Arational Actions

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ARATIONAL ACTIONS*

IT is often said that there is some special irrationality involved in wreaking damage or violence on inanimate objects that have angered one, and, correspondingly, something rational about striking people or animals in anger. The explanation of this seems obvious, for the first surely manifests the irrational belief that inanimate things are animate and can be punished, whereas the second has no such flaw. But behind this seemingly innocuous observation lies, as I shall argue, a false account of action explanation and a false semantic theory. According to the standard account of actions and their explanations, intentional actions are actions done because the agent has a certain desire/belief pair that explains the action by rationalizing it. Any explanation of intentional action in terms of an appetite or occurrent emotion (which might appear to be an explanation solely in terms of desire) is hence assumed to be elliptical, implicitly appealing to some appropriate belief.[1] In this paper, I challenge this assumption with respect to the "arational" actions of my title—a significant subset of the set of intentional actions explained by occurrent emotion. These actions threaten the standard account, not only by forming a recalcitrant set of counterexamples to it, but also, as we shall see, by undercutting the false semantic theory that holds that account in place.

I define these actions ostensively by means of a list of examples, and then define them explicitly, thereby making it obvious why I call them "arational" actions (rather than "irrational," on the model of

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[1] So, for instance, Donald Davidson has said in lectures that 'She fled out of fear' (or 'because she was frightened') and 'She killed him out of hatred' are to be construed in terms of the actions' being caused by appropriate beliefs and desires.

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the distinction between "amoral" and "immoral"). I cluster the examples around the emotion (or emotions) that would, usually, explain the actions; the explanation would, usually, be of the form "I ϕ-ed because I was so frightened (or happy, excited, ashamed . . . so overwhelmed by hatred or affection or . . .) that I just wanted to, or felt I had to." Arational actions:

(a) explained by a wave of love, affection, or tenderness—kissing or lightly touching in passing, seizing and tossing up in the air, rumpling the hair of, or generally messing up the person or animal one loves; talking to her photograph as one passes, kissing it;
(b) explained by anger, hatred, and sometimes jealousy—violently destroying or damaging anything remotely connected with the person (or animal, or institution) one's emotion is directed toward, e.g., her picture, letters or presents from her, awards from her, books or poems about her; the chair she was wont to sit in, locks of her hair, recordings or "our" song, etc.;
(c) explained by anger with inanimate objects—doing things that might make sense if the things were animate, e.g., shouting at them, throwing an "uncooperative" tin opener on the ground or out of the window, kicking doors that refuse to shut and cars that refuse to start, tying towels that keep falling off a slippery towel rail on to it *very* tightly and then consolidating the knots with water; muttering vindictively 'I'll show *you*', or 'You *would* would you';
(d) explained by excitement—jumping up and down, running, shouting, pounding the table or one's knees, hugging oneself or other people, throwing things;
(e) explained by joy—running, jumping, leaping up reaching for leaves on trees, whistling or humming tunelessly, clapping one's hands;
(f) explained by grief—tearing one's hair or clothes, caressing, clutching, even rolling in, anything suitable associated with the person or thing that is the object of grief, e.g., pictures, clothes, presents from her (cf. anger above). (The example of rolling in comes from a novel in which a man takes his dead wife's clothes out of the wardrobe, puts them on the bed and rolls in them, burying his face in them and rubbing them against his cheeks);
(g) explained by shame—covering one's face *in the dark*, or when one is alone; washing with violent attention to scrubbing and scouring;
(h) explained by horror—covering one's eyes when they are already shut;
(i) explained by fear—hiding one's face, burrowing under the bed clothes;
(j) explained by feeling proud, or self-satisfied, or pleased with oneself —talking to or posturing to oneself in the mirror.

I maintain, with respect to these examples, that on very many (though *not* necessarily all) occasions on which such actions were

performed, it would be true to say the following of them: (i) that the action was intentional; (ii) that the agent did not do it for a reason in the sense that there is a true description of action of the form "*X* did it (in order) to . . ." or "*X* was trying to . . ." which will "reveal the favorable light in which the agent saw what he did,"[2] and hence involve, or imply, the ascription of a suitable *belief;* and (iii) that the agent would not have done the action if she had not been in the grip of whatever emotion it was, and the mere fact that she was in its grip explains the action as much as anything else does.

