Wittgensteinianism and Marxism are holisms, not determinisms.

7 Chihara and Fodor, p. 397.

8 Wittgenstein, para. 620.

9 Findlay, Values and Intentions, p. 40.

10 Sigmund Freud, "Repression," The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 14:153.

11 Findlay, Values and Intentions, p. 34.

12 Ibid., pp. 33-34.

13 Findlay's "seems" and my "seeming" make room for Ungerian skepticism; neither of us argues that certainty is a mark of the mental. Of course,

seeming needs accounting for, too.

14 Findlay, Values and Intentions, pp. 138-39.

15 Ibid., p. 141.

16 Ibid., p. 139.

17 Ryle, p. 74.

CHAPTER VI

WHY MUST ACTION FEEL?

Davidson Vs. Melden: The Mental Cause Theory Revived

The wide-open contemporary debate on the nature of action--it seems that everybody is writing on the subject--was given its breath of life some twenty years ago by an exchange between A.I. Melden and Donald Davidson. Melden's Free Action and Davidsons's "Actions, Reasons and Causes" [1] set the boundaries for a generation of discussion, the former picking up on Wittgenstein's idea of the dependence of meaning on context, on public and conventional rules of usage, and the latter resolving to defend "the ancient and common-sense position" that an action has the intention or meaning it has in virtue of its having been caused by a mental event of a particular character.

Wittgenstein urges that there is no remainder when you substract an arm-rising from an arm-raising, and Melden concurs; but Melden proceeds to explain, in true Wittgensteinian fashion, that what makes a particular motion of the arm a case of signalling is the existence of a rule, public and conventional, to the effect: "When you approach an intersection, and you extend your arm out the window of the car, this means you want to make a turn." Thus, free action has no subjective cause, only an objective standard. This is commonly called the rule-following model of action.

Davidson's very common-sensical reply is that an analysis of signalling in terms of rule-following is acceptable only if it is presumed that, when you put your arm out the window on such occasion, you know the rule and that it is applicable just here. Otherwise, you are merely acting in accordance with the rule, not actually following it.

In an article that postdates Davidson's, A.J. Ayer makes the same point, with characteristic elegance:

> (The) only way in which the social context enters the reckoning is through its influence on the agent. The significance of the action is the significance it has for him. That is to say, his idea that this is the correct, or expedient, or desirable thing to do in these circumstances is part of his motivation; his awareness of the social context and the effects which this has on him are therefore to be included in the list of initial conditions from which we seek to derive his performance of the action by means of a causal law.[2]

So, following a rule requires knowing it and your situation; but in what do these knowings consist, and how are they supposed to figure into a mental-causal account of action? Davidson uses the term "pro attitude" to cover a multitude of mental causes of action, from long-standing dispositions to spontaneous whims. It is not hard to see how a whim might cause motion: I experience a conscious craving or a subliminal attraction and this occurrent "attitude" results in action to satisfy my whim. But where is the proximate cause of habitual action?

You have a "pro attitude" toward turning left at the next corner--a relatively long-term disposition to perform such an action--because that is the way home from here. Also, you know that to make a left turn--any left turn--safely, legally, you must put your left arm out the driver's side window. This, too, is something you know--or believe--dispositionally, non-occurrently. Thus, we have two dispositions, one to make a particular turn and the other to make it by following a particular rule of the road. But the performance of an action will not be analyzable into cause and effect unless there is a preceding <u>event</u> that causes motion. Dispositions aren't sufficient; they are causal <u>conditions</u>, not events. There must be an event, a mental episode, that distinguishes following a

rule from acting in accordance with it. This is what Davidson calls the "onslaught of a disposition."[3]

Event required, event supplied. This move has an ad hoc flavor to it, until we begin to consider what such an "onslaught" is supposed to consist in. "(At) some moment the driver noticed (or thought he noticed) his turn coming up..."[4] So, the very factor Ryle must reject as being irrelevant, namely, our noticing what we're up to, Davidson calls an event, and one that is essential to action. This event is a single perception, but brings into play both of the dispositions we've just described. I have a standing desire to make this turn; I have a standing belief that extending my arm will signal my desire; I perceive that this is an appropriate occasion for such rule-following. What's so appropriate about it? It's not just an occasion the rule may be followed with effect, but an occasion it may be followed <u>to my advantage</u>. After all, it's <u>my</u> turn's coming up that I notice. This is not bare perception, then; it's <u>interested</u> perception, a sort of <u>perceiving as</u>. I have an end-in-view, a means-in-mind, and I observe that conditions are right; so I act. Observing that conditions are right, a key ingredient in action, has an ineliminable subjective component.

Now, the principal aim of Davidson's article is to combat the view, nurtured by Wittgenstein, that action couldn't be the effect of a mental cause. The course of his debate with Melden, from this first exchange on, and of much of the contemporary discussion on the nature of action, has been determined by this emphasis on action's causal features (or its lack thereof). Melden wants to rid action analysis of hidden causes as much for the reason that he wants to save the freedom of it as for the reason that he is committed to a behaviorist account of meaning; Davidson wants

to keep these causes, because he thinks this is the common-sense view, and because, being a positivist at heart, he clings to the positivist's confidence in our ability to scientize all the world--glorious human action included--to analyze it into a succession of events, of causes and effects.[5] Melden: action is not explicable by reference to causal laws: reasons are not causes. Davidson: action is so explicable; reasons, the onslaughts of dispositions, are causes.

I share with Wilfrid Sellars both a "general sympathy" with Davidson's view and the feeling that "his constructive account remains underdeveloped."[6] We are told that reasons can be causes, too, but not what kind of causes they are, at least not in any great detail. The explanation for this omission, and it is an omission that marks most post-Davidson pro-mental-cause-theorizing on action, is clear. The outward-looking theorist's attack on "ancient and common-sense" mentalism is primarily an attack on the idea of the mind as an arena where hidden causes play, and only secondarily on the idea of the mind as a realm where special feelings reside. If Taylor, for instance, objects to characterizing volition as special feeling, it is in its putative role as hidden cause that he finds such feeling a threat. Melden's commitment to a behavioristic theory of meaning is probably firmer than Taylor's, but I think there can be no doubt that the real passion of his fight to save action from analysis derives from his passion to save action from coercive causes. So it isn't surprising to find that the response to this criticism has, for the most part, taken the form of a reaffirmation that causality reigns, or at least that there is no reason to suppose it doesn't reign, everywhere and forever. This line of argumentation

makes newly respectable an interest in inward-looking accounts of action, thereby saving action theory from Wittgensteinian monopoly, but it does so with a great deal of skittishness on the subject of the nature of that inward cause. We get the form of the original theory clearly enough--outward motion caused by mental event--but the substance of it is not so well defined.

Davidson's reticence is understandable, for, in trying to describe action's inner side, it is easy to be crude. Davidson properly cautions us against thinking of the mental cause of action as being "like a stab, a qualm, a prick or a quiver." So, this cause is nothing gross, but this is not to say it's nothing conscious. Indeed, Davidson probably thinks it is conscious; he just doesn't make a point of it. Hence, we find him resorting to puzzling "onslaught" talk, and correcting the Wittgensteinians thusly: "Those who have argued that there are no mental events to qualify as causes of actions have often missed the obvious because they have insisted that a mental event be observed or noticed (rather than an observing or a noticing)..."[7] So, by "onslaught of a disposition" he means a noticing.

