

FEELINGS AND EMOTION*

STEPHEN R. LEIGHTON

One question asked about the relationship between feelings and emotion is whether feelings are a feature necessary to constitute emotion. Answers vary from James's assertion that they are so central as to be emotion, to Bedford's and Solomon's insistence that they are irrelevant to emotion. More moderate answers, however, have emerged, views in which feelings have a place with regard to emotion—at least some of the time. Assuming that feelings do have some status with regard to emotion, a further question is to be asked. When feelings are a feature relevant to emotion, what is their status with regard to the (other) features of the complex that are said to be emotion?

Modern analytic philosophers seem to adopt a two-part solution. First, when feelings are relevant to or constituents of emotion, they depend upon other factors for their identity and nature. Second, they depend upon judgments.¹ I shall call these the dependency and judgmental theses respectively.²

My purpose is to criticize both parts of this solution.

* This paper is held in copyright by its author and the *Review of Metaphysics*. I would like to thank the latter for the right to reprint this paper here.

¹ Although judgments are the usual subject of dependency, theorists often move indifferently among judgments, evaluations, beliefs, etc. For purposes here, I shall do the same. The important claim is that the subject of dependency is something cognitive.

² I should emphasize that my interest is in the identity of the relevant feelings, not a concern for the source, cause or genesis of feeling. Is what a feeling is a feeling of determined by the feeling itself or something else? If something else, what exactly?

I

We must begin with the alleged agreement within modern analytical philosophy on a two—part solution. William Lyons makes it clear that feelings are never independent enough to individuate emotion when he says:

For, as I will argue later in detail, behavior and feelings need not be present on all occasions of an emotional state, but, even when they are present, they do not form any sufficiently consistent and distinct patterns which would enable one to distinguish different emotions by reference to such patterns. (p. 81)³

Rather, evaluations are in control.

Emotions are not specified by their objects or targets but by what the subject of the emotion *thinks* of the object or target. Your emotion will be fear if you believe that you are in danger of being exposed by this woman as a thief and a liar and this belief causes your emotional reaction. It will be embarrassment if you believe that the woman knows that you are the one who rejected her application for compassionate leave, and in consequence you believe the situation to be one of extreme awkwardness, and this belief causes your emotional reactions. Your emotion will be love if the reaction

³ W. Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1980). The view that feelings themselves can determine the emotion present, I call the determinator thesis. In holding the judgment and dependency theses, one must (and Lyons does) reject the determinator thesis. In holding the determinator thesis, one must reject the judgment and dependency theses. One can, however, reject the judgment and dependency theses without being committed to the determinator thesis, or reject the determinator thesis without endorsing the judgment and dependency theses.

We shall speak further about the determinator thesis: its rejection is often bound up with an endorsement of the judgment and dependency theses; its adoption will undermine the dependency and judgmental theses.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

is caused by your belief that this woman is the most perfect person you have ever met and could possibly meet. (pp. 48—49)

Lyons allows that feelings may be present; they may be part of the emotional reaction. But that which determines the reaction and the whole state as one of, say, fear is the judgment(s) relevant to fear. Consequently, that which determines the feelings present as feelings of fear must be the judgment(s). The identity of the feelings present is no more independent than the rest of the emotional reaction. Both the dependency and judgmental theses have been adopted.

Although Anthony Kenny's position on the matter is considerably different in detail, he too endorses the dependency and judgmental theses. According to Kenny, important constituents of emotion include motivated behavior and symptom. The feelings present depend upon these.

For it is not just an unfortunate accident of idiom that we use the same words, such as "love," "anger," and "fear," in the description of feelings as we do in the attribution of motives. The two uses of an emotion-word are two exercises of a single concept; for it is through their connection with motivated behavior that feelings are identified as feelings of a particular emotion. (p. 38)

But the existence of characteristic expressions of emotion itself provides a further link between emotion and sensations: for the expression characteristic of each motion—e.g. weeping—is itself felt, and this feeling is a genuine sensation. (p. 59)⁴

So far, it looks as though Kenny holds the dependency thesis only. But if we look further, we shall see that his position also entails the judgmental thesis. Motivated behavior and symptom rest on the third strut of his analysis, circumstance.