I shall say that when and only when these three conditions hold of an action it is, by definition, an *arational action,* and appropriate to the emotion or emotions that explain it. The examples are of action types, most of whose tokens would be arational actions, but, as noted above, I am not insisting that they always would be. Many of them, for instance, might be done on occasion without the agent's being aware of what she was doing, thus violating condition (i), and many might be done, on occasion, in order to . . . , thus violating condition (ii). On such occasions, the actions are not, as performed, arational actions; whether or not an agent has performed an arational action on some occasion is determined by whether the three conditions obtain.

I have encountered great resistance, both explicitly in discussion and implicitly in philosophy-of-action literature, to the very idea of arational actions as defined. What people want to do is deny that when condition (i) obtains, condition (ii) *can* obtain. "If an action is intentional," they say, "it *must* be done for a reason, i.e., because of an appropriate desire and belief"—for this is, indeed, the standard account. Now I do not want to quarrel about senses of 'done for a reason'; the central point at issue is certain belief ascriptions to agents performing intentional actions of the sort described above. I am just using 'not done for a reason' here to capture my claim that these actions are explained solely by reference to desire—"I was so angry/delighted, etc., I just wanted to"—not to an appropriate belief.

To get quite clear about what is at issue, let us consider as an example, Jane, who, in a wave of hatred for Joan, tears at Joan's photo with her nails, and gouges holes in the eyes. I can agree that Jane does this because, hating Joan, she wants to scratch her face, and gouge out her eyes; I can agree that she would not have torn at the photo if she had not believed that it was a photo of Joan; and if

[2] "Explanations of action in terms of reasons work by revealing the favourable light in which the agent saw what he did (or at least what he attempted)"—John McDowell, "Reason and Action," *Philosophical Investigations,* V, 4 (October 1982): 301–5.

someone wants to say, "So those are the reasons for the action," I do not want to quarrel, for these "reasons" do *not* form the appropriate desire-belief pair assumed by the standard account. On the standard account, if the explanatory desire in this case is the desire to scratch Joan's face, then the appropriate belief has to be something absurd, such as the belief that the photo of Joan *is* Joan, or that scratching the photo will be causally efficacious in defacing its original. And my disagreement is with adherents of the standard account, who must think that some *non*absurd candidates for appropriate beliefs to ascribe to agents performing arational actions are available.

An exhaustively detailed rebuttal of the various candidates that may be offered cannot be given, of course, but I now review the most plausible.

When one attempts to think of appropriate beliefs, it becomes clear quite rapidly that there is no point in trying to find them piecemeal, token by token—beliefs such as the belief that by harming a photo one harms the original. Viewed abstractly, the desires to perform arational actions when in the grip of an emotion provide, apparently, a rich fund of those cases which Gary Watson[3] neatly characterized as those in which "one in no way values what one desires" (*ibid.*, p. 201), and what is needed to show this is mere appearance, is a belief, ascribable to the agent in every case, about the value of what she is doing. My claim was that these actions are not done in order to ϕ; the counterclaim, coming from the standard account, should be that they *are* done in order to ϕ, where the agent always wants to ϕ and where the appropriate belief, showing in what way the agent values the action, would be of the form "and the agent believes that doing this (gouging out the eyes on the photo or whatever it is) is ϕ-ing."

We seem to find the promise of a candidate in the thought that tokens of the types in question are done *in order to express the emotion*, to relieve it, or vent it, or make it known. This, it is said, reveals the standard desire-belief reason for which arational actions are done: the agent desires to express her emotion, and believes that whatever she is doing *is* expressing it.

But quite generally, what is wrong with this suggestion once again is that it involves ascribing a belief to the agent which should not be ascribed. If I ϕ in order to express or relieve my emotion, I do so in the belief that my ϕ-ing will indeed have (or is likely to have) this upshot. And in such cases, there is the possibility that I am not setting about fulfilling my intention in the right way; that I am open to correction. But arational actions would not usually admit of any

[3] "Free Agency," this JOURNAL, LXXII, 8 (April 24, 1975): 205–220.

possibility of mistake in this way; they are not the sort of action an agent would usually do in the (possibly erroneous) belief that they would achieve this effect. Nor should we accept it as obvious that in every case the agent has the desire *to express this emotion*, a desire whose content is distinct from that of the desire to, say, throw the tin opener violently on the floor. The ascription of this extra desire requires an extra justification.