"The obvious," Davidson implies, is that a noticing is required to distinguish intelligent action from dumb coincidence (of motion and rule). The reasoning here is: action needs an inner side, specifically, a noticing, to give it the quality of intelligence; nothing else could fill the bill. Now, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Pfänder, and Findlay could all assent to this reasoning, but they would surely recognize it as a shying away from the feeling aspect of feeling theory. For these philosophers, the inner side of action is a phenomenal fact, a deliverance of consciousness, not a construct of theory. The very feeling of willing is what is

obvious, if not precisely describable. But, of course, there are no arguments to convince someone of the obviousness of such a feeling if he claims not to feel it. So you have to go at establsihing feeling theory a bit differently. But do you have to go at it in the way Davidson does, with a shy, even grudging, concession that action's inner side is a fact of consciousness? ("To dignify a driver's awareness that his turn has come by calling it an experience, much less a feeling, is no doubt exaggerated, but whether it deserves a name or not, it had better be the reason why he raises his arm."[8]) I am trying to be more "constructive" (to use Sellars' word) than this. Davidson is a full-fledged mental cause theorist, and his arguments against Melden are, I think, conclusive; but he is not recognizably a feeling theorist.

Before I move on to consider recent work on feeling theory proper, I would like to consider a recent article by Harry Frankfurt that represents a challenge, not to the inward-looking approach of Davidson's theory, but to its causal aspect.[9]

Frankfurt's avowed aim is to refute the causal theory of action, on the ground that it neglects the "most salient differentiating characteristic of action: during the time a person is performing an action he is necessarily in touch with the movements of his body in a certain way, whereas he is necessarily not in touch with them in that way when movements of his body are occurring without his making them."[10] Now, the charge that a causal theory of action must fail to do justice to "what is currently happening as I act" is one that threatens feeling theory only indirectly: if a causal account of the relation between feeling and action fails, an alternative account may still be possible. As I have already said, my intention in this thesis is to concentrate

attention on the feeling aspect of volitional theory, that is, to say what the feeling is, and to indicate why it is an asset of volitional theory that it includes a reference to this conscious ground of action, and not to argue for the acceptance of the whole theory. Still Frankfurt's claim seems plainly wrong to me; and his positive account seems misguided, but in an interesting way.

Is causal theory sheer history? Does it have nothing to say about current events, about the action I am now performing? In Chapter II I refer to those critics of feeling theory who insist on looking for action's felt cause in the moment before movement and nowhere else (and who do not expect to find one there or anywhere else) as "cramped-moment specialists." Taylor is one. Alston, another critic, isn't. I also appeal to Hume's string instrument analogy, which suggests that action's cause persists through movement as the secondary vibrations of a string (those following the first plunk) continue to produce sound. But this is just a metaphor. Davidson and others have supplied a mechanism for this extended causal process.

Davidson:

> During any continuous activity, like driving, or elaborate performance, like swimming the Hellespont, there are more or less fixed purposes, standards, desires and habits (recall Hume's "settled inclinations of the soul"--HP) that give direction and form to the entire enterprise, and there is the continuing input of information about what we are doing, about changes in the environment, in terms of which we regulate and adjust our activities."

And D.M. Armstrong:

> Purposive activity is a train of activities, initiated and sustained by a mental state, and controlled from beginning to end by perception acting as a feedback cause on the mental state.[12]

Thus, all but the simplest activities require us to keep up with

(possibly) changing circumstances, to allow us to adapt in time should things suddenly turn against us in mid-action. Just as Hume suggests--through his doctrine of the resonance of passion--a role for volition as not merely initiating cause, but also guiding cause, Davidson and Armstrong suggest our noticing is, typically, no one-shot, but, rather, a sustained perception.

Of course, it is open to Frankfurt to reply that an extended activity or enterprise is not a single action, but a series of discrete actions, each with its own little causal history, and each of these indistinguishable from the others in the series by anything "that exists or that is going on at the time (of the action)." But these actions do not form a series by accident: they are connected somehow. A common interest--a "fixed purpose"--guides them. From here it is a short step to the conslusion that it is interested noticing that guides activity from one action to the next. We could then distinguish between the primary and secondary parts of extended noticings; or else we could say that this is no single noticing, but a series of discrete noticings, each with its own little effect-action, and each of these inherently indistinguishable from the effect-reaction it resembles. In this case the "common interest" would manifest itself in noticing only intermittently throughout an activity designed to satisfy that interest. (At this point I'm ignoring the question of whether this would have to be a conscious noticing. Armstrong, for one, would certainly deny this.) But if noticing doesn't persist through an activity, how does noticing start up and stop? Do we have to notice that a noticing is in order? A vicious regress threatens. In any case we are now confronted with a large question concerning the proper individuation of

actions and volitions, which is an issue neither Frankfurt nor I am inclined to pursue. I certainly do not think it wise to try to count the actions, or the volitions, in an activity, or the activities in an enterprise; this threatens an atomism escalating into unmanageability. As I say, I don't propose to resolve this question here, only to show that there is, within causal theory, an opportunity for characterizing the inside of an action: we can agree that actions "differ in themselves" and not be driven to the acausal account that Frankfurt proposes.

But what is his positive thesis? What is it, if not a special cause, that is supposed to distinguish action from reaction? Frankfurt maintains that a person can act even when his movements have no causal history; all that is required is that they occur "under the person's guidance."[13] Now, Frankfurt doesn't have a great deal to say about what it means for movements to occur under one's guidance--he doesn't claim, as Taylor does, that causal histories rob us of our guidance, only that they are unnecessary--but he does say this, of a driver who is coasting downhill: "what counts is that he was prepared to intervene if necessary, and that he was in a position to do so more or less effectively."[14] Thus, according to Frankfurt, a person can act even when he makes no bodily movement at all: here the man is driving, though no "compensatory" movement is necessary. As a remark about the possibility of acting through refraining, this is unobjectionable. But Frankfurt means to do more: he wants to supply an acausal account of action. He wants to say that, when I refrain from movement, but still act, "the causal mechanisms (of my body)...stand ready to affect the course of a bodily movement...," and that this <u>is</u> our guidance of our behavior.[15] In other words: we can be identified with the causal mechanisms of our body. What would Davidson say about Frankfurt's driver?

That what counts is that the man notices he's coasting satisfactorily, and that there's no need for adjustment, which he could make if it were needed. How does Frankfurt's reference to being "prepared to intervene," or "standing ready to affect," differ from Davidson's reference to noticing? Surely, the capability of intervening includes more than the capability of making certain movements: it includes the capability of knowing, or believing, that such movements are needed if a certain goal is to be reached. Thus, I must notice (consciously or not) what my circumstances are or else I am not truly prepared. So Frankfurt must grant the need for noticing as a guide to action. This is a very important concession from my point of view. For if we can agree that interested perception is essential to action, we are a part of the way to feeling theory: we've granted there's something that could be conscious--the process itself or just the end-product of it--and then we can ask whether consciousness is foundational to ineterested perception.

While it is no principal concern of my thesis, I should like to suggest that the causal theorist hasn't conceded the poverty of his theory just by accepting the possibility of acting through refraining. What he can say, after he's said that noticing is what counts, is that such noticing causes us to keep from intervening. If we are equally able to intervene or not, and we elect not to intervene, it must be because we notice our present motion is tending toward our goal. Frankfurt supplies no argument to show that this reason couldn't also be a cause.

Of course, Frankfurt could give an account of preparedness that eliminates any reference to anything like noticing. But this would seem to eliminate subjectivity, the partiality which is a sine qua non of action.

Thomas Nagel has had some interesting things to say about subjectivity. Now I'd like to consider his recent work briefly: if Nagel does not precisely share the view of action I am presenting, he has nevertheless helped considerably at making this sort of view respectable once again. Then I will turn to the work of Alvin Goldman, who looks to be the genuine article, contemporary feeling theorist with no apologies offered.

Nagel and Goldman: Toward The Revival of Feeling Theory

Nagel: "What Is It Like...?"