⁴ A. Kenny, *Action Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963).

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

The occasion on which an emotion is elicited is part of the criterion for the nature of emotion. Merely to investigate behavior or its physiological accompaniments, without reference to the occasions on which these occur, is to treat something which is essential to establishing the nature of what is being investigated as if it was a dispensable laboratory circumstance. The tears which we shed while watching films, the shudders which we give while reading horror stories are real tears and real shudders; but the surroundings are not those of real grief or real horror. We do not want the film to stop, or put the book down. (p. 49)

Thus whether the emotion and feeling elicited is of fear or of some other emotion seems to rest on the circumstances that elicit the motivated behavior and symptom. The significance of the circumstance, however, is itself determined by the evaluations made of it. Thus of ultimate importance are the judgments of the emoter.

For an animal to be genuinely afraid, it is not necessary nor sufficient that he should be in danger; he may be in danger which he does not know about, and so not be afraid, or be in no danger, but be afraid because he thinks he is. (p. 50)

...for it is not in general possible to identify an emotion without identifying also its object; and where, *ex hypothesi*, an emotion takes the form of a feeling which is not acted upon, the connection with the object can be made only by the thoughts which surround the sensation. (p. 64)

Thus Kenny, too, holds that the feelings present and the emotion present depend upon the judgments made of the circumstances. Once again, the nature of feeling depends upon judgments.

These analyses have left no room for the feelings being what they are through their own nature or able to help determine the emotion present. Roger

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

Trigg, while reviewing some work of A. R. White, considers something like the latter view—one in which it is the nature of the feelings that determines the emotion. Trigg comments:

How could we say that we felt pangs of *anxiety*, if the pangs were all that there were to anxiety? White, of course, could envisage *pangs* which had a distinctive ‘anxiety-quality’. When I had them I would know I was anxious. If I did not, then either I was not anxious, or I had forgotten my anxiety. *However, the main difference between a pang of anxiety, a pang of fear, a pang of disappointment, or a pang of any other emotion would seem to be their contexts.* It is because they occur in certain situations that I attribute them to various emotions. A pang of anxiety, for instance, would occur in a situation which I *viewed* as disquieting in some way. (pp. 97—98, my emphasis)⁵

Although sceptical, Trigg grants that there may be noticeable differences among different pangs, i.e., feelings. Still, whatever these differences come to, a consideration of them is not sufficient to distinguish even among the feelings. Trigg’s requirement of context means that the feelings are ultimately determined by one’s beliefs about the situation, not by what one might want to say about feelings independently of these beliefs.⁶ Feelings remain dependent, and dependent upon judgments. From the failure of feelings to be independent, it follows that differences in terms of the feelings are insufficient to distinguish among emotions (contrary to the determinator thesis). The situation and, ultimately, the beliefs determine the nature of the feelings and the emotion present.

⁵ R. Trigg, *Pain and Emotion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

⁶ That the significance of the context relies upon beliefs we saw in Kenny and see here with the importance of how one “views” the matter. For a fuller discussion of this relationship see Lyons, p. 35.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

It is interesting to notice that even when feelings do appear to be independent of context and judgment, a consideration of those feelings would still not help to determine the emotion or even the feelings present.

We have already seen how it is possible to be anxious about the significance of a pain, because one thinks it is a sign of the onslaught of a fatal disease. Such anxiety would be defined by our belief about the pain, and not by any pang which might occur apart from the pain. Indeed, even if I felt no special pangs, I might still be said to be anxious. If pangs which I recognize as being like those I might feel when anxious occurred when, for example, I had just received news of some personal failure when I had hoped for success, *I would not say I was anxious and not disappointed. The situation was one of disappointment, whether they were similar or not to pangs of anxiety.* (p. 98, my emphasis)

Even should it initially appear that a feeling is independent of judgment, still what the feeling is a feeling of is not to be found in the feeling itself. For one's beliefs about the situation determine the emotion and, in turn, the feeling present.⁷ Feeling remains dependent upon judgment.