Of course, I grant that, on some particular occasion, such a justification may be available; as before, I am not insisting that *no* token of an arational action type is ever done in order to express an emotion. I might indeed, on occasion, break up the furniture in the belief that this is expressing my rage and wanting to express it, because my psychotherapist has convinced me that I have hitherto suppressed my emotions too much, that it is better to express them than to bottle them up. Here, my decision to follow the therapist's advice provides the justification for ascribing to me the extra desire *to express this emotion*—and, significantly, it also introduces the possibility of my being open to correction. "You're not really expressing your rage," knowledgeable onlookers may say. "Why don't you really *scream*!"

Similarly, I might tousle someone's hair in the belief that this will make it known to them that I am feeling a wave of affection for them, and that they would like to know this. Or I might deliberately try to get my corrosive hatred for Joan out of my system and tear at her photo in the belief that doing so will bring me this relief. In such cases, the information that my belief is false, that I am not going to succeed in making known or relieving my emotion, or that my expressing it in this way on this occasion is not a good idea would be seen by me as a reason for stopping what I am doing. Granted, this can happen on occasion. But on most occasions, this is not how things are; usually the agent will not be *trying* (successfully or unsuccessfully) to express her emotion, in the belief that this is a good idea, at all.

Notwithstanding this, there seems to be something right about the idea that arational actions are done "to express the emotion" that has not yet been brought out. Let us consider the claim, not that the agent does the action *in order to* express the emotion, but rather qua expression of emotion.

What does this mean? If it is saying that arational actions *are* "expressions of emotion" or "expressive of emotion," this is, I think, obviously true, but it adds nothing to the claim that arational actions are as defined—i.e., intentional actions appropriate to certain emotions, whose only explanation is that, in the grip of the relevant emotion, the agent just felt like doing them. Indeed, it is less explicit than the definition, for both unintentional actions (such as unknow-

ingly gnashing one's teeth) and intentional actions done for further reasons (such as tearing at someone's eyes in order to hurt them) also count as expressions of emotions. But if the 'done qua expression' turn of phrase is intended to capture something more explicit, what could this be?

Given the obvious fact that in some sense the agent does arational actions "(just) because she wants to," or "for their own sake," prompted by the occurrent desire, it is natural to compare arational actions with actions prompted by appetite, and to look to Stephen Schiffer's[4] account of actions prompted by "reason-providing desires," such as eating a piece of chocolate because I am seized by a desire for chocolate. These, according to Schiffer, are done "for pleasure"—not in quite the same sense in which one goes to the ballet "for pleasure," where I desire to go to the ballet because I believe I shall enjoy it, but still in the sense that they are done *in the belief* that satisfying the desire will yield pleasure. This being so, the obvious cases of actions prompted by Schifferian reason-providing desires can be given a standard belief-desire reason explanation; the agent desires physical pleasure, and believes that acting in accordance with the currently aroused appetite will yield this, and so acts. And similarly, it might be said, in the case of arational actions; the agent desires pleasure, and the appropriate belief, ascribable in every case, is that acting in accordance with the occurrent desire to do whatever it is—tear up the photo, cover one's eyes, throw the tin opener out of the window—will yield this.

But the difficulty with extending Schiffer's account in this way is that the ascription of the relevant belief is plausible only with respect to the standard bodily appetites. It is indeed "almost always" true, as he says, that the bodily appetites, once aroused, are pleasurable to satisfy, which is why we talk of the pleasures of food and drink and sex, why we have the concept of *physical* pleasure, and why actions prompted by appetite can so often be described as done "for pleasure." The belief that we shall get physical pleasure from actions done to satisfy such appetites may plausibly be ascribed to any one of us. But the ascription is either implausible or vacuous in other cases.

Suppose I am seized by a sudden desire to lick something furry, and do so because of that desire. Do I do so *in the belief* that doing so will yield me pleasure? A philosopher could indeed, parodying Thomas Nagel,[5] introduce the notion of a motivated belief; the de-

[4] "A Paradox of Desire," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, XIII, 3 (1976): 195–203.