If analytic philosophers are beginning to flirt with feeling theory, they are doing so in an attempt to avoid what is (to them) an obvious shortcoming in outward-looking views, namely, their skimping on the subjectivity that is at the core of mentality, their soullessness. Nagel, in his "What Is It Like To Be A Bat?" (from which the title of this thesis is taken) most forcefully presses this charge against the outward-looking theorists, indeed, against any who would attempt a reduction of the mental. What the reductionists will likely fail to capture, he claims, is the "point of view" "essentially connected" with subjectivity.[16] "(The) fact that an organism has conscious experience at all means, basically, that there is something it is like to be that organism...something it is like for the organism."[17]

Some observations. First, what we get here isn't so much an argument as a reminder ("Look friend, you've left this rather bulky item out of the case") together with a skeptical tag ("I don't see how you'll ever manage to pack it in"). Save the phenomena, please. But where's the argument to convince us there are such phenomena in need of saving? (A Ryleian might think there aren't.) And supposing the existence of such phenomena is granted, where's the argument to convince us they haven't

been saved? Really, the argument, such as it is, is in the very wording of the reminder, in how finely the skeptical pose is struck. Though you may object to talk of an "inner life"--because you think this smacks of occultism--you certainly can't deny there is "something it is like to be you." And though you may feel no difficulty in accommodating most talk about our mental life to talk about our physical life, surely you will be at a loss to perform this accommodation for the "something it is like to be you." Now, this is coaxing, and there's nothing wrong with it; it's just that you can be a good and honest philosopher and fail to be persuaded.

We are told that the mental is a domain of "subjective" facts, that the physical is a domain of "objective" facts, and that "it is a mystery how the true character of experiences could be revealed in the physical operation of (the) organism."[18] But this invocation of the subject/object distinction, and also of the appearance/reality distinction, only serves to put a theoretical gloss on the special pleading: if it's a mystery how a reductionism could succeed, it's partially because we make overconficent use of these (vulgar?) distinctions. I suppose I see why there can't be a subjective fact about a stone; but why exactly can't there be an objective fact, an <u>essential</u> objective fact, about a point-of-view?

Second, it is very possible that Nagel would reject a feeling theory of action were he asked. We are told that the problem for physicalist theories is to reduce conscious mentality to the physical without remainder and that the tricky thing about consciousness is point-of-view, but nowhere does he say explicitly that point-of-view belongs to consciousness exclusively. He <u>might</u> hold that physicalist treatments of desire, belief and volition--the propositional attitudes involved in action--are inadequate

for the reason that they fail to capture the point-of-view involved, without holding that this point-of-view is essentially connected with consciousness. It's true that he alternates between talk of point-of-view and talk of what it's like for an organism, as if they were one and the same, but he could, I suppose, pause to explain that point-of-view doesn't belong to consciousness exclusively but rather to subjectivity generally, and that it takes the form of a distinctive feeling--that elusive "what it's like"--when and only when it is manifested in consciousness. To be a feeling theorist, though, you must hold that the point-of-view connected with action is a conscious fact and not just a subjective one. Now, I'm quite sure we must take this additional step (indeed, I am inclined to think that subjectivity-in-general cannot be understood except by reference to consciousness); I'm just not sure Nagel is prepared to agree.

What's the importance of his work, then? Just this. Nagel's article helps make philosophy safe for feeling theories--of action or whatever--again. Nagel calls for a new "objective" phenomenology, which aims for and "understanding of the mental in its own right" but doesn't depend on "loose intermodal analogies"--metaphor--for its vocabulary: he wants to employ "concepts alternative to those we learn in the first person" to describe the "structural features" of experience, though he admits "something would be left out."[19] Thus, he wants to marry the phenomenologist's strong conviction of the felt reality of experience to the analyst's native caution about the use of language for descriptive purposes. Whether or not Nagel's antireductionism itself stands up to close criticism, it raises the right questions, old questions perhaps, but questions that need to be

addressed in terms as fresh as those in which they are raised here.

It would be convenient, of course, if we could fully explain the-as-yet-underexplained--the mind--by seeing it as nothing but a complex organization of the-already-relatively-well-explained--states or motions of the body, social conventions--but there is no reason to think this must be possible. We may actually have something distinct to deal with, something that is impervious to description by words used in their primary sense, something that is, perhaps, altogether indescribable. "(To) deny the reality or logical significance of what we can never describe or understand is the crudest form of cognitive dissonance....(There) are facts that do not consist in the truth of propositions expressible in a human language. We can be compelled to recognize the existence of such facts without being able to state or comprehend them."[20] Only a behavioristic theory of meaning stands in the way of this view. And if the view is accepted, we are given renewed access to the underexplored world of felt-thoughts Hume and the others set out to colonize. We can have our volitions back, or at least entertain the possibility of having them back.

Goldman: "It's Like This, See"

Alvin Goldman's "The Volitional Theory Revisited" forthrightly draws upon the idea that there is an ineliminable phenomenology of experience to fashion an account of action that makes room for feelings of voluntariness.[21] (His earlier A Theory of Human Action pointed the way for his emergence as a feeling theorist: "I think we are aware, intuitively, of a characteristic manner in which desires and beliefs flow into intentional acts. Certainly we can 'feel' a difference between a voluntary and an involuntary one..."[22]) Goldman nowhere explicitly acknowledges Nagel's influence; indeed, there may be no direct influence; even

so, the resurfacing of feeling theory would not be possible without the sort of anti-Wittgensteinian ground-clearing that Nagel so deftly accomplishes. Nagel argues that there must be something it's like to be a bat or a human; Goldman, that there is something it's like to act as a bat or as a human, as this human and not another, in this way and under these circumstances and not others.

In point of fact, Goldman cites William James as his mentor, invoking the following passage from The Principles in response to those who, like Wittgenstein, demand to know the "grammatical difference" between "this" and "so" before they will grant there is a "this" or a "so":

> Suppose we try to recall a forgotten name. The state of our consciousness is peculiar. There is a gap therein; but no mere gap. It is a gap that is intensely active. A sort of wraith of the name is in it, beckoning us in a given direction, ... at moments tingle with the sense of our closeness, letting us sink back without the longed-for term. ... names are prosposed to us, this singularly definite gap ... is immediately so as to negate them. They do not fit into its mold. And the gap of one word does not feel like the gap of another, all empty of content as both might seem necessarily to be when described as gaps. When I vainly try to recall the name of Spalding, my consciousness is far removed from what it is when I vainly try to recall the name of Bowles. Here some ingenious person will say: "How can the two consciousnesses be different when the terms that might make them different are not there? All that is there, so long as the effort to recall is vain, is the bare effort itself. How should that differ in the two cases? You are making it seem to differ by prematurely filling it out with the different names, although these, by hypothesis, have not yet come. Stick to the two efforts as they are, without naming them after facts not yet existent, and you'll be quite unable to designate any point in which they differ." Designate, tryuly enough. We can only designate the difference by borrowing the names of objects not yet in the mind. Which is to say that our psychological vocabulary is wholly inadequate to name the differences that exist, even such strong differences as these. But namelessness is compatible with existence. There are innumerable consciousnesses of emptinesses, no one of which in itself has a name, but all different from each other. The ordinary way is to assume that they are all emptinesses of consciousness, and so the same state. But the feeling of an absence is toto caelo other than the absence of a feeling. It is an

> intense feeling. The rhythm of a lost word may be there without a sound to clothe it; or the evanescent sense of something which is the initial vowel or consonant may mock us fitfully, without growing more distinct. Every one must know the tantalizing effect of the blank rhythm of some forgotten verse, restlessly dancing in one's mind, striving to be filled out with words.[23]

The explicit demand for a "grammatical difference" is a veiled demand for an outer syndrome. To know a thing exists, we must be able to describe it, Wittgenstein says, and to describe it we must be able to provide public criteria. This is the orthodoxy that Goldman opposes. He summons James for help, but he might have summoned Nagel.