⁷ One might argue that this conclusion is too strong, the fallacy of division. The emotion and judgments are those of disappointment while the pang is not simply like one of anxiety but is one of anxiety. This suggestion seems plausible if we are maintaining that the pang is not, after all, relevant to the disappointment. What we have, then, is disappointment without any feeling—a possibility admitted by Trigg— and quite incidentally a pang of anxiety. Yet given the importance placed upon context how does one account for the identity of this “independent” pang of anxiety? Appeal to how it feels, we learned above, is of no real help. More importantly, the case we are discussing seems to be one in which the feeling remains intimately connected with the disappointment. In this case, either the pang must really be that of anxiety or it is of disappointment. Again, given his earlier remarks on pangs and context, it is clear that Trigg must maintain that the feeling is one of disappointment. Indeed, the alternative, that we have disappointment with a pang of anxiety as part of the disappointment, seems fairly incoherent. Thus an apparent distinctiveness of feeling will not be sufficient to establish that said feeling is a feeling of anxiety.

Some consensus concerning the dependency and judgmental theses certainly exists.⁸ Without bothering ourselves further with the particular subscribers to these views, let us see whether the theses are true.

II

One striking feature about emotion is that the cognition appropriate to a given emotion may be overruled or trumped in such a fashion that the emotion present is other than what the judgments would suggest. Instead, the emotion present is what it is by virtue of the feelings present (the determinator thesis).

Take shame and embarrassment. Concerning the doing of something judged to be bad, shame requires the judgment of responsibility whereas embarrassment admits involvement but not responsibility.⁹ Yet I am often embarrassed by, not ashamed of, things I know and take to be my fault, for example, through carelessness spilling a drink over my host. Contrariwise, one can be ashamed though realizing that the matter is not one's fault. Lord Byron is said to have been ashamed of his foot. He could have been so, though knowing that he was in no way responsible. Similarly, one raped or otherwise abused could be ashamed, though being well aware that the abuse was not his or her responsibility. In each

⁸It should be observed that the adoption of the judgmental and dependency theses by analytical philosophers is general rather than universal. For example, remarks J. Shaffer makes in "An Assessment of Emotion," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1983):161—62 suggest that he holds neither of these theses.

⁹ See, for example, Bedford's discussion of a Mr. Davies's embarrassment rather than shame upon discovering that he was the model for Peter Pan, E. Bedford, "Emotions," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 1956—57, p. 116, or Solomon's discussion of the embarrassment or shame had if unknowingly versus knowingly going to a party with torn pants, R. Solomon, *The Passions* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1977), p. 305.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

case, the emotion that the judgments suggest is not present; and the way one determines what emotion is present has to do with the way the thing feels.¹⁰

If this is right, then we have proof both that feelings in emotion need not be dependent upon or secondary to the judgment(s) present and that feelings in emotion may be independent and be determinators. This overthrows both the dependency and judgmental theses. That the emotion present is determined by an appeal to the nature of feelings in spite of judgments to the contrary shows how significant the independency of feelings can be.

What might be said to avert these conclusions?

An analysis of the subjects' judgments might help. One could argue that the person who says that he/she is ashamed when clearly the situation and judgments are those of embarrassment (or vice versa) lays claim to the emotion through (1) conditioning, (2) the possession of contrary judgments, or (3) a muddled mind.¹¹ Each option is meant to circumvent the objection to the judgmental and dependency theses. Let us consider each in its turn.

Conditioning (1) suggests a case in which the person is ashamed for a good period of time and then learns something which alters his or her judgment. Although a change in judgment has occurred, the original emotion persists. Conditioning, then, is meant to explain the continuance of the original emotion, and thereby to explain how, say, a person remains ashamed, though now judgments appropriate to embarrassment are made.

Although the explanation is plausible enough, it does not diminish the force of the objection. First, it is not always going to be the case that a person ashamed

¹⁰ Elsewhere I have used this observation to object to cognitive analyses of emotion ("A New View of Emotion," forthcoming in *American Philosophical Quarterly*). Here I want to show what role feelings can take when they are constituents of or relevant to emotion.