[5] *The Possibility of Altruism* (New York: Oxford, 1970), pp. 29–30.

scription of an agent as doing something "because she wants to do it" simply entails that the agent believed that doing whatever it is would "give her pleasure." This "motivated belief" could then be ascribed to the person who licks something furry "because she wants to"; but in such a case the ascription is clearly vacuous. There are no grounds on which she could believe it will give her *physical* pleasure —quite the contrary, in fact. She does not necessarily believe she will enjoy it—indeed, if one were seized by such an odd desire, one might well act on it because one was curious to find out whether doing so was enjoyable or not. The only "pleasure" the agent believes in is "the 'pleasure' of desire-satisfaction," and this is an entirely formal and empty concept of pleasure.

Now, the desires to perform arational actions (unlike the aroused bodily appetites but like the desire to lick something furry) are not generally known as being pleasurable to satisfy; on the contrary, we know of some of the cases that acting in accordance with the desires makes one feel terrible, and of others that acting in accordance with them is neither pleasant nor unpleasant. To ascribe to the agent of an arational action, in every case, the belief that satisfying this desire now will yield pleasure is hence, implausibly, to ascribe an absurd belief—one for which the agent has no grounds, and which she knows is probably false. Or it is the vacuous ascription of a "motivated" belief.

Actions prompted by odd physical cravings are, I claim, genuine examples of cases in which "one in no way values what one desires" and are thereby counterexamples to the standard account of intentional action, albeit so odd and rare that they might be dismissed as fringe cases. Arational actions, however, are not, in the same way, odd or rare; if they do indeed resist appropriate belief ascription, as I have maintained, then the standard account is shown to be fundamentally flawed.[6]

For not only do arational actions provide a large set of counterexamples, but they also, once their resistance to belief ascription is acknowledged, justify our looking with a skeptical eye at actions done in the grip of an emotion to which the full rational panoply of belief, desire, and "intention with which" is usually ascribed. It is generally said, for example, that, if someone flees in terror from a lion, she is

[6] I am not, of course, unaware of further variations on the appropriate belief which might be tried, but only space prevents me from showing that they fail, too. The belief that in performing the arational action one will eliminate discomfort or agitation (rather than achieve actual pleasure) does not turn the trick; nor does the fascinatingly symbolic nature of many of the examples of arational actions yield anything helpful, as many people are initially tempted to suppose.

doing so in order to get to safety and preserve herself from danger or death; she desires self-preservation and believes that flight is the best way in the circumstances to get it. And, it is said, if someone strikes a person with whom she is angry, or says cruel things to him, she does so in order to hurt, or even to punish him; once again, an appropriate desire-belief pair is ascribed.

Anyone who confidently holds the view that these ascriptions of reasons or "intention with which" must apply in such cases is committed to seeing a great disanalogy between them and cases such as feeling frightened of burglars, ghosts, or thunder and burrowing under the bed clothes (to safety?), feeling angry and kicking furniture (to hurt it?), and muttering imprecations under one's breath (for whose ears?), or to making them analogous by ascribing quite lunatic beliefs to the agent.

If there really is a great disanalogy, the account of the "rational" cases provides us with no clue about the account to be given of the arational ones, which must then seem utterly mysterious. Nor is the problem they present solved—not at least for anyone interested in giving a systematic account of action—by denying that arational actions are intentional. For they are clearly not unintentional, and to say they form a significant class of actions that are neither intentional nor unintentional is to admit that, within the standard account, they present a formidable problem.

If, on the other hand, they are accepted as analogous and the lunatic beliefs are ascribed, these will show up nowhere else in behavior, be sincerely and vigorously repudiated by the agent, and that agent's momentary acquisition of them will, in turn, be utterly mysterious.

A deep problem is found here by anyone who holds that whether or not an action is intentional or was done for a reason (because of a desire and a belief), whether or not an emotion was motivated by emotion e, and whether or not an agent believes that p must be all-or-nothing matters. And this view is held by people in the grip of the false semantic theory according to which predicates such as 'intentional', 'for a reason', 'motivated by emotion e', and 'believes that p' have clearly determinate, necessary and sufficient satisfaction conditions. On this theory, an action must be intentional or not, done for a reason or not, motivated by an occurrent emotion or not; an agent must believe that p or not. And then we find these mysteries.

