

NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF

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Emotions, according to David Hume,¹ are “simple and uniform impressions,” “internal” impressions which are related to other impressions according to an empirically demonstrable set of “laws of association.” The notion that an emotion is “simple” and a mere “impression” accounts for the relatively little attention the topic of “the passions” has received in modern philosophy, at least until very recently. Unlike “ideas,” to which such “impressions” are usually contrasted, emotions are thought to be pre-conceptual, unintelligent, irrational, causal products of “animal spirits” of a sub-human nature, mere “feelings” which deserve none of the careful analysis so often dedicated to the structures of perception, knowledge and reason. In Descartes’ treatise on the passions,² for example, “animal spirits” and the crude physiology of emotions take priority over his quick and often glib quasi-conceptual analyses of them. His analysis is thoroughly strait jacketed by the dubious dualism that usually bears his name, and ever since, the question whether emotions should be thought of as mere “feelings” or “impressions” or rather conceived of in terms of their physiology and manifestations in behavior has dominated what little study of emotions existed before this century.³

Even in the writings of Hume, however, there is another, more complex and more edifying theory of the passions. He recognized the importance of passions as something more than distractions and intrusions in human life. Hume insisted, in his most often quoted phrase, that passions should be served by reason, not the other way around, and he suggested that the passions “form a complete chain of reasoning by themselves.” Buried beneath the sometimes unintelligible rubble of his atomistic sensationalism and quasi-Newtonian causal theory of association, Hume defends a view of emotions in which beliefs, attitudes, intentions and judgments play an essential role.⁴ When he moves from his general theory of emotion to an analysis of particular emotions—for example, pride—it is evident that he insists upon analyzing at least some emotions in terms of ideas as well as impressions. Moreover, he insists that these emotions have an “object” as well as a cause. In more contemporary terminology, we would say that he had a notion of the *intentionality*⁵ of emotions. [This is also true of Descartes, who betrays a drastic shift when he moves from his discussion of passions as such (as physiologically induced affects in the soul) to his discussion of the six “primitive” passions, which are intentional. (Article LXII ff.)]

What is the relationship between an emotion and its “object?” In other words, what is intentionality? Hume provides us with a wholly unworkable set of answers, typically couched in *causal* terms (i.e. the emotion-impression *causes* us to have an idea of the object), occasionally expressed as a logical relationship (e.g. “as distinguishing character of these passions”), and most often muddied over with the most unhelpful appeal to “natural” and “original” properties. If we turn to the writing of more recent authors on the subject, however, we find ourselves no better informed. Brentano and Husserl, for example, who brought the term “intentionality” into its current prominence, provide only the most simplistic characterizations of their most important concept, for example, the idea that an emotion (or any mental “act”) is “directed toward” its object. What follows in every discussion is the usual catechism of examples. “You can’t be angry without being angry *about* something,” “You can’t be in love without being in love *with* someone,” “You can’t assert without asserting *something*,” and so on. But what does this “aboutness” amount to? Can it be analyzed as a causal relationship, a simple association of ideas, as Hume believed? Or is it instead, as Husserl, for example, has argued, some *essential* relation, a matter of logic? Given the problems that have arisen in even the most superficial attempts to spell out the Humean insistence on the intentionality of emotions, several recent authors have attempted to reject this entirely, reducing the object in every case to the cause of emotion.⁶ But even Hume saw the importance of distinguishing cause from object, even if his subsequent analysis of “objects” has causal flaws. In his analysis of the emotion of pride, for example, he distinguishes the “object,” which is always oneself, from the cause, which is a belief about circumstances (some achievement or honor, for example, with which one can identify). Taken in conjunction with Hume’s theory as a whole, this primitive intentional analysis must be judged to be incoherent.⁷ But this does not mean that Hume’s insight can be explained away, even if his analysis, and so many glib characterizations of intentionality since, tend more to obscure this insight than to explain it.

Hume’s Theory of Pride

At the beginning of Book Two of the *Treatise*, Hume offers us the characterization of the passions as “simple and uniform impressions” [277]. But this is just a piece of his theory, and, insofar as it is Hume’s final word on the subject, it is also a misleading oversimplification of a theory that is anything but simple or uniform. Emotions are complex phenomena, and Hume is well aware of that. Ideas are involved as well as impressions and the former are as important as the latter. In his general psychology, the human mind may be flatly analyzed in terms of “ideas and impressions,”

distinct psychological entities standing to one another in specifiable causal relationships. This view of the mind, typically characterized as Hume's "psychological atomism," makes the characterization of even the simplest psychological phenomena awkward, at least. In the analysis of particular emotions, it becomes all but impossible, and Hume's analysis of pride, for example, becomes nothing less than a hopeless jumble of causal connections and distinctions, as he tries to characterize what could be a uniform and simply described experience in terms of a grossly over-simplified psychological ontology and a therefore unnecessarily complicated theory.

It is not my intention to make an attempt to sort out Hume's analysis; if it is essentially incoherent, no doubt one could pursue a number of different interpretations. I am interested only in diagnosing the underlying reason for that incoherence and trying to understand the phenomena he appreciated but could not account for in his theory. The underlying problem can be stated in a phrase—Hume's refusal to accept the intentionality of emotions as such. Pride is about something. "Impressions" are not. This profound difficulty leads Hume to an elaborate ruse. He insists that emotions are "impressions of reflection," that is, impressions which are effects of ideas (which are in turn the effects of other impressions). The model, as so often in Hume's psychology, is that of causal "association," and since ideas are intentional, i.e. about something, their effect (the passion) would seem to be as well, by "association." But this is obviously inadequate, given Hume's conception of "impressions," and so he does not pursue this dubious line of argument. Rather he turns to a more explicit and ingenious strategy.