¹¹ These explanations are adaptations of some remarks Lyons makes about the appropriate analysis of reflex emotions (cf. pp. 76, 88—89).

though having judgments appropriate to embarrassment did change from judgments appropriate to shame to judgments appropriate to embarrassment. For example, Byron's shame or my embarrassment do not rely on one having an emotion corresponding to certain judgments, and then changing judgments but not feelings or emotion. The explanation, then, is not universal in its scope. Second, even when something like this does occur and we do want to give a role to conditioning, this description, albeit correct, does not invalidate the objection. For feelings still determine the emotion present in spite of judgments to the contrary. The feelings are not dependent upon judgments; the feelings are independent and determine the emotion.¹² If anything, conditioning explains rather than explains away the trumping by feelings.

Option (2) shows more promise. Two sets of contrary beliefs are held by the person. One set of judgments, which evaluate the person as responsible (those appropriate to shame), lead to the feeling and underlie the emotion, while he (wrongly) supposes that it is the judgment that he is not responsible (the ones presently "in mind") that lead to the emotion. He is, then, self-deceived, a victim of repression or unconscious beliefs, or some such thing. In these cases, it is right to say that the person is ashamed but misleading to say that the judgments are those of embarrassment. For the judgments that, in fact, cause the emotion and are apposite are those of shame. That the emoter does not fully understand the situation explains why he is misled and misleads us in holding that he does not take himself to be responsible, but still is ashamed.

No doubt this explanation has its place. Indeed, we might later learn that the person was only trying to convince himself. Really, deep down, he took himself to be responsible, and that is what caused his emotion. In such cases,

¹² A critic might suggest that this objection to the dependency thesis is epistemological rather than ontological. However, the point is not simply that one knows that it is the emotion it is by an appeal to feelings, but rather the feeling present determines the emotion present—and this determinant is not dependent upon the other factors relevant to emotion.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

option (2) serves us well, canceling our objections to the judgmental and dependency theses.

Yet we cannot suppose that all cases will be resolved in this way. Where the person never finds the “deep down” beliefs, insists even years later—and is found to have no axes to grind—that he never took himself to be responsible, we should accept his word. We have no reason to suppose that he must be wrong. The only pull to the contrary is an inclination to combine a psycho analytic explanation with the presupposition of a judgmental alignment. But we have no right so to presuppose. For the judgmental alignment is under discussion here. Thus even though the second option illuminates some cases, there is no reason to suppose it illuminates all cases—and good reason to think that it does not, e.g., my own embarrassment at spilling my drink through carelessness.

Where the option of being muddled (3) is not a further appeal to the second explanation, it suggests either that the person has an inadequate grasp of the language or that the person cannot recognize his own emotional state. Of the former, there is no reason to doubt that such things occur. These occurrences, however, are of little interest. The examples I have used to generate the problem for the traditional analytic account of feelings have not relied on the subject being linguistically inept. Of the latter, namely the inability to recognize one’s own state, we do want to appeal to it. Should the person be extraordinarily agitated even for one in such circumstances, should the person seem terribly confused, should there be some deep rooted psychological problem, etc., we might surmise that he is simply confused about his emotions. When so, even without hypothesizing contrary sets of judgments, we might be justified in claiming that though he says he is ashamed, really he is embarrassed.

These surmises, however, could be wrong. Although we can have evidence to doubt his word, he remains in an advantageous position with respect to his feelings, judgments, and emotion. At his disposal is powerful evidence with which

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

he can oppose our claims. As with the second explanation, if years from now he maintains his position, then our presumption that it was really embarrassment becomes quite implausible. Moreover, where the person is not confused, is not extraordinarily agitated, etc., yet claims to be ashamed, there our doubts about his ability to recognize his own emotional state are without justification. As before, though we want to admit that the explanation is possible, we must insist that it will not help with all the relevant cases.

While option one is unhelpful to subscribers of the dependency and judgmental theses, options two and three do have application. Yet neither is necessary, nor do the two suffice to explain all the relevant cases. For my embarrassment, Bryon's and the abused person's shame need not be explained in any of these ways. The appeal to a special explanation does not cancel the objection. Feeling may trump judgment; the determinator thesis is true; the supposition of the judgmental thesis and the dependency thesis is quite mistaken. Hence we must give feelings a more significant role than heretofore granted—and that is the end of the modern view about the nature of feelings in emotion.