It's hard not to go back to James, for no one writes like him. Here is another passage from The Principles, this one appearing directly after the one Goldman chooses.

> And has the reader never asked himself what kind of mental fact is his intention of saying a thing before he has said it? It is an entirely definite intention, distinct from all other intentions, an absolutely distinct state of consciousness, therefore; and yet how much of it consists of definite sensorial images, either of words or of things? Hardly anything! Linger, and the words and things come into mind; the anticipatory intention, the divination, is there no more. But as the words that replace it arrive, it welcomes them successively and calls them right if they agree with it, it rejects them and calls them wrong if they do not. It has therefore a nature of its own of the most positive sort, and yet what can we say about it without using words that belong to the later mental facts that replace it? The intention to-say-so-and-so is the only name it can receive.[24]

They call this occultism who feel they have a compelling reason to believe these mental facts either don't exist or are irrelevant if they do exist. Nagel insists we "can be compelled to recognize the existence" of facts such as these. Goldman insists volitions exist and are what make actions voluntary. They are, he says, "conscious occurrences which are,

or express, propositional attitudes"; and each volition "has a tendency to cause an event which satisfies or fulfills its propositional content."[25]

Goldman proposes that the attitude is a desire or intention and that the content, the intentional object, is a "response image." In this he is again borrowing from James, specifically, from his "ideo-motor" theory. A movement occurs "in a random, reflex, or involuntary way" and leaves "an image of itself in the memory."[26] Acting voluntarily means desiring to make the movement, and having that desire, whose "vehicle" is the response image,"trigger an appropriate set of efferent impulses."[27] And Goldman doesn't hesitate to identify this vehicle and occupant pair as a feeling. If the image is present, though the desire is not, the resultant behavior "feels more-or-less voluntary, at least by contrast with events such as salivations and knee-jerks."[28] (Goldman describes the case of a driver who notices danger and steps on the break "automatically."[29] The implication is that he's had no time to desire, so his act is automatic or quasi-automatic, not voluntary. This recalls Anscombe's account of "mental causation"--her face-in-the-window case--the only difference being the response there (giving a start) is more purely emotional while here it's behavioral. Once again I have to ask whether time-of-response is the proper criterion. Doesn't wit count?) Now, Goldman doesn't say explicitly that the desire added to the image yields a feeling more clearly distinctive of genuine action than the feeling of this quasi-automatic action, but his "at least by contrast" implies this.

An important deviation from James, which Goldman unaccountably does not mention, is that for James the "filling of the mind by an idea is consent,"[30] while for Goldman it's possible for the idea to cause behavior without our consent: "When the behavior is initiated by the mere

occurrence or thought of a response image, as opposed to a desire of which such an image is the vehicle (or content), then the behavior is not voluntary."[31] Both agree that thought is inherently propulsive, but only James holds that we act voluntarily whenever it happens to propel. An "express consent,"[32] a mental "Let it happen" is often added, James grants, but it is not necessary for action.

To my mind, and I suppose to Goldman's as well, this makes action into a kind of unthinking response: the thought is there, but it isn't wholly mine. The opposite is nearer the truth: I belong to it. Consciousness may be, as James claims, "in its very nature impulsive,"[33] but that doesn't mean that all activity that reflects consciousness deserves the name action. James himself says of habitual action that it is "often difficult to decide whether or not to call them reflex rather than voluntary acts," and calls the latter part of these "quasi-automatic."[34] (The "fleeting notion" that is a sensory image "(seems) fatally to bring the act about."[35]) But we need some way of distinguishing between activity that a hypnotist or EBS machine initiates and activity that we've long mulled over, relatively free from external influence. Possession may be nine-tenths of action, but the other one-tenth, call it proprietorship, is the true source of voluntariness. That owning <u>feels different</u> from mere holding is a fact James seems to recognize in some passages: our intention of saying a thing is "an absolutely distinct state of consciousness....how much of it consists of definite...images?--Hardly anything!.... (As) the words that replace (the intention) arrive, it welcomes them.... It has therefore a nature of its own of the most positive sort." Does this sound like a species of attending, and nothing more? Passages such as this one suggest that the "ideo-motor" theory is one of motion, not of action.

And this is the way Goldman uses it.

An "ideo-motor" theory of action would, in fact, succumb to the kind of criticism Taylor offers. But volitional theory, put in its best form, is not such a theory. "Volition" does have the connotation of cog-in-a-mechanism, of ignition-to-motion, that Taylor senses, but I think this is a connotation of the word, not the summ quality of the thing. Volitional theory imprisons us in the wrong metaphor, as Taylor charges, only if we keep to explicating it through this one metaphor. But James also speaks of intention as "divination" and Pfänder of willing as "an obligating 'spiritual' bond." The best description of the experience of the mind in action lies in some underexplored middleground between talk of brute propulsion and talk of religious revelation. We call this somewhat fantastical feeling "volition" to mark its causal role, and also to distinguish it from other feelings; but unless we say more, we leave the impression that the "subjective underlying cause" of action may be substantially the same as the subjective underlying cause of sneezing. So we must say more if we are to keep from thinking of ourself as more acted upon that acting.

This I've tried to do by indicating, with more care than is usual, the kind of feeling feeling theorists have in mind, or ought to have in mind, a kind of thought-feeling that, for its thoughtfulness, is appropriately regarded as the expression of our power to envision and change our lot. Goldman seems to agree with this approach. Now I want to know this: whether those who deny there is a feeling always associated with action are as quick to deny that there is (a perhaps delicate) "something that it's like for me" to act?

Does Goldman provide a compelling reason to embrace such a view?

Not quite, I don't think.

His argument, like Nagel's, is mostly canny questioning: "Notice what happens when we....Do you mean to suggest we are not conscious through this activity?" The critic of feeling theory asks us to observe ourself when we type: if we are minimally competent typists, we do not pay attention to the movements of our individual fingers. Doesn't this mean our moving a particular finger, certainly something we do voluntarily, has no volition corresponding to it? To this canny question, Goldman replies:

> (Is) it perfectly clear that there are no volitions for fingers to move, as well as for a certain word to be typed? What is undeniable is the fact that the focus of the agent's attention is on the word: this is what he concentrates on. But is his thought entirely exhausted by this content? Isn't he at least dimly thinking of the finger movements as well?[35]

So, a volition can be a dim thinking. Dim thinkings, calm feelings, unnoticed noticings... This is an Adam's Family of mental misfits, at least by conventional philosophical standards, and we need reassuring that they quite belong on our block. Goldman continues:

> To lend support to this suggestion, consider another example. Suppose you are aiming to throw a baseball to a certain spot, say, home plate. You are concentrating not on your arm movement, but on the spot to which the ball is to be thrown. Are you not dimly thinking of your arm movement as well? Suppose you are perfectly ambidextrous, so that you could throw the ball with either arm. Would there not be a difference between the thought of throwing to home plate with your right arm, and the thought of throwing with your left? Even if the focus of your attention in both cases is on home plate, or the catcher's mitt, your intention or volition would be colored by the thought of throwing the ball with one kind of movement--e.g., a right-handed movement--or by the thought of throwing with another kind of movement--aleft-handed movement. To draw an analogy between this practical thought and perceptual thought, we might say that the thought of home plate or the catcher's mitt is the figure of your thinking, the part that is "salient" or "prominent"; but the thought of the arm movement--indeed, the movement of the entire body--is a sort of ground

> against which home plate, or the thought of home plate, stands out. The thought of the arm movement, or bodily movement, is peripheral or marginal, but it is not entirely absent.[37]

Goldman piles on the cases, and asks us to consider what happens. This procedure does "lend support" to his idea, but I fear it's a kind of support that falls short of our mark. We worry that volitional theory may fail because we notice that, when we perform skillfully, we don't concentrate on individual movements. Goldman can't help but agree, yet tries to calm us by pointing out that if we don't pay special attention to the parts of our activity, we nevertheless pay some attention to them. Of course, I agree with Goldman; but there's no compelling reason to agree offered here. His is a coherent story, but perhaps not a true one. For there could well be a difference between the thought of throwing to home with your right arm and the thought of throwing with your left without that difference manifesting itself on the level of consciousness. From the fact that action requires subjectivity, point-of-view, interested noticing, practical thought, call it what you will, it does not follow that this must be conscious.