If emotions are intentional, and ideas are intentional but impressions are not, then the intentional object of pride, what the pride is about, must lie in an idea rather than an impression. But the passion itself is an impression; "a passion is an original existence" and "contain(s) not any representative quality" [THN 415]. But relations between impressions and ideas are causal relations. Therefore, the passion itself, which is an impression, must *cause* an idea in us, which is about something. That "something" turns out to be the self. The self, then, is the intentional object of pride, loosely speaking. Such speaking is "loose" because, insofar as pride itself is a "simple and uniform impression" (about which Hume never even hesitates), it can have no object. But the idea it causes can have an object, and this is called the "object of pride."

Now it may be objected that I have overplayed the Humean distinction between ideas and impressions here, that the two are not nearly so distinct in Hume's *Treatise*. But if this is so, Hume's argument becomes even less plausible than my reconstruction, for any shift towards making ideas and impressions more alike would have to be a shift of ideas towards impressions, and thus intentionality would be further excluded from his analysis.

There is also a problem, which Hume explicitly recognizes, in his central theme of causality as the link between pride and its object (i.e. the resultant idea of self): Late in the *Treatise*, he complains:

There are two principles which I cannot render consistent, nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz., *that all our perceptions are distinct existences and that the mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences* [THN 636]

The notion of “self,” too, is a problem for Hume.⁸ But, for our purposes, we can again leave aside such general dilemmas and focus solely on the analysis of passions. Granting Hume reasonably ordinary notions of “self” and “causality,” can his analysis of pride, and passions in general, be made coherent?

It is worth mentioning again that Hume did not take pride to be merely an “impression.” It is an “impression of reflection,” which, we are told, means an impression that is caused by a particular kind of idea. “Pride is a passion placed betwixt two ideas of which one produces it, and the other is produced by it” [THN 278]. This idea too, like the idea which is pride’s object, is an idea of self. But the idea of self which is the cause of pride is not identical to the idea of self which is the object of pride. (Thus Hume distinguishes pride as one of the “indirect passions,” those whose causal ideas are not identical to their object-ideas, in contrast to the “direct passions,” whose causal-idea and object-idea are identical [THN 276].) The causal idea involves “other qualities” [ibid.]; the object idea is, more or less, the self *simpliciter*. (Hume’s analysis is in fact not nearly so simple, for he has grave reservations about the idea of pride in oneself without qualification, which this over-simplified characterization of the object-idea would suggest.)⁹ The “other qualities” required in the causal idea of pride are recognition of one’s own virtue (or virtues one identifies with, for example, one’s family or school), and the idea of one’s consequent uniqueness and superiority over others in some respect. (It is not clear to what extent this “respect” also enters into the proper description of the object-idea.) It is also necessary that the “qualities” recognized in the causal idea be *pleasant*, and thus the impression of pride itself being pleasant as well (“the very being and essence of pride” [THN 286]). It is worth noting too that the pleasure(s) in the causal idea and the pleasure of the impression are, as atomistically always, distinct. (“Every cause of pride, by its own peculiar qualities, produces a separate pleasure” [THN 285].) There is also pleasure, we may presume, in the object-idea, since the pleasure of pride surely involves taking pleasure in the object of pride. Notice too, however, that Hume’s atomism requires that the pleasure in the causal idea itself be a separate impression of pleasure distinct from the idea, and one may well at this point feel like throwing away this increasingly complex analysis and insisting simply, “Look, pride is taking pleasure in one’s virtue,” where “pleasure in”

means “pleased about” the object of the emotion. This seems to be, in fact, what Hume wants to say. But his atomization makes extremely complex and implausible that which, on the face of it, would seem to be eminently simple. There are, in addition, severe problems with Hume’s concept of “pleasure” itself¹⁰ such that the whole idea of separate impressions of pleasure, whether those involved with the causal idea or that which constitutes the emotion of pride itself, may be unintelligible.

Pride, as Hume rightly insists, is taking pleasure in one’s virtue. (He also says that it is virtuous to do so, and taking pleasure in that second-level virtue also warrants pride, but we need not concern ourselves with this possible difficulty.) But pride may also be taking pleasure in someone else’s virtue (a parent, a child, one’s country).¹¹ Hume’s problems aside, we can say that the object of pride is, with some proper qualifications, one’s having a virtue or otherwise identifying with it. The pleasure is also about that same object (for pleasure too, it would seem, is intentional, at least in this context). But to these simple and convincing insights Hume is forced to add the baggage of his psychology; impressions must be separated from ideas and from each other; relationships among these must be causal and not logical; the object of the emotion must be something other than the emotion itself. And so what emerges is, to put it mildly, bizarrely complicated:

That cause, which excites the passion, is related to the object, which nature has attributed to the passion; the sensation, which the cause produces separately, is related to the sensation of the passion; from this double relation of ideas and impressions the passion is derived [THN 286].