Well, not quite. Those who claim that judgments do all the individuating may simply deny the plausibility of the examples. The trumping by feeling is not to be explained away: it is denied. If we try to be sensitive to our experience of emotion, I think that this will be seen as a move of desperation. Nevertheless, this course might be taken; the result would be contradiction but no argument. To help us out of such a predicament, we must seek further demonstrations of the independency of feeling. This will bolster our rejection of the judgmental and dependency theses.

III

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

Suppose one made the evaluations relevant to grief and this leads to or causes the person to feel vaguely as one does after an orgasm. Whatever is experienced, it would hardly count as grief. The judgmental thesis is wrong, mistakenly identifying the feelings, and even the emotion, as being of grief.

The reason we are reluctant to call this emotion grief is that it does not have the right “feel” about it. Evidently, the feeling of grief is identifiable enough such that one can say: “That is not the feeling of grief, whereas something like this is.” Moreover, the feeling is independent enough and significant enough to make us discount the emotion as one of grief.

One’s abilities here rest on the nature of the feelings, not the context, not the factual or evaluative judgments, not the behavior, not the symptoms. The judgmental and dependency theses must make room for an independency thesis. Although one might respond that such cases do not, as a matter of fact, occur, this will not do. For they do occur, though perhaps in a less extreme fashion. Moreover, there is no conceptual difficulty with their occurrence, even if it has not happened yet.

We should notice that this argument does not rest on a peculiarity of grief. Take a much simpler case. If we assume Aristotle’s characterization of envy and indignation, then the former is a certain pain at the good fortune of another, while the latter is a certain pain at another’s undeserved good fortune. Were one pleased, or at least not pained, one would not speak of envy or indignation. Again, rather than expecting judgments always to carry the load, we must be more sensitive than the modern tradition has been to the place and nature of feelings.

Now perhaps the force of these objections can be nullified with a slight modification in the tradition’s position. Instead of speaking of the feelings that arise as a result of certain judgments, one might speak of the feelings “typically associated” with the relevant evaluation. Feelings of grief are “typically associated” with judgments of grief, whereas vague post—orgasmic feelings are

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

not. Thus one need not maintain that the feelings (described above) are those of grief, or that the emotion is grief. Furthermore, the case of shame/embarrassment could be dealt with in a similar fashion. Since shame feelings are not “typically associated” with judgments of embarrassment, one need not insist that embarrassment and feelings of embarrassment are present. With only a slight modification in the account, we may be able to preserve the modern analytic conception of feelings.

But this modification will not really do. First, though one avoids insisting, contrary to fact, that the emotion is grief or embarrassment, one is left unable to identify the emotional state. This may be apt when judgments of grief spawn feelings similar to those felt after an orgasm. However, regarding shame/embarrassment, the inability is a liability. For the point there was not simply that it was misguided to insist that the emotion was embarrassment. Rather the emotion was identified as shame. The modification, then, fails to account for the trumping of judgments by feeling, and thereby fails to account for all that it should.¹³

Second, and most important, the modified analysis works only through an unacknowledged assumption that the identity of feelings can be independent of the context, judgments, behavior, symptoms, etc., of emotion. For the modified analysis must assume that feelings and (given shame/embarrassment) the corresponding emotion can be individuated (epistemologically and ontologically) in terms of a consideration of the feelings themselves: otherwise one is in no position to identify or distinguish the atypical from the typical cases. That is, the

¹³ One might, then, take the “typically associated” claim differently, arguing that since feelings of embarrassment are typically associated with these judgments, the emotion is embarrassment—no matter what the individual happens to feel at the time. That is to reassert something like the position considered in the earlier discussion of shame/embarrassment. It simply overrides what the person feels and says. Moreover, it revives an absurdity by implying that judgments of grief which spawn post-orgasmic feelings constitute grief. Thus this revision is not plausible.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

feeling would be grief (or embarrassment) unless feeling does not depend on its context, surroundings, causal ancestry, etc. for its identity. Since the feeling is not grief (or embarrassment), the identity of the feeling must depend on the nature of feeling itself.

Thus while the modification of the theory seemed slight, in fact, it is quite radical, abandoning both the judgmental and the dependency theses. And these theses are what modern analytical philosophers are keen to maintain in their two-part solution.¹⁴ Certainly, we must conclude that what a feeling is a feeling of may well have to do with the nature of the feeling itself. The tradition's espoused view still fails.