Assessing the Competition: Why Feeling Theory Is Best

Any minimally sensible account of intentional action is an account of action as intelligent motion. The idea of intelligence is a logical part of the idea of intentional action. The genuine agent has an end, believes he has a means, is in control of his motion. What a finally successful account of action must do is to find a medium for this intelligence, a substantive analysis that gives the conditions under which reports of intelligent motion hold true, that enables us to detect the presence or absence of intelligence in motion.

If Davidson's arguments against the rule-following model are conclusive, as I believe they are, this means that action is more than its outer side. The idea that serves as the motive on the basis of which we act must be somewhat--somehow--hidden from public view.

Some philosophers worry about making this idea into a content of a non-public mind, because they think this breaking of action into parts invites a causal analysis that threatens our integrity as agents. Taylor tells us that action is control, that if you want to know whether a performer is an agent you find out whether his behavior is his own. But, he cautions, you do not provide a proof of ownership by discovering the real meaning in a complex pattern of bodily motions or even by ferreting out the ghostly essence of action from its secret place inside the machine. The intelligence of an action, the idea-motive of it, is neither a relational property of it (its connections with other activities) nor an inner predecessor of motion; rather, it is a quality that belongs integrally to a seamless whole. There is no sense in trying to strip it off something that is larger to see what you've got. This is the theory of agent causation, and it's a logical, if vague, next move.

One other logical next move is made by the new functionalists. They do not fear causal hypotheses, so they are able to claim that the motive for action <u>is</u> a content of mind, though not necessarily a conscious content. The idea that causes action is, we are told, an inner player, but one that is identified by its causal relations. The kernel of truth in the behaviorist's account of action--that you can't talk about desire, say, without talking about motion or possible motion--is preserved; but at the same time justice is done to the conviction that outward act needs an inner process or cause. Most functionalists go on to say that, as a

matter of fact, these causal roles--connections to stimuli, responses, and other experiences--are filled by natures that are psychochemical. Sometimes these natures are identical with conscious states, and sometimes they are not. Sometimes the idea, the desire or volition, behind our action is felt, sometimes it isn't.

Both these moves to side-step feeling theory seem to suggest the following rule of parsimony: don't multiply conscious entities. That is, if it's not obvious to you that you feel something, assume you don't; and if you've got to supply a cause or ground to complete an explanation--to fully explain action, for instance--put it outside consciousness, where it's safe from the conjurings of occultist-introspectionists. Assign it a definite place in the physical mechanism, in the nervous system, or, contrarily, disperse it evenly through an undifferentiated oneness, our action-simple. We are asked to choose between a causal-theory-with-a-vengeance and an occultism par excellence.

Taylor denies that there is an event in an inner arena that we must bring to light to assure ourself an action has taken place. "What I am actually aware of when I speak is that I am speaking..." So, I am aware of something when I speak, but this awareness is no essential part of my speaking, not a "part" at all. (Ryle, too, refers to a sort of awareness. He speaks of the "quality" of mind I enjoy--as opposed to a content my mind has--when I act. When I act, I "mind what I'm doing."[38])

The doctrine of agent causation is mysterious. Taylor denies that action exemplifies the kind of causality in which event follows event, and maintains that it exemplifies a special kind of causality, indeed, a kind that is conceptually primary. But the positive claim is

impervious to understanding: it has the effect of ending argument without ending the mystery surrounding action. Taylor admits as much:

> That anyone who happens to defend a thesis of indeterminism should be unable to give an informative analysis of an act is ...no difficulty or source of embarrassment for him. It is only a logical consequence of his position. We are...entitled to conclude that one can hope to give an informative analysis of an act...only if he is willing to assume that all human conduct is causally determined by certain events within the agent.[39]

We are told: action can't be event causation--that spells the loss of self-control--so it must be something else, something neater, something indescribably neat. I have tried to show why it's a mistake to fear event causation--an event that is rich enough in our thought is a fitting source of intentional action--so that we are not driven to the indeterminist's position. What, after all, is Taylor so afraid of here? When Locke declares that it is "the man" and not a part of him that does the acting, he is very likely speaking from the particular fear that Taylor has and that leads to agency theory. And it must be admitted that there is something quite right in the statement that the man--the whole man, the person--is responsible for his action; after all, I do not excuse myself from a misdeed by saying "My will did it; the rest of me had no part in the thing." What is a mistake is the further claim that the integrity of action, and of the agent, is compromised somehow by attributing action to something going on in a person's conscious mind. It is, indeed, the whole man that comes to have a volition, and this occurrent thought of his causes action; as long as he comes to this thought through the "normal channels," what is the harm? Taylor may well have qualms about whether a man whose whose volitions are <u>caused</u> is really a <u>free</u> agent, and I may share his worry, but that is another issue. I

would say: let us analyze voluntariness--in terms of volitions as felt-causes--and let the chips fall where they may with respect to freedom.

It is true enough to say, as Taylor says, that persons cause actions, but it is, by his own admission, not illuminating. We want to know what it is about persons that explains this special power. And while it may well be true that we have the idea of agents-causing-events before we have the idea of events-causing-events, that is not to say we entirely understand what agent causality is. There is no more reason to think that agent causality is a conceptual simple than there was to think water a basic, indivisible element before the discovery that it is really a combination of two quite distinct elements. Indeed, event-event causality makes a most natural candidate for an "informative analysis" of agent causality. Now we need to know: what kind of event?

The curious thing about Taylor's characterization of action is that he gives no reason why the self-awareness he claims to find in action should not be taken for the self-awareness feeling theorists hold is the source of our intentionality, except to say that it isn't a part of action, because action has no parts. But this is sheer dogma. He is aware that he is speaking, but he treats this awareness as if it were superfluous, as if it were a matter of his finding himself already speaking, as if it were an after-thought. Something is missing here. If it doesn't function as a guide or monitor of action, then what place has it in Taylor's theory? What's it doing in the picture at all? What should we say of the speaker who is not aware that he is speaking? Is he missing something important? Can he actually be speaking--mean what his mouth utters--if he doesn't have this sense of himself? Taylor

would have to answer "yes," because action has no prerequisites for him; it's self-contained. Strip this awareness away and see what you've got left. Taylor must say: an agent causing a bodily movement, a whole action. The real problem with Taylor's theory is that we've got to take his word for it, which means it's not much of a theory after all. If you positively refuse to be "informative," even if it's on principled grounds, you invite incredulity.

The problem with the functionalist account of action is cousin to the problem with the behaviorist account. The classic rebuke to the behaviorist is the case of the perfect actor. The criticism here is: motion doesn't infallibly reveal mind, even if we are infallibly attentive, so motion can't equal mind. I'm not sure this quite follows, but I think the example can be changed to suit a dual purpose: show motion can't equal mind and show causal role can't equal mind.