Hume’s ambiguity between the passion as simply the “sensation” and the passion as much more (“from this double relation...the passion is derived,”) is evident here, as if he saw the wholesale inadequacy of his own continued insistence on the passion as “a simple and uniform impression.” To this already too complex analysis, we now have to add attributions of merit, comparisons with others, the concept of “pleasure” and the sense in which “nature has attributed [the object] to the passions,” all of which must be divided up between the impression itself, the causal idea and the object-idea. As soon as we do this, it becomes evident that the analysis becomes what Hume elsewhere feared as a “monstrous heap” [THN 282] of doubled attributions of merit, two concepts of self, objectless pleasures, double ideas, dubious comparisons and causal confusions. But what is left out of (or hidden by) this “heap” is the simple central theme, that pleasurable pride is *about* its object, namely, one’s virtue or achievement. And Hume’s causal account, even clarified in this jungle of “relations,” is obviously inadequate.

What pride causes is not its object. As a purely contingent and causal relationship, that which is caused by the impression of pride might well be anything—a regular thirst for an extra dry Beefeater martini, or the idea

that one should receive another medal, or the thought that “if only my poor old grandfather should see me now.” In fact, pride might well trigger monkish guilt, the very pseudo-virtue Hume attacks, and the object of pride would thereby seem to be the very opposite of pride, mortification at one’s own alleged egotism or, in a more modern vein, an acute awareness of one’s extremely low self-confidence and self-esteem. Even if it turned out that pride regularly or even universally caused the “correct” Humean idea of self, coupled with pleasure and self-congratulation, this would in no way serve to provide the connection that is needed between emotion and object. That connection must be a *logical* connection, whatever else it may be. That is, the description of the emotion *entails* a description of a certain kind of object. Being proud *entails*, not just causes, the idea that one has or identifies with some virtue.¹²

Hume is aware of this requirement, but his attempts to fulfill it are awkward, doomed from the start by his own earlier arguments. Elsewhere, it is Hume who invokes the notorious principle that two things causally related cannot be described in terms that render them logically related as well. This means that Hume, once he has already insisted on the causal relationship between emotion and object, cannot allow there to be a logical relationship as well. Thus he cannot show how the object-idea *must* (logically) be an idea of a certain kind, namely, an idea of one’s having a certain virtue. In place of this, he limply insists on the view of the object-idea as that “which nature has attributed to the passion” [THN 286]. What does this mean? At most, it is an appeal to a quasi-innate “association of ideas,” which, even if it can be made intelligible in this context, falls far short of the requisite logical connection. Elsewhere, Hume insists that “to this emotion, [nature] has assigned a certain idea, *viz.* that of self” [THN 287]. Elsewhere again, he says that the passion is “originally determined” to have a certain object, [THN 280], that pride “mediates” between human nature and its object [THN 287]. All of this is a pathetic attempt to sneak in the logical connection required for any analysis of emotion and object under the guise of causal associations, “original” and “natural” connections.

But why should Hume have to do this? Just because he denies himself the apparatus for accounting for the simple observation that the emotion of pride is *about* one’s own virtues by his atomization of psychological entities and his insistence on solely causal connections. It is not that he didn’t appreciate the obvious facts of intentionality; he just couldn’t account for them, given his method. Hume wanted to be the Isaac Newton of empiricist psychology, a misplaced ambition. One might as well strive to be the King Kong of garden party etiquette.

Hume Reconstructed (by Davidson)

To insist that the connection between (the description of) an emotion and (the description of) its object must be a logical connection need not require giving up the idea that it is a causal connection as well. Hume is trapped by his own principle into rejecting the obvious, that whatever else, the connection between emotion and object has a logical basis. But even if Hume were right, that the emotion is an impression which causes the idea which is its object, it does not follow that the relationship between emotion and object (that is, the two descriptions thereof) might not also be a logical one.

Donald Davidson has reconstructed Hume's theory of pride on the basis of just this counter-Humean principle,¹³ which he himself has amply justified elsewhere.¹⁴ This helps Hume out of his dilemma in the following way: A causal connection is itself the logical essence of "being a parent." So too one can say that the Humean impression of pride, in order to be pride (rather than just some pleasant impression or other), must cause an idea of a certain kind as well as be caused by ideas of a certain kind. In other words, certain impressions count as pride (the logical point) only if they have the right kind of causes and effects (the causal connection). Hume's causal thesis remains intact. But it is also a logical point, one that allows the reconstructed Humean to say that pride *must* take as its object, as a matter of logic, a particular kind of object, namely self. And he can do this without retreat to such wholly unhelpful fudge concepts as "natural" and "original."

By rejecting the "causal versus conceptual" dichotomy, Davidson recasts Hume's account of pride as a sequence of logically connected propositions, in fact, in the form of a syllogism. Davidson cautiously warns us, "I do not pretend that this is what Hume really meant; it is what he *should* have meant, and did inspire" (744). He attacks Hume's critics as having "gone wrong...in rejecting the causal aspect of Hume's doctrine as if it were inseparable from the atomistic psychology" (744 *ibid.*). I will argue that Davidson himself is still caught up in "atomistic psychology," though boldly reconceived. What he has done for Hume, however, is to give him a way of providing the necessary logical account of the connection between emotion and object. In Davidson's reconstruction, Hume's view of passion as "a simple and uniform impression" is not to be taken all that seriously, whether or not Hume intended it seriously. What is rather more important is the "pattern of elements" which make up the passion (754). This pattern consists of ideas (beliefs) primarily, impressions and sensations (including pleasure) only secondarily. Davidson ultimately even rejects Hume's causal view: "Hume was wrong to suppose that the state of being proud causes the idea of self to which it is directed; that idea is a constituent of the state" (754). Notice Davidson's explicit reference to intentionality here ("to which it is

directed," emphatically not a causal notion). Notice too the move from pride as impression to pride as idea. In fact, Davidson even adds, "What Hume *called* the passion (i.e. the impression) had no 'representative quality';...So the valid criticism is that what Hume called the passion has no place in the pattern" (*ibid.*). (One is naturally reminded of Wittgenstein's sensational gear that plays no part in the mechanism.)