To avoid any confusion about the role of context, etc., let me observe that it is no wish of mine to deny that the context of the emotion may be necessary in order to learn which feelings are which (a genetic remark). Nonetheless, my arguments are designed to show that the identity and identification of certain feelings as being of a certain sort and even emotion is independent.¹⁵ Feelings can be ontologically independent.

The conclusions we reach are the following. Whether an emotion is present and what it is may rest not only on the assumption of certain cognitions (where appropriate) and the presence of a feeling, but also upon the presence (where appropriate) of an apposite feeling. Feelings are wrongly portrayed as having to be secondary and dependent.

¹⁴ I remind you of the (earlier quoted) remarks of Kenny concerning the difference between identity of substances in laboratory experiments and identity in emotion, and Lyons's remarks on whether the emotion is fear or love or embarrassment, and Trigg's concern for whether the pang is one of anxiety or disappointment.

¹⁵ Because modern analytical philosophy holds that judgments determine the emotion and feeling present, they do not allow themselves to distinguish adequately the questions "Of what sort is the present feeling?" and "To which emotion does the present feeling belong?"—or at least they take the latter question to be prior to the former, to be determined by an appeal to judgments, and to answer the former. I am suggesting that this is all quite mistaken.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

These conclusions find further confirmation through the following thought experiment. Even if we or Martians or any other thing always felt as one does after an orgasm as a result of making the evaluations relevant to grief, this still would not be grief. We probably would have an emotion, but not grief, not even grief by another name. This emotion is conceptually distinct from grief because part of the concept of grief involves what we call feelings of grief, not simply feelings. ‘Feelings of grief’ does not pick out whatever happens or typically arises when making judgments of grief, but may pick out an independently identifiable and apposite (set of) feeling(s).¹⁶ Thus the picture modern analyses offer of feelings in emotion, even the modified version, is surely false. Feelings need not be secondary and dependent upon judgments or anything else. Their place in emotion may be wholly independent, having a nature of their own. What is more, that nature may determine the emotion present. Indeed, it may trump what the judgments would suggest.¹⁷

IV

Certain views popular among philosophers, though not directly involved in the issues here, could undercut our conclusions. For example, some argue that we cannot attain certain concepts if the concepts refer only to feelings. For a feeling is

¹⁶ Again, these arguments do not rely on a peculiarity of grief. For though this may be a particularly convincing example, the same point can be made concerning embarrassment, anger, etc.

¹⁷ Here and elsewhere I use the word ‘may’. For (1) I do not deny that sometimes feelings are classed by virtue of the judgments, behavior, etc. For example, being in love seems to admit quite a number of different feelings. Most anything that comes along with the rest of the structure will be considered a feeling of love. Although Polonius may have been mistaken about whether Hamlet’s feelings were those of love, he was not mistaken about feelings of love. Moreover, (2) even in emotions such as grief, in which certain feelings are apposite and independent, that itself does not mean that these feelings need be the only ones relevant or even that such independent feelings must always be present.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

something private; and neither teacher nor learner could be certain that the right feeling was had while learning the expression. The absence of a public check on feeling is fatal. Thus any rejection of the dependency thesis—though not necessarily the judgmental thesis—is wrongheaded, because it tries to give feelings an independent identity and recognizable status.

This is a version of the private language argument, holding, for example, that in regard to the concept of pain there has to be something that is publicly observable if we are to have (and given that we do have) the concept *pain* in the language. This argument has been used by Bedford to show that feelings in emotion must be incidental and dependent. If this is right, then my analysis is mistaken.

The private language argument, however, has received a good deal of inspection and criticism. I shall discuss one line of thought that is particularly useful given my purposes.¹⁸ We begin with pain and then move to emotion.

Trigg distinguishes the sensation of pain from the behavioral distress common to pain. The sensation of pain is held to be of a certain quality. That there is a difference between the distress and the sensation of pain is clear since not everything that distresses is painful. For example, electrical shocks from faulty circuits certainly distress, yet they are not properly included within our concept of pain. For they do not have the right feel about them. Conversely, not everything that is painful need distress. For example, some medical patients who are not distressed do report the sensation of pain when asked to report their sensations.¹⁹

¹⁸ See Trigg, esp. pp. 64-79.