The new "solution" to this problem is to say that, if the world proves thus recalcitrant to our attempts to carve it up with our predicates, this shows that there is something wrong with the predicates and the concepts they express; that, under the pressure of the facts about human behavior, they "fragment" or "come apart." So

"intentional" and "belief" (for example) must be abandoned, and replaced by more accurate concepts derived from neurophysiology.[7]

But suppose we abandoned this false semantic theory, and instead said the following. Actions done because one is in the grip of an emotion do not form discrete groups, but a range. In the grip of an emotion, we do some things quite involuntarily, such as sweating, trembling, and coloring up. These are things over which, as things are, I have no direct control at all. There are other doings over which I can exercise direct control but can also do involuntarily, without realizing that I am doing them. I can clench or unclench my fists at will, smile or frown, but these are also things I can easily do unawares. I may begin to do some things, e.g., scream or cry or run without realizing that I am doing so, and once started, find it easier to go on than to stop; here perhaps I may be said to refrain intentionally from stopping. Other actions I do intentionally because, in the grip of the emotion, I just want to do them, though I do not do them in the belief that there is anything good about them at all (arational actions). Then there are actions that I do, momentarily believing that there is something good about them, though, looking back, I may not be able to understand how I could have (some cases of *akrasia*); and finally there are actions I do for a reason, in order to do or achieve something I believe to be good or desirable. Although there are clear cases in each of these groups, some of the actions that are clearly done "because the agent is in the grip of an emotion" will have features in common with some two adjacent groups, and there will be nothing that does or could settle to which group it "really" belongs.

Fleeing in terror might well be a case in point. It may be, on occasion, that one has a reason for fleeing—that it will get one out of danger—and flees, but it still may be that one did not flee, on that occasion, in order to get out of danger. Perhaps, after all, it is simply the case that one of the desires we are seized by when seized by fear is the desire to run or hide—such a desire would have good survival value—and that sometimes we act on it as impulsively, and with as little thought, as we act on the desire to scream or jump for joy.

Now, if this is indeed how things are with us, what are the consequences for the roles of reason and emotion in action? Well, let us go back to the thought with which I started—the contrast between the supposed irrationality of striking inanimate objects in anger and the supposed rationality of striking animate ones. If what I have argued

[7] Cf. Patricia and Paul Churchland's and Stephen Stich's writings, *passim;* e.g., Patricia Churchland, *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind/Brain* (Cambridge: MIT, 1986), p. 382.

is correct, then both sides of this contrast may be false. It may be that neither is irrational nor rational, but rather that both are arational, in the sense of being done without reason.

Moreover, insofar as one can see the potential for rationality or irrationality in either, the ascription goes the other way. I have deliberately stayed away from the murky waters of the topic of *akrasia* or weakness of will, but it is, I take it, perfectly obvious, and consistent with all I have said, that on some occasions an arational action may be irrational in the standard akratic way, i.e., contrary to some practical judgment about the good or necessity of refraining from it. If I throw the only tin opener out of the window, I certainly shall not be able to open the tin and may have to go hungry to bed; if I wreak violence on someone else's valuable antique furniture, I violate her rights. So, assaulting inanimate objects in anger may be irrational in the sense of being akratic. But it is surely the case that assaulting animate ones is much more likely to be so. Reason may well have nothing to say against assaulting the inanimate, but the fact that the animate can be hurt and harmed always stands as a potential reason against assaulting them.

In highlighting this point, I do not mean to ally myself with those who see emotion as opposed, in some important sense, to reason (or Reason) or who think that the practical rationality manifested in moral action must be somehow independent of the desiderative faculty. On the contrary, I stand firmly on the Aristotelian side of the Aristotelian-Kantian debate. But those of us who follow Aristotle should not, I think, push our luck too far, and I want to conclude by showing how the existence of arational actions creates something in the way of a problem even for us.

An important fact about human beings, stressed in neo-Aristotelian virtue-based ethics, is that we are creatures such that our appetites and passions may prompt us where reason would also have lead. In this fact lies the sense in which we are "constituted by nature to receive the virtues,"[8] the possibility of harmony between our desiderative and rational faculties, of the virtuous person's grasp of "truth in agreement with right desire" (*ibid.*, 1139 a31). Aristotle maintains, (and Dennis Stampe[9] has recently reiterated) that desire is for the seeming (or apparent) good (or pleasant); when what seems good in the faculty of desire is truly good, then the desire is right, and the true judgment of reason about what is good will be in agreement with it.