Davidson's reconstruction begins with a significant but suspicious revision. Although nearly all of Hume's examples are in the form "proud of...", Davidson says that he is "best" interpreted as providing an account of "propositional pride"—"pride described by sentences like, 'She was proud that she had been elected president'" (744). Davidson even admits that this is not Hume's sort of example, and he rightly worries about the possible lack of self-reference in the propositional account; it is not sufficient, for example, to translate "she was proud of being elected" to "she was proud that (her name) had been elected." There is no need to introduce the horribly technical questions concerning the possible need to replace the reflexive pronouns with proper names, which, if accepted, would undermine the propositional account altogether. Emotions are nothing if not *personal*, and any reconstruction that does not retain this essential self-reference is wholly inadequate from the start.

Clearly some emotions are propositional attitudes, including some species of pride, but not all are. In a trivial way, it may be that any such non-propositional attitudes can be converted into propositional attitudes, e.g. "proud of...", by the addition of the perhaps awkward but usually grammatically acceptable addition of the appropriate "proud that..." clause. But it is worth noting that this cannot always be done with emotion-verbs, e.g. "John loves Mary," or "Fred hates spinach" (Dennett's example). And even where it can be done, there are nagging questions of notorious philosophical difficulty. What is a proposition, other than a semantic construction of philosophers? Does it make sense (in general, that is) to say that one is proud that a certain proposition is true? And given what seems to be the experiential content of the emotion, namely that one *feels* proud of oneself, doesn't the shift to propositional attitudes lose precisely that experiential and personal reference? This is, however, an apparent problem for any "cognitive" view of emotions, and so it is particularly important, for someone who also holds such a view, to distinguish Davidson's reconstruction of Hume from other theories, in opposition to Hume, that promote what Hume called "ideas" to definitive status in the analysis of emotions. Why "reconstruct" Hume, if one's purpose is in fact to refute him?

Davidson at one point asserts, as I have argued at length elsewhere,¹⁶ that there is a "judgment that is identical with pride" (751). "A judgment" makes it much too simple. Every emotion is composed of a system of judgments

and beliefs, not as causes but as components, and this accounts (among other things) for the “cognitive” features of emotion that Davidson and others have emphasized. But this judgment-belief analysis alone is not sufficient. Every emotion also has its component desires, expectations and hopes, which give judgments their motivational force. Without them, emotion isn’t emotion.¹⁷ Then too—our main concern here—every emotion has its object. But how does a “cognitive” theory account for this?

First of all, the belief itself, even the object of the relevant belief, i.e., a proposition, cannot plausibly be taken to be the object of the emotion. For example, John’s love for Mary is composed of a network of complex judgments and beliefs, but the object of John’s love is Mary. In the case of pride, matters are more ambiguous: “She is proud of having been elected president” must be analyzed in terms of a set of beliefs, to be sure, but it is not at all clear, as in Davidson’s use of this example, that what she is proud of is a proposition or a set of propositions. She could not possibly be proud of having been elected president, of course, if she did not believe (know?) that she had been elected president, that the election was more or less honest, that gaining the presidency was in some sense desirable and an honor, and that she deserved this honor. But is she thereby proud *that* she has been elected president? The first problem is the “she.” No translation into the form of a definite description, “the person who...,” will capture the fact that, from her view, “*I* was elected.” But more seriously, is this pride *just* a matter of belief? What of the experience so badly captured by Hume’s “impression”? And why insist on a reformulation in terms of propositions? Not all judgments, and certainly not all of experience, require propositional attitudes. The cognitive theory of pride remains intact without it, so long as beliefs and/or judgments remain essential components of emotion.

Davidson has other things in mind. He is not just after a “cognitive” theory; he is also after a theory which dispenses with the problematic concept of “intentional objects.” He is a “Sinnephobe.” Extensional analyses only. Accordingly, even if his propositional analysis is not faithful to the wide range of non-propositional examples of pride (and other emotions), he gains another advantage, being able to recast Hume’s complex causal relations of impressions and ideas imperfectly yielding objects into a simple syllogism, a creature well-suited to his own analytical techniques. It is not the first time that philosophical method dictates the nature of human experience. (Hume, for example.) Thus recast, Hume appears to be analyzing pride as a sequence of inferences, rather than causal stages;

All who (have a certain property) are praiseworthy.

I (have that property).

Therefore, I am praiseworthy.