¹⁹ Since it is agreed that knowledge here is immediate, when the witnesses are reliable, unconfused, and sincere, we must assume that it is pain that they feel. It should be noted that feeling for the pain of an aching tooth and, perhaps, the pleasures of masochism seem to be different types of cases in which the painful sensation and the distress are not aligned.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

With this distinction in mind, one can respond to the private language argument's concern for and account of the language of pain by claiming that we can and do learn the language of pain just because we are typically distressed at pain. Although this connection is contingent, it remains the usual case. A child acquires pain language and the concept of pain through the conjunction of pain sensation with distress. Having acquired the concept of pain, being able to recognize the pain quality, one can, on touching a faulty electrical connection, find oneself quite distressed yet note that the sensation is not quite that of pain. In contrast, someone congenitally insensitive to pain cannot understand pain as anything but being distressed. Such a person should (and does) fail to appreciate electrical shocks not being pains. Thus we can have the sensation of pain (and thereby the pain) without the distress, or the distress without the sensation.

Trigg's argument is correct, keeping distinct what is necessary for one to learn the concept (where a sort of dependency seems to apply) versus what must be present for the concept to be fully in place (where such a dependency need not follow).

These considerations can be applied to the role feeling must take in emotion. To the claim that there cannot be an independence of feeling and the claim that matters must always depend upon behavior in a context, we reply that it is certainly true that through behavior in context (like the distress), we first learn to identify feelings of, say, anger (like the pain sensation).²⁰ However, from this it no more follows that anger must not involve the feeling and/or must not be identified with or by the feeling but rather must (in part) be constituted by the behavior and/or must be identified with or through the behavior or some other factor, than it followed that pain must not be the sensation and/or must not be identified with or by the sensation but rather must (in part) be constituted by the

²⁰ I choose behavior in context only to keep the analogy with Trigg's discussion. One can substitute judgments, physiological changes, etc., here.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

distress and/or must (in part) be identified with or by the distress. Of course, my point is not to suggest that emotion is feeling or that distress is not part of our concept of pain. Rather I want to show that the private language problem does not prevent the pain being the sensation or the emotion being the feeling, but even more importantly, to show that we have been given no reason to believe that feelings need adopt the dependent role in emotion that they have too often been cast in.

It seems, then, that the objection centered round the idea of a private language fails to detract from our earlier analysis of feelings in emotion. Not only can feelings have an independent nature of their own, but also they can play an individuating role.

V

Gilbert Ryle, one of the originators of the modern analytic conception of feelings, also offers considerations which would have us revise our analysis. Ryle holds that feelings do not come prelabelled as to what they are feelings of. One labels them as feelings of something only by sorting out a cause, e.g., the pin sticking in the pained thumb. Hence we find the dependency thesis combined here with a more general causal theory rather than the more specific judgmental thesis.

But the point here being made is that whether we are attaching a sensation to a physiological condition or attaching a feeling to an emotional condition, we are applying a causal hypothesis. Pains do not arrive hall-marked 'rheumatic', nor do throbs arrive already hall-marked 'compassionate'. (p. 105)²¹

²¹ G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1949).

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

Of course, there is a trivial sense in which nothing comes with a label attached. After all, labels are ours to give. But clearly this is not what Ryle is rejecting when he speaks of the “already hall-marked.” Rather, Ryle wants to suggest that any sensation’s or feeling’s identity is dependent upon its cause. Now we can agree that finding a needle in oneself, associating it with pain, relieving it by sucking seems to be a matter of identity through causality. Ryle’s claim, however, is meant to cover all sensations and feelings. I suggest his conclusion is hasty.

Trigg observes that shooting or stabbing pains are not matters of causal hypothesis. For we do not have to know what it is like to have been stabbed or shot in order to properly characterize a present pain as shooting or stabbing.²² Shooting or stabbing describes how the pains feel, their nature. It is this nature that determines how they are described. This is considerably different from the way a pin in the thumb is meant to yield a causal hypothesis. Thus we can say, contrary to Ryle, that some feelings do come hall-marked, that some feelings are independent.