Why might the perfect actor case be insufficient disproof? First, we must presume the actor to be ever on guard against being found out--that is the nature of his actorly skill. There is a psychical reality that appearances can't reveal, but only because his skill at sham is superior to ours at exposing sham. Thus, the moral of the story is epistemological, not ontological: we can conclude only that knowledge of motion can't equal knowledge of mind. But if we add logically possible motions to actual motions, then behaviorism appears safe.

The real problem with both behaviorism and functionalism is that they can't distinguish between action and automatism (motion without mind, without the guiding idea) that exactly mimics action. With the automaton there is nothing psychical to find out, no possible appearance that could

give it away. We'd have to assume a mechanism's point-of-view to know whether, and in what mode, it thought and felt. Nagel's point is just that you can't learn a point-of-view by learning about the mechanism that realizes it; you can't get a deep understanding of a subjective fact by researching the objective facts alone. It's behaviorism's claim that the objective facts that are behavioral appearances define mental realities, so these appearances can't truly deceive; we can fail to be ideal observers, or fail to be in ideal conditions of observation, though. The possibility of automatism refutes this claim. It's the functionalist's claim that the objective facts that are a mechanism's organization--its software, its programming, not its hardware, its stuff--define the nature and extent of its mentality. So a knowledge of this facet of its mechanism is a knowledge of its point-of-view. The conflict with Nagel is stark. How do we choose between them?

The functionalist has the burden of showing there can't be functionally-equivalent mechanisms differing in mentality; Nagel has the burden of showing this is quite possible. I don't believe either side has succeeded in putting together the clinching argument. (In fact, subjectivist Nagel does not himself shut the door on the possibility of a resolution in the objectivist's favor: "(It) seems unlikely that any physical theory of mind can be contemplated until more thought has been given to the general problem of subjective and objective."[40] And objectivist Jerry Fodor admits: "As matters stand, the problem of qualitative content poses a serious threat to the assertion that functionalism can provide a general theory of the mental.")[41] The interesting thing about this disagreement is that empirical tests are relevant here. We could know whether hardware matters to mentality, and, if it does, which hardware yields which mentality

on the basis of empirical tests. But just for this reason functionalism must be rejected as an account of action. Suppose events prove Nagel wrong; his mistake will be different from the mistake Fodor would have made had events proved Fodor wrong. For Nagel's is not a semantic thesis--or at least it doesn't have to be--while Fodor's is. Whatever events finally show, it will still be true, and damaging to the functionalist, that it is coherent to imagine an autonomic act-alike. With the "right" software, with canny programming, that is, and the "wrong" hardware, materials resistant to mentality, you get an automaton, a performer of high-level tasks that is not an agent. The burden is on the functionalist to show that the idea of a stuff resistant to mentality, though accommodating to the appearance of mentality, is self-contradictory. I am aware of no argument that functionalists offer that even attempts to show an automatism of high-level behavior is impossible.

That the wrong material rightly pre-wired will produce an automaton is thinkable. But more: we know for a fact that sometimes even the right material wrongly organized can go haywire in such a way as to produce behavior that isn't, but may be mistaken for, action. The medical literature well documents our vulnerability in this respect. We can fall victim to psycho-motor epilepsy, say, and suffer purely automatic motion that gives the appearance of action. A little while ago the New York courts tried the case of a police officer charged with the murder of an unarmed boy. The defense claimed the officer shot the boy during an epileptic attack. The prosecution presented evidence to the effect that the sequence of his behaviors was far too complex to be carried out during a seizure, and that, besides, while victims of such seizures typically experience amnesia with respect to the events surrounding their attack, the defendant was

able to give a detailed account of his movements. But this testimony is medical, not philosophical. If we can experience an automatism of low-level behavior, then perhaps, with the biological circumstances changed somewhat, as by a mutation, we could likewise experience an automatism of high-level behavior. One eon's medical horror may be the next's evolutionary advance. (Philosophers convinced of the non-necessity of consciousness for action should have no difficulty embracing this prospect. But I think that the layman's natural horror at the thought of this science fiction deserves serious consideration: even if we are benevolent automatons, as opposed to the usual B-movie baddies, won't we have lost something? Will we be "we" anymore?)

To be fair, there is a last move some functionalists can make. I have said that, according to functionalism, mental terms are partly defined by their causal relations to "other experiences," but I have criticized the theory as if reference to these experiences is eliminable. This would reduce us to input-output talk, which is no more satisfactory than the talk about patterns of output (behavior) we get from behaviorists. Now, for a functionalist like David Lewis, who conceives of internal states as theoretical entities, this may be a fair reading, as theoretical entities can be "Ramsified." But for the likes of Fodor, who explicitly denies that his theory is a reductionism, there may be a way out: he could number volitions (effective, felt desires) among the "other experiences" that figure in the definition of "intentional action." (Can an automaton have felt desires? Perhaps, if they are caused by EBS. So, we should specify the absence of funny wires, etc.) Thus, a volition could be a typical, but not the invariable, cause of action.

This would appear to make room for absolutely unconscious action:

where there is motion but volitions are absent, it must be that internal and unconscious systems take over completely; and this motion is called action if enough other typical associates of action, for example, compensatory motions, are present, Now, I have already granted the permissibility, even the wisdom, of allowing such use of action terminology--I offer a foundationalism, not a phenomenalist reductionism--but under this functionalist view such a use would not be a diversion from the standard, or foundational, use that pertains to consciousness: the two uses would be equals at least. Indeed, the functionalist is likely to argue that reference to unconscious systems displaces reference to conscious willings at the base of the Findlayan hierarchy of meanings, if such hierarchy there be; for he can say that action is possible without a conscious cause, but it's not possible without an inner cause.

The sophisticated feeling theorist will want to agree with this last statement, but then he will need to provide a reason for thinking that, where there is action but volitions are absent, the reference to action here should--or could reasonabley--be fixed in scare quotes. The analytic tie between the idea of consciousness and the idea of action must be shown to be particularly strong, so strong that without this special tie the connection the functionalist draws between the idea of an internal system and the idea of action could not be drawn altogether, or else could not penetrate the full depth of signification that the concept of action offers up to us now. The Freudian may use "willing" to mark out something unconscious, but remember that, according to Freudian theory, this unconscious willing is ever pressing against the door of consciousness, indeed, would be conscious if not for the harm we perceive it will do us were that door opened. This is what makes the Freudian use of the language of action a

diversion. What might the feeling theorist point to that will make the functionalist use of the language of action (to refer to all sorts of behavior, not just the defensive behavior so interesting to psychoanalysts) seem like a diversion?

I think that, in the first place, the functionalist who is dismissive of the role of consciousness in action must be forced to take another, harder, look at a linchpin claim he is in the habit of making, namely, the claim that consciousness absents itself where it's not needed. (After this it is claimed that consciousness is, often if not always, unnecessary to guide action, and the conclusion is drawn that consciousness not untypically absents itself from action.) It seems to me that this claim (and the argument it triggers) itself suggests a kind of foundational role for consciousness: consciousness is seen as a paradigm source of control, of guidance; the paradigm might be superseded, as it were, by the development of sufficiently complex unconscious systems, but if it is ever needed, this is what it's needed for. This accords with Findlay's suggestion that we think of "performatory intelligence" as if it were the expression or result of motivating thoughts in their "fullest form": whole conscious thoughts may be absent, but we will understand action better if we subscribe to the "mythology" that they are present. This is, of course, a minimal foundational role for consciousness. We want more.