Davidson’s strategy seems to be this. He has argued that causal relations do

not preclude logical connections, and seen the necessity of tying the emotion to its object in a logical rather than a Humean merely causal way. The syllogism, in which each line correlates with one of Hume's causal atoms, is an apparent way of doing just this. The syllogism, however, does not work, as Davidson points out. The crucial clause in parentheses, that which one is proud about, drops out in the conclusion. Thus what one would be proud about would always be oneself "*überhaupt*," which Hume does suggest but Davidson rightly denies.¹⁸ Furthermore, it is clear that Hume did not hold anything like the first premise of Davidson's reconstruction. To the contrary, he argues at length that pride is based precisely on the uniqueness of one's virtue, and that, were everyone else to have it (e.g. the virtue of "humanity"), it could not be a proper object of pride at all. But then we want to ask, if this translation does not succeed in saving Hume, and it is not even what he meant, why does Davidson attempt it at all? (In fact, he drops it immediately and moves on to the far less committal claim that pride always has its "reasons.") The answer, I think, is this: Davidson sets out to save Hume's atomism, despite his denials. The atomism of causal elements is replaced by an atomism of propositions, but it is the same, the illicit breaking up of a single *gestalt*—"being proud of one's virtue"—into discrete bits which cannot be put together again. Hume needs his atomism to allow for causal connections between "atoms"; Davidson needs his so that he can analyze emotion in terms of propositions and their logical relations. Both, in other words, avoid the analysis of emotional object itself. And neither provides an adequate analysis of emotional *experience*.

What Davidson wants to do with Hume is surely valuable—to shift our focus to Hume's attention to "ideas" and away from his simple-minded conception of passions as impressions, and to provide Hume with the needed but missing logical link between the emotion and its object. But his syllogistic interpretation is neither accurate to Hume's intentions nor does it provide an adequate analysis of pride. At this point, Davidson retreats to the meek observation that pride always has its reasons ("someone who is proud always has his reasons," 752). But although this again stresses the "cognitive" aspects of emotion, it adds nothing to the belief-analysis already offered, in fact, weakens it considerably. (Davidson says, "giving the belief and attitudes on which pride is based explains the pride in two ways; it provides a causal explanation, and it gives the person's reasons for being proud" (*ibid.*)) "Reasons" are appropriate in several different senses. "Reasons" might be beliefs, but they need not be. They might also be desires, but there is nothing in Davidson's account to suggest anything like the idea that emotions are purposive. Nor does he seem to allow for the fact that emotions *include* certain desires, as even Descartes had pointed out. There are reasons for holding a belief, all of which need not be further

beliefs. And then there are reasons as (causal) explanations, and Davidson, like Hume, is easily prone to slip from reasons back into causes (though Davidson, unlike Hume, has an elaborate justification for sometimes doing so). Employing a time-tested formula from his other writings, Davidson says, “the cause of his pride rationalizes it” (752), but here he confuses beliefs as causes and beliefs as components in a gross way. Consider the following example: a man tends to take considerable pride in his own slovenliness. A behavior-modification therapist à la *Clockwork Orange* subjects him to a series of experiences in which sloppiness is accompanied by drug-induced nausea and neatness is rewarded with praise. After a few weeks, the man takes pride in his neatness. What is the reason? The series of artificially induced associations. Those are also the cause of his pride. To be sure, if he is truly proud, he must therefore have certain beliefs concerning his appearance as virtuous, but (1) those beliefs need have no role in the causal explanation of his pride; (2) the cause of his pride clearly does *not* “rationalize it”; and (3) he need have no reasons for being proud, other than his beliefs which constitute pride. But as they constitute pride, they are hardly *reasons for* the pride in any sense. In other words, someone who is proud need not “always have his reasons.” He need only have the requisite beliefs.

Davidson makes good his promise to extract Hume’s “Cognitive Theory of Pride,” but he fails to do what Hume himself failed to do, to provide an account of the object of emotion and its relationship to the emotion. These elaborate maneuvers from propositions to syllogism to reasons weave a “cognitive” veil around the concept of intentionality. But the object of the emotion is not always (or is it ever?) the same as the object of the component beliefs. It is not always a proposition. It is not a “reason for” the emotion but what the emotion is about. It is, in a sense to be explained, a further description of the emotion rather than an explanation for it. But all of this is totally missing from both Hume’s and Davidson’s accounts. Davidson has provided the web of beliefs tangentially introduced by Hume. He still has given us no account of the intentionality of emotions, and he has dropped out Hume’s undeniable reference to the “feeling” of the emotion, the so-called “impression.”

It is worth taking a closer look at the accusation that Davidson wholly ignores the intentionality of emotions, despite the fact that he attempts to provide just those logical relationships that seem to be demanded by intentionality. His postures of avoidance are at times grotesque. In his initial reconstruction of Hume (before he attempts to recast Hume in disastrous syllogism), Davidson rightly argues that,

What a man takes pride in, that is, the fact that he has a beautiful house, is identical with the content of his belief; one could say that the belief *determines* the object of pride (745).

The “*What*” and “the content of his belief” would seem to point unabashedly towards intentionality, and although “determines” is noncommittal in

itself, “determining the object” would seem to be a step towards a very Husserlian account of “intentional constitution.” But immediately, in an extremely revealing footnote, he comments,

This is not to say, of course, that the belief *is* the ‘object of pride.’ All this talk is loose. I do not assume that ‘the object of pride,’ ‘what pride is taken in,’ ‘the content of belief’ refer to psychological entities of any kind. Of course the semantic analysis of intentional [sic] sentences, like those which attribute belief or propositional pride, may require objects such as propositions, sentences, or utterances (745 n. (see also p. 755)).

Such “loose” talk is never clarified, however, a rare lapse for Davidson. But the reason that it is never clarified is because it is unintelligible. Davidson says that the belief “*determines* the object of pride” (his italics). But here it is obvious that Davidson takes the objects of emotion to be propositions, and, for most cases, this just is not true.