[8] *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103 a24–6.
[9] "The Authority of Desire," *Philosophical Review*, XCVI, 3 (1987): 335–81.

Now, the apparent pleasures to which the bodily appetites prompt us may indeed be judged truly good and pleasant by reason. In relation to the bodily appetites, Watson rightly emphasizes the fact that we may "judge that to cease to have such appetites is to lose something of worth" (*op. cit.*, p. 213) and thereby both desire *and* value (some of) the actions to which the appetites prompt us. A human being *can* be seen "in his role as Rational Animal"[10] while eating, drinking, and making love (if it is in the right way, on the right occasions, and so on), odd as that may initially seem, not because he is, necessarily, acting "for a reason" of the standard sort, but because these are activities that can properly form part of a flourishing human life; reason may correctly judge that such actions are good and endorse them.

The same is true of most of the emotions. Reason may judge truly that to cease to have many of the emotions to which we are subject would be to lose something of worth, thereby conferring value on many of the actions to which they prompt us which it would endorse. Once again, a human being can be seen in her role as a rational animal when she flees the dangerous, honors the dead, repels aggressors, punishes wrongdoers, makes recompense for her own wrongdoing, cherishes her children, celebrates joyful occasions, and so on. Reason may correctly judge that such actions are good.

The only sense in which Reason and emotion are opposed, according to Aristotelian ethics, is that (except, perhaps, in people who have "natural virtue") the untrained passions tend to represent things as good and pleasant (or bad and unpleasant) which are not truly so. We have to be trained to fear dishonor more than death, to desire sexual intercourse as an expression of love within a lifelong partnership rather than as simply fun or the exercise of power, to be angered by injustice rather than deserved criticism. Unless they are properly trained, the passions will prompt us to action contrary to reason, or, even worse, corrupt our reason so that we judge things to be good and pleasant falsely. But, properly trained, most of them—it has been said, all[11]—will be in agreement with rational judgment.

[10] Davidson, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes," this JOURNAL, LX, 23 (November 7, 1963): 685–700.

[11] In "Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, X (1973): 223–30, J. O. Urmson maintained that, according to Aristotle, there is no emotion that one should never exhibit. In "Plato on the Emotions," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplement, LVII, 1 (1984): 81–96, I argue, following Aquinas (*Sum. Theo.* 1a2ae Q24 a.4.), that, on the contrary, some passions may be bad in themselves, insofar as they involve an attachment to the truly bad or an aversion to the truly good, for example, envy and *accidie*. But the intrinsically bad emotions are few.

But can the same be said about the arational actions to which our emotions prompt us? It seems to me that, by and large, it cannot, though we might make out a plausible case for some of the actions appropriate to a wave of affection or tenderness. Reason can find good in touching and caressing the people and animals one loves (in the right way on the right occasions, etc.); it forms and endorses loving bonds, is found innocently pleasurable, reassuring, or endearing by the recipients, may speak louder than words, especially to the pre- or nonlinguistic, and so on. Although we usually do not rumple our children's hair for these excellent reasons, we could. But I do not see how one could even begin to make out a case for finding any good in any of the others; they are arational not merely in the sense that one is prompted to them only by desire and not by reason (which is equally true of actions prompted solely by appetite) but further, in the sense that they cannot be *made* rational; reason cannot endorse them.

We might still think, however, that our lives would not, quite generally, be better if emotion never prompted us to act in these ways, or if we always resisted the prompting. We might well find something rather touching or endearing about people's performing many of the arational actions;[12] even the disturbingly violent ones seem to evoke some sort of bond of sympathy. When I have read this paper to discussion groups, I have found that the list of the examples at the beginning always provokes instant delighted recognition; everyone knows what it is like to act in some of these ways, and is somehow pleased to hear it acknowledged and described. Now, someone might maintain that this is just a case of the weak and fallible taking (improper) pleasure in having company. But to me it suggests that we value ourselves and each other as emotional creatures—not as *rational*-emotional in the way pinpointed by Aristotle, but as just plain emotional—and do not believe that the perfect human being would never act arationally.

The importance of this fact, if it is a fact, should not be overemphasized. It leaves general claims about the connections between human perfection, moral agency, and practical *rationality* intact, *if* it is remembered that we make these claims in the area where things are, as Aristotle says, not true of necessity but "for the most part."

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[12] I owe this point to Watson in discussion.