Findlay makes two stronger claims: (1) that "a being whose performances show consistent domination by very high-level projects and concepts must at times be capable of consciously grasping such projects and concepts...";[42] and (2) that, even where whole conscious thoughts are absent, there are "conscious orientations carried out in each bodily motion."[43] The first claim is that a being must sometimes have articulated conscious thoughts about some of things he's doing or has done if he is ever to do anything

intentionally; the second claim is that, even where he is not or cannot be articulate about his action, whether for reasons of time pressure or because of the heat of the moment or the smallness or familiarity of the task, there is, nevertheless, a minimal awareness--an implicit grasp, if you will--guiding action.

The first claim is probably easier to grant than the second. For the fellow who walks, talks, signs documents, and rides in vehicles, but is never conscious, is a suspicious character, indeed. If we can't call him an automaton, then the idea of an automaton is incoherent, which I don't think it is. And the idea that we could possibly grow into such a condition by mutation doesn't temper our apprehension; after all, we were once salamenders but are no more. (Perhaps in our new state we shall be a kind of "superagent," able to carry out high-level projects without a flicker of conscious attention, but it's not at all clear that this is just another--superefficient--variation of agency as we know it. If there is no "what it's like" to aim at a goal, what is the point of efficiency? Who is being efficient?)

To grant consciousness a place in the life of an agent is a concession even a functionalist can make. But then we have to consider Findlay's second claim. To uphold it the feeling theorist needs a reason for thinking that the times we can justifiably be said to act without the presence of whole conscious thoughts are, in the majority of cases, times when our action is guided by a lean (but no less sustentative for being lean) consciousness of our circumstances.

Though such a conclusion inclines against the functionalist spirit, I should like now to indicate the possibility of functionalism's embracing it. I am myself inclined to think that there is a hard kernal of truth

in functionalism--the need for internal systems, of course, but also the importance of unconscious processes to mentality, and thus to action--but I remain convinced that, for intentional action at least, internal systems need consciousness, as a foundation at least. Just as behaviorists tend to be eliminativists about inner events and processes, functionalists tend to be eliminativists about conscious events and processes. But a functionalist can be more respectful of consciousness than this tendency, as, for example, Daniel Dennett is. In Brainstorms he announces his intention to "take consciousness seriously."[44] To be sure, this respectfulness is not an acceptance of the view of consciousness as densely populated by all manner of events and processes. His functionalist impulse leads him to deny that consciousness is as full as is popularly supposed. He is eliminativist about conscious processes and merely stingy about conscious events. He claims there is no problem-solving going on in consciousness and that "thinkings that p," the results of unconscious computations, "exhaust our immediate awareness."[45] There are these conscious events, then, and we only imagine or posit corresponding processes. Now, I'm rather dubious about the plausibility of this schema. I'm prepared to grant that often, probably more often than the fetishists of consciousness would like to believe, "the result arrives," and all we have access to is the result, not the production of it; but it's awfully hard to believe this is always how it goes. What about conscious deliberation, for one conspicuous example? But I do not intend to consider the merits of this view here. I mean only to suggest that, as a feeling theorist, I could live with the particular noneliminativist functionalist theory of action this theory of consciousness implies.

What is the corresponding theory of action? Dennett lays out the

general concept of an intentional system--a system is intentional if it aids explanation or prediction to treat it as if it had beliefs and desires--but he is careful to indicate that what realizes a particular system's information-possessing and aim-bearing capabilities (what form belief and desire take there) is variable. Thus, trees are never "volition-emitters," but persons, at least sometimes, are. Now, among the thinkings that p that "exhaust" consciousness, Dennett includes intentions to say that p.[46] But these are just a special class of intentions to do x. Sellars has called volitions "on-the-spot intentions"; though I would prefer to say "on-the-spot desires," there is no real conflict between us, nor is there necessarily a conflict between Sellars and I on the one side and Dennett on the other. For nowhere do I argue that volitions are conscious processes rather than "emissions." Indeed, I have tried hard to develop an emission-like view, the view that volitions are, in Locke's words, "barely a thought or preference." I have called willing "quasi-deliberative" to indicate that calculations of a sort are relevant to the action, and to deny that they must be made consciously or wholly at the time of the action. I would say that the relevant calculations are already contained in Davidson's "pro attitudes," or in Hume's "settled inclinations of the soul": the practical syllogism is reconstructible from the entire attitudinal background of an action; it needn't be written on the face of the volition. On such a view of volitions, then, consciousness becomes a kind of cash register window of the soul, our means of access to the results of work done elsewhere; and just as what appears in a register window tells a customer what to pay, what appears in consciousness tells an agent how to behave. This is an attenuated form of volitional theory, but not an emasculated one:

consciousness is still the sustaining force.

Back now to the main line of argument here. I have said that a functionalism that makes consciousness utterly dispensable can't distinguish agent from automaton. Now I have to ask how we are to choose between the theory, functionalist or not, that allows consciousness a merely typical association with action, and the theory that gives it a more central place. I think we can only choose on the basis of what we quite well know about consciousness, which isn't a terrible lot, but is, I think, enough to put into doubt the theory that makes volitions into merely occasional associates of action.

In a recent book by the able science popularizer Carl Sagan, we find the claim that the automatism typical of epilepsy "also characterizes my first half-hour after waking."[47] This has got to be wrong. I'm half-asleep, but I'm not exactly the innocent bystander and helpless victim epileptic seizure makes me: I'm half-awake, too. My actions are quasi-automatic at worst. This is a diminished consciousness, of course, but one thing we quite well know about consciousness is that not all consciousness is alike. United States criminal law recognizes sixty different states of mind, representing a great variety of agencies and diminished agencies. How does this help us make our choice between theories of action?

Well, the claim that consciousness houses sundry subtle feelings often arouses the response that these ghost-thin feelings are delusory, conjured by the wish-thinking introspectionist to suit his theory. In his common-sensical little book, Self, G.E. Myers entertains this possibility, then declares for subtlety: "...you may think it queer, upon reflection, that you feel nothing at all. It is uncomfortably close to confessing to being a vegetable."[48] Sagan's self-description seems to me to be

unjustifiably self-denigrating in this way. I consider the argument of this thesis an elaboration of Myers' comment, as it pertains to the problem of action. My aim is to say what separates us, as agents, even during our most thinly-intentional early morning maneuverings, from automatons and vegetables.

Here, finally, is the reason for thinking that feeling theory is the best theory: we aren't vegetables, even at our least self-aware, even in our least alert moments. If we're acting, we consciously know what we're doing, even if only very dimly, or else the quality of our conscious life is "uncomfortably close" to the vegetable. Dim thinkings, calm feelings, and unnoticed noticings fill a gap that can be filled in no other very plausible way. What can come between explicit awareness and utter unconsciousness? Only these.

Now, critics of feeling theory can be found who agree that when we act we "consciously know what we're doing," that we enjoy an awareness of our motion as we move. As I have indicated, Taylor and Ryle grant this much. But they hold that this awareness neither initiates nor sustains motion, in which case it is a mystery what other use it has. Taylor, for one, is likely to caution: it isn't our <u>motion</u> we notice here, but our <u>self causing motion</u>. But this only compounds the problem: we still need to explain the presence of the overarching consciousness; and now we need to make sense of agent causality as well.