Yet Davidson is right, in a sense not intended. Beliefs do “determine”—or should we say “constitute”?—the objects of emotion. But then how could the object *not* be a “psychological entity of some kind?” Beliefs don’t build houses (except in Monty Python skits, perhaps). Beliefs don’t convey legal ownership. So it is neither the house nor the ownership that could be determined by the belief. So what is it? It is the object of the emotion *as experienced* which must therefore be, *contra* Davidson, a “psychological entity of some kind.” This isn’t to say that it is not the wood-and-brick house that is the emotional object. It is rather the house *as one is proud of owning it*. The psychological qualifications cannot be eliminated without losing the notion of pride altogether. Does this make the house itself a “psychological entity”? Of course not. But the house as an object of pride has its *essential* psychological properties. It is essentially an object-experienced, in a certain way, and it is this mixture of the psychological and tangible “objects” that the notion of intentionality tries to capture.

The ontology of intentional objects raises serious questions of identity; in what sense can we say that the object of pride, which has certain essential psychological properties, is identical to the house “in itself”? In what sense is the object of pride identical to the object of component and accompanying beliefs about the house? (And what about the object of frustration, where it is exactly “the same” house that now needs a new roof after only four months?) Such questions as these have scared more than a few philosophers away from the notion of intentionality altogether. But problems of identity are not unique to questions of intentionality, and, regarding the analysis of emotions, such ontological questions can be avoided altogether.¹⁹ On the other hand, if one restricts one’s choice to the intolerable ontological dichotomy of “in the mind” or “in the world,” then the notion of an “object” of emotion can make no sense whatsoever, and one should try at almost any cost to avoid it. But it is that ontology that is in-

tolerable, not necessarily the notion of “intentionality.”

We can now see too clearly why Davidson takes the trouble to shift Hume’s analysis of pride to an analysis of propositional pride. If the idea of an emotional object as such is a matter of ontological hysteria, a proposition can be analyzed away in any number of familiar quasi-Quinean ways. A man who is proud *that* he owns a beautiful house can be reconstructed as a man who believes a certain set of propositions, who thereby tends to utter certain sentences and act in certain ways, and—poof—the mystery is dissolved. But a man who is proud of his beautiful house does not only believe a certain set of propositions: He also has a distinctive *experience*, which cannot be reduced to mere Humean impressions, and his experience has an object, which is neither a proposition nor an idea. It is, in some sense, *the house* that he is proud of, and no manipulation of causes, beliefs and propositions will account for this.

What is wrong with Hume’s account is not merely his atomistic psychology, nor even the causal account that Davidson defends. The essential feature of pride, that it is an experiencing *of* something (including oneself) escapes Hume altogether, and Davidson too. One might too easily conclude, from this indictment, that it is “intentionality” that is missing, but “intentionality” too has its problems. In fact, it might even be that this now fashionable notion embodies more than it wishes of the same atomism of emotions and their objects that we have rejected in the above accounts.

Taking Emotions Seriously: Beyond Intentionality

“Intentionality” is a concise but hardly precise way of characterizing the fact that emotions are always “about” something. But what emotions are “about” are always putative objects in the world (including myself, of course²⁰). They are not (except rarely) about ideas. (I might be proud of my brilliant idea.) They are not (except rarely) about beliefs. (I might be indignant that you *believe* that *I* did it, or sad that I can believe that you might have done it.) But neither is it the case that ideas and beliefs are merely the causes or the cognitive presuppositions of our emotions. Davidson is surely right, and Hume wrong, that ideas and beliefs are themselves constitutive of emotions, an intrinsic part of them. But Hume is surely right, and Davidson wrong, that some kind of *experience* (though not a “simple impression”) is essential to emotion, but Hume has his hands on the wrong kind of experience, while Davidson ignores the experience of emotion altogether.

How does any cognitive theory of emotions capture the essential experience of having an emotion? Since I too have defended such a theory at length, namely the theory, over-simply stated, that emotions are basically judgments of certain specifiable kinds, this question applies to my own

analyses as well.²¹ Furthermore, how does either a cognitive or an experiential theory—and I do not want to imply that these will turn out to be different—account for the so-called “intentionality” of the emotion? The main problem seems to be this: If one accepts anything like the empiricist account of experience, as an “inner impression” for instance, then the question how this “inner” experience connects up with an “outer” object—a person, state-of-affairs or situation in the world—seems to be insurmountable. And the word “intentionality” only hides this rather than solves it.²² Hume solves the problem by making the object out to be an idea, which is still “inner” (though the “aboutness” question arises for the idea too, thus not really solving the problem at all). Davidson substitutes a sequence of propositions—a sort of computer model of emotion—thereby leaving the work ascribed to “intentionality” to some unstated theory of reference. What Hume inherited from Newton, and Davidson from Quine, is a method that systematically distorts or dismisses experience to fit models and methods derived from elsewhere. But can any judgment-type theory of emotion capture both emotional experience and what is indicated, if not clarified, by the notion of intentionality?

Intentionality, perhaps unintentionally, retains Hume’s atomism, just as Davidson does. There is still the emotion, on the one hand, and its object on the other. And if one were to claim that emotions are judgments, understood as some purely “inner” episode, the same problem would emerge once again.

It is for that reason, in my book, that I place such enormous emphasis on “subjectivity” and in re-doing, without the jargon, the work of the phenomenologists (not so much Husserl as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty), before I even begin to introduce my theory. An emotion, as a system of judgments, is not merely a set of beliefs *about* the world, but rather an active way of structuring our experience, a way of experiencing something. In place of the psychological atomism of Hume, Davidson and in the early phenomenologists, I want to substitute an organic molecule, in our case of pride, the irreducible complex, *being-proud-of-my-house*. The “being proud” is not an “act” or episode or a feeling “in” consciousness, mysteriously related to an “outside” object, namely, my house. *Being-proud-of-my-house* is, in Heidegger’s terminology, a “unitary phenomenon.” The so-called “object” is not simply *the house* but is defined by the emotion of which it is a part. Neither is being proud a distinctive psychological entity, “directed towards” or possibly even looking for an object. Being-proud-of-my-house is a complex and irreducible experience, not divisible into components or individual atoms.

Here too we can understand Hume’s uncertainty regarding the proper object of pride. He says that it is one’s Self, but he hedges with the restriction

that it may not be the Self wholly unqualified. But there is also a sense, which Hume misses, in which the object of pride, in this example, is not a Self but a house, or one might argue, not merely the house (which was not an object of pride before I bought it, though it was indeed "the same" house) but my ownership of the house. Here one could launch, as the literature has demonstrated, into a lengthy debate, but one that proves to be wholly beside the point. Neither Self nor house nor ownership as such is what the emotion is "about," but rather pride is, to continue the atomic metaphor, an experiential molecule, whose inseparable ingredients are judgments of a certain kind (for example, those which form the steps in Davidson's syllogism, amended by Baier).²³ Some of these pertain particularly to the house, others to self and still others to the virtues of ownership. But what is most important is that these judgments are components of the emotion only insofar as they structure a certain experience, a certain way of experiencing the house, and oneself, and one's ownership. One might even say, with some reservations, that every emotion is a worldview, a distinct perspective within which certain aspects of one's world (namely, the "object" of the emotions) receive special attention.

An emotion is a system of judgments, through which we constitute ourselves and our world. This does not mean that an emotion is a set of beliefs *about* the world, but a way of experiencing, shaped by concepts which need not, and often are not, made fully articulate. In anger, for instance, we view another person (the "object" of our wrath) through judgments constituting him as an offender, as offensive, as deserving of punishment. In pride, to use Hume's example, we view the house *as* beautiful, *as* beautiful because of some achievement on our part, *as*, therefore, a reflection on ourselves. Pride is a species of *seeing as* (as are all emotions), and it is the analysis of the judgments which define the "seeing as *what*" that form the proper analysis of the emotion. This is where ideas and beliefs enter into the analysis, not as causes or effects, but neither as a sequence of abstract propositions. They are the skeletal structure of a distinctive experience, in this case, the emotional experience of pride.

With this analysis, it is time to give up the notion of "object"—except perhaps as a kind of shorthand for the focal point of an emotion—for the very idea of emotion *and* object ("act" and "object," "*noesis*" and "*noema*") already sets up a dualism that no further tinkering will put back together. (Husserl, for example, insists that "noesis and noema [act and object] are essential correlates." Too late.) So too, it is time to say that the now favored concept of "intentionality" serves only to antagonize the *Sinnephobes* and too easily soothe those who employ it so freely. The very idea of an "object," as a distinctive ontological entity, raises infamous paradoxes, but more important for our interests, to remove the "object" from its emotional

context is, in phenomenological fact, to destroy it as an “object.” Of course, one could proceed to discuss one or more features of the emotion (e.g. the house one is so proud about) as an ontological entity wrenched from its emotional context (much, for example, as my girl friend’s gynecologist examines her), but this is by no means any longer what the emotion was about. The “object” of an emotion is such only as viewed through the judgments that make up that emotion, and so the problem to which “intentionality” is supposed to be the answer (or at least the name) cannot even arise. One could wax Sartrian here, and say that the object of an emotion is not what it is, but I trust the point has been made without the need for new confusion. Not only is the “object” necessary to the emotion, but the emotion is equally essential to the object. Hume in his fashion fully appreciated the complexity of emotional experience, but denied himself the apparatus for talking about it.

Of course, there is still a problem: I have not said a word about what was once called “intentional inexistence,” the nasty habits some emotions have of directing themselves towards “objects” that don’t exist. But the first (and only) comment to make here is that the problem is overrated, that most of its instances can be simply translated into instances of false belief, and the more interesting cases are not matters of “inexistence” at all but the far more fascinating phenomenon of “willful seeing,” for example, two ugly, even grotesque people who, because they are in love, see each other *as* beautiful. But it is not their existence that is in question, rather, their judgment. But, emotions are judgments, after all. And if there is a problem here, it is not a problem of ontology, a matter of phantom or “subsistent” objects. At most, we have to account for ugly people, or houses, judged to be beautiful, perhaps an aesthetic problem, but not a Meinongian nightmare.

Neither have I said much of anything about the often intricate connections between emotional “objects” and the *causes* of emotion, which Hume anticipated too. But these topics will require another paper.

NOTES

1. *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford University Press, 1951) esp. Book II, “Of the Passions” p. 277. All references to this work will be placed in square brackets in the text. Hume also insists that the passions are “secondary impressions,” which “proceed from original ones,” either immediately or by the interposition of its idea” (Pt. 1 sect. 1). The disjunct, “the interposition of its idea,” is an important hint towards intentionality, discussed below.

2. *Les Passions de l’ame*, (*The Passions of the Soul*) in Haldane and Ross, trans., *The*

Philosophical Works of Descartes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911). Descartes' very general definition of "passion" is simply "things which we experience in ourselves."