If the agency theorist gives us more consciousness than he can account for, the functionalist gives us less than we require. A functionalism that is reductionist about "other experiences" fails because it can't account for the possiblity of automatism; one that grants occasional volitions, but doesn't grant a foundational role to these conscious

orientations, fails because it can't account for the possibility of chronic bouts of automatism, of vegetative consciousness. But we don't have to choose betwen accepting the presence of "full form" consciousness and denying the presence of consciousness altogether. A theory of "diminished" or "attentuated" consciousness, which volitional or feeling theory is, or can be, supplies the missing links. We can think in on-the-spot dissertations (if the spot is large enough), in what is "barely a thought or a preference," or in all manner of thoughts in-between. If thinkings can be more or less dim, feelings more or less calm, and noticings more or less noticed, we have a means for distinguishing among the various grades of action, the varying degrees of control, that are manifestly possible, from the deliberated self-approving action that is exclusively human to the near-automatic action we perform, as "unthinking" as cows. Appeal to the nature of the consciousness behind action--sunny or dim? calm or violent? relective or non-reflective?--accomplishes this end admirably.[49] If you grant that some degree of awareness is present when we wact, then you are able to measure our distance from automatism by the richness and brightness of it. No other thesis I'm aware of offers a snugger fit between the object and the means of measurement, nor an apter yardstick: the extent to which our power to see advantage is exercised.

This power is manifested in complex activity, but it can't reside there: you can have complex activity without agency. This power is manifested in certain input-output patterns, but it can't reside there: you can have a pair of identical patterns where one member has a mind, because it's made of the right stuff, and the other doesn't, because it's made of the wrong stuff. You may hold that this power belongs to a simple called action, but you'd have some difficulty saying what this

means. No, this power is the power of interested perception; it has an inner place of residence; and there's something it feels like to live in here. There must be something it's like, or else we'd be indistinguishable from high-level automatons, from talented vegetables. We are not programmed to respond; we act to secure an advantage; we care. And while the appearance of caring can be mimicked or programmed, the real thing needs consciousness.

I should like to be able to produce a reason for subscribing to feeling theory that is as concise and to-the-point as the reason Davidson produces for subscribing to mental cause theory. It's relatively easy to see that something important is left out of an account of action that relies entirely on public events and social conventions; but I recognize that the case for feeling theory is not comparably straightforward. It is, in fact, not so easy to see--or maybe it is just very hard to say--what is left out of an account of action that, while admitting the need for mental causes, regards consciousness as an epiphenomenon. If we say the missing dimension to Melden's theory is point-of-view, and we agree that to supply this element we need to turn our analysis inward, to a world of private events and subjective perspectives, then why should we feel the need to go still further inward? Why should we think it necessary for understanding intentional action that these mental causes be explicated in terms of conscious "experiences" or "orientations"?

The reason I have given is no simple, knock-down logical point; rather, it is more on the order of the kind of coaxing that Goldman engages in. But it is coaxing with a difference. I do not ask that introspection assure us we are really feeling something relevant to our

our action when we throw a baseball or type a paragraph, or at least I do not ask this simply. I am also appealing here to more general considerations about the nature of personal identity. I am trying to make what Sellars has called our "manifest image" of ourself the basis for any argument on behalf of feeling theory.

Exile consciousness from the realm of action and you exile the point-of-view that informs action and makes it intentional; do this and you lose the person to whom this action matters. How do I know that the person is lost in this way? It is here that the "what should we say if" questions I've been entertaining--overreliant on intuitions as they are--become relevant. Agency theory can be looked on as a reaction--in the name of our manifest image--to the assaults of various reductionisms. My quarrel with it is that it tries to explain the underexplained by appealing to the inexplicable: it rightly insists on the primacy of the person without saying what it is about a person that makes intentional action possible. The fact is we do have a sense of who we are basically, and now we need a theory to formalize what we already know informally and incontrovertibly.

What I have tried to do in this thesis is to fashion an account of action consciousness that corresponds to the sense of ourself as a being whose nature it is to respond to the world primarily through consciousness. I can only hope that I've done a good enough job sketching this terrain so that the rush to new reductionisms in the philosophy of action is slowed. I should like to see the manifest image, and the inner world of experience, in particular, taken really seriously once again. I think that, at the very least, I've offered the outlines of a research program to that end.

Notes for Chapter 6

1 Donald Davidson, "Actions, Reasons and Causes" in Care and Landesman.

2 Alfred J. Ayer, "Man As A Subject For Science" in his Metaphysics and Common Sense (San Fransisco: Freeman, Cooper, 1967), pp. 236-37.

3 Davidson, p. 189.

4 Ibid.

5 In a later article, "Mental Events" (in Experience and Theory, ed. Lawrence Foster and J.W. Swanson, University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), Davidson begins by conceding that "mental events such as...actions resist capture in the nomological net of physical theory" (79), but goes on to argue, reassuringly, that their failure to fall under laws may be "reconciled with (their) causal role in the physical world." (79) The agent of this reconciliation is a doctrine he calls "anomolous monism," a physicalism that rejects psychophysical laws. From the indisputable premise "laws are linguistic" (89), taken together with the somewhat obscure claim that descriptions of events as mental and descriptions of events as physical are linguistically incommensurable, Davidson concludes that the mental is nomologically irreducible. Still, because causality is a relation "between individual events, no matter how described" (89), particular mental events may be causally efficacious. The argument here, that "we know too much about thought and behavior to trust exact and universal statements linking them" (91-92) is an implied attack on behaviorist reductionism; thus, I can count Davidson an ally on this point. But as it is an overt attack on any who dare a nomological reduction of the mental, the argument is too ambitious for my present concerns. Mostly, I want to confirm Davidson's fidelity to the idea that causality is ubiquitous in human affairs.

6 Wilfrid Sellars, "Actions and Events," Nous 7 (June 1973): 192.

7 Davidson, p. 189.

8 Ibid., p. 190.

9 Harry Frankfurt, "The Problem of Action," American Philosophical Quarterly 15 (April 1978): pp. 157-62.

10 Ibid., p. 158.

11 Davidson, p. 189.

12 D.M. Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of the Mind (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 139.

13 Frankfurt, p. 159.

14 Ibid., p. 160.

15 Ibid.

16 Nagel, p. 437.

17 Ibid., p. 436.

18 Ibid., p. 442.

19 Ibid., p. 449.

20 Ibid., pp. 440-41.

21 Alvin Goldman, "The Volitional Theory Revisited" in Action Theory: Proceedings of the Winnipeg Conference on Human Action, ed. Myles Brand and Douglas Walton (Dordrecht and Boston: D. Reidel, 1976), pp. 67-84.

22 Idem, A Theory of Human Action (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 62.

23 William James, The Principles of Psychology, 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1950), 1:251-52.

24 Ibid., p. 253.

25 Goldman, "Revisited," p. 68.

26 Ibid., p. 76.

27 Ibid., p. 77.

28 Ibid., p. 81.

29 Ibid., p. 80.

30 James, Vol 2, p. 564.

31 Goldman, "Revisited," p. 79.

32 James, pp. 568-69.

33 Ibid., p. 526.

34 Ibid., p. 523.

35 Ibid.

36 Goldman, "Revisited," p. 74.

37 Ibid.

38 Ryle, p. 74.

39 Taylor, pp. 95-96.

40 Nagel, p. 450.

41 Jerry Fodor, "The Mind-Body Problem," Scientific American (January 1981): 122.

42 Findlay, Values and Intentions, p. 34.

43 Ibid., p. 139.

44 Daniel Dennett, Brainstorms (Montgomery, Vermont: Bradford Books, 1978), p. 150.

45 Ibid., p. 165.

46 Ibid., p. 169.

47 Carl Sagan, The Dragons of Eden (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977), p. 215.

48 G.E. Myers, Self (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 97.

49 The consciousness behind skilled typing is dim (inarticulate) and non-reflective. The consciousness behind unskilled typing is brighter (better articulated) and more reflective. This may seem to imply that skilled typing is a lower grade of action that unskilled typing, which is a worrisome implication. The missing factor is just the richness of intentional content it is possible for a "dim thinking" to exhibit: the consciousness behind a skilled performance is full with accumulated learning.

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