3. The culminating statement of this tradition is probably William James' classic paper, "What is an Emotion?" (1884). More recently, see Gilbert Ryle's equally classic *Concept of Mind*, despite the fact that he ultimately dismisses the emotions proper as mere "agitations," breakdowns in our normal behavior patterns, and Errol Bedford, "Emotions" (in D. Gustafson, ed. *Essays in Philosophical Psychology* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964) in which he too attacks the "feeling" view for a more behavioral conception of emotion. For a philosophical survey of the leading positions and arguments in this not very fruitful debate, see William Alston's contributions on "Emotion and Feeling" in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. P. Edwards (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1967). A survey of the psychological literature occupies the first chapters of David Rapaport's *Emotions and Memory* (N.Y.: International Universities Press, 1971) and, more recently, Magda Arnold's *The Nature of Emotion* (London: Penguin, 1968). (Justice requires at least some mention of Spinoza, the one philosopher to quite clearly develop an intentional theory of the emotions, particularly in Part III of his *Ethics*.)

4. Notably, Páll Árdal, *Passion and Value in Hume's Treatise* (Edinburgh, 1966) and Donald Davidson's defense of Hume in "Hume's Cognitive Theory of Pride" (*Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. LXXIII, no. 19, Nov. 4, 1976, pp. 744-57).

5. It is important not to move with the usual ease from this notion of "intentionality," which designates a property of mental attitudes, to "intensionality," which designates a property of certain types of sentences. I will make no use whatever of this latter notion in this essay.

6. For example, Donald Davidson, whose reinterpretation of Hume is discussed in this essay, but also, at greater length, J. R. S. Wilson, in *Emotion and Object* (Cambridge, 1974) and Robert Gordon, "The Aboutness of Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 11, no. 1, 1974, pp. 27-36.

7. See, in this regard, P. L. Gardiner's excellent essay "Hume's Theory of the Passions," in *David Hume: A Symposium* (London: Macmillan, 1963), esp. pp. 38-42. Also, John Passmore, *Hume's Intentions* (Cambridge, 1952) esp. pp. 126-7, and Páll Árdal, *op. cit.*, p. 16f.

8. If we were to be more obstinate, we would ask Hume how he can so confidently introduce such a notion when he has flatly rejected it in Book I. His answer would be that he had denied the concept of self "only as it regards thought and imagination, not as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves" [THN 253]. But when we look to see what the difference might be, there is nothing in Hume's meager ontology to make out that difference. This is discussed at some length by Jerome Neu in his *Emotion, Thought and Therapy* (University of California Press, 1977), and by Annette Baier, in her "Hume's Theory of Pride," *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 22, no. 1, 1979, pp. 27-40.

9. Davidson, *op. cit.*, Baier, *op. cit.* and Donnellan, D., "Hume on the Objects of the Passions," an unpublished reply to Davidson. Also, P. Árdal, *op. cit.*, p. 22f. The conclusion is that Hume wasn't sure what to believe. Davidson distinguishes particular and general pride for Hume, but continues to lean to the latter. Baier flatly rejects the idea that Hume accept pride "without qualification." But can't we be, in fact, at least on occasion, proud of ourselves, *in general*, whatever the cause?

10. Neu discusses these at length, *op. cit.*, Chapter 1.

11. P. Árdal defends this objection, *op. cit.*, p. 23f and in "Another Look at Hume's Account of Moral Evaluation," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. XV, no. 4, Oct. 1977.

12. For a slightly different way of arguing this in defense of Hume, see A. Baier, *op. cit.*, exp. p. 29f.

13. Davidson, *op. cit.*

14. Davidson, "Actions, Reasons and Causes," *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 66, 1963. pp. 0685-700.

15. Baier argues precisely that pride is a "nonpropositional attitude," *op. cit.*, p. 28f.

16. *The Passions* (N.Y.: Doubleday-Anchor, 1976).

17. It is this essential qualification that is ignored, for example, in Frithjof Bergmann's attack on my analysis, *Journal of Philosophy*, April, 1978.

18. But cf. Baier, *op. cit.*, see footnote 9.

19. In phenomenology, this formulation raises hoary and familiar questions. The move I am making here is evidently similar to Husserl's notion of "bracketing" ontological questions in favor of phenomenological description. The difference between us, however, is that I am doing so only *within* the context of a naively accepted ontology, so that questions of "reality" don't even arise. But since he intends to have a "first philosophy," and question the nature of ontology itself, he must deal with these difficult questions of the identity of intentional objects as I need not. I can glibly say, "sure the house mentioned in the belief and in the pride are identical, but the way they are experienced, i.e. the intentional objects, are different" is closed to him. Thus it becomes a problem how a thorough-going Husserlian phenomenologist can ever establish a sense of objective identity. (I have argued this at length in my "Husserl's Private Language," in *HUSSERL* [Hague: Nijhoff, 1977].) John Searle has developed a parallel version of this kind of analysis of intentionality in some of his recent, not yet published, work.

20. It is important to insist, myself as "object," not "subject"; see Árdal, p. 18.

21. In *The Passions*.

22. A. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1963), for example, uses "feeling" in this way, insisting, without explanation of any kind, that some feelings are intentional, others not. He then simply follows the grammar of intentionality—always dangerous—to some very problematic ontological obscurities.

23. Baier, *op. cit.*