Therefore we need not assume that the feelings involved in emotions are dependent. To return to our earlier example, a feeling of grief does not stand as such only because it is caused by evaluations appropriate to grief or because it arises in settings of grief, but because this feeling is apposite to grief. And this is but another way of supporting our conclusion that should Martians feel quite tickled upon making the evaluative judgments appropriate to grief, we might not deny that they experience emotion, though we would deny that they experienced grief. Equally, our considerations of shame and embarrassment indicate that there too apposite feelings come hall-marked.

²² Similar points can be made about nipping, biting, racking, and piercing pains.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

Now some qualify Ryle's position that all sensations are hall marked through causal hypothesis. Taking Ryle to be on the right track, Lyons adds that some of the language is loaded, i.e., tacitly revealing hints as to what sort of thing the feeling so labelled is likely to be of.²³ So, we call something a "downcast" feeling because we have already guessed that the context is, say, remorse.

Certainly, this sort of thing occurs with respect to our language of feelings and sensations. However, if Lyons maintains (as seems to be the case) that the "loadedness" does not reflect on the nature of the feeling itself, then we must consider whether his conclusion is hasty. Even should we grant that the feeling called "downcast" is so called through tacit reference to its context, that does not rule out others being labelled by reference to the way they feel— as Trigg's considerations on shooting and stabbing have shown, and as our reflections on feelings of grief (and, we can add, joy, elation) suggest. Indeed, we may ask whether the "downcast" feeling or a "throb" or a "pang" is found in other emotions or sensations, though perhaps under a different description. If they are not, then these feelings are candidates for an analysis analogous to that of shooting and stabbing pains. And I should have thought that the pang often spoken of in grief is like this.

We should appreciate (1) that some of our language of the felt is dependent for its identity on its cause, (2) that some makes tacit reference to its context, (3) that some is descriptive of the feeling, not parasitic or causally hall-marked. The richness we see enhances our conclusion that individuation need not solely rely upon judgments. It often relies in a nontrivial way upon what is felt.

There is another point to be made concerning Ryle and the tradition following him. Even if we were to accept that the genesis of the language of feeling arises entirely through the context or cause of the emotion, it would not follow that it remains tied permanently, reduced to a secondary, consequential

²³ Lyons, p. 136—37.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

role. Even were feelings genetically on the coat-tails of the context, they would not have to stay there. As we saw when considering the private language argument, having learnt the language one would be able to do some distinguishing between the cases (unless one just stipulates that there never is or can be a consistently recognizable distinction in feeling among any emotions) in terms other than context, behavior, and judgments. We are in a position to say: “This is not grief—though the judgments may be right, the feeling just isn’t.” Too often modern thinkers have supposed that an apparently secondary role for feelings in the genesis of the child’s language entails a secondary role ontologically. But there is no such implication.

VI

If it is now agreed that regardless of context certain feelings can be ruled out as feelings of grief while others are allowed to be appropriate, then we admit that certain feelings are identifiable through their own nature. They are not what they are simply through the judgments they may be associated with or the context in which they arise. This can occur at a rather general level: grief does not have the feelings present in an orgasm. As well, it can occur at a much more specific level: this feeling is not that of shame but of embarrassment. It is clear that not just any feeling when combined with and caused by the relevant judgment will count as appropriate to remorse, rage, despair, grief, joy, sadness, fear, shame, delight, etc. Moreover, the feeling itself may deter mine the emotion present.

The arguments I have offered do not seem to rely on the emotions cited being somehow peculiar or eccentric. They tell us something about feelings and emotion, not just an odd one or two. What they tell us is that the judgmental and dependency theses are far too strong. We must allow for the independency of certain feelings.

Feelings and Emotion, as published by *Review of Metaphysics* (1984)

Now in allowing that feelings may be ontologically and epistemologically an individuating factor, we need not doubt that there is much to be gained by referring to factors other than feelings. Much is to be learned from context, behavior, judgments, etc. It would appear that, in some cases, e.g., being perturbed or cross or peeved or upset, if there is any difference here, the presence of a certain feeling is not enough to convince us that one emotion is present rather than another. In addition to the appropriate feeling, judgment may also be necessary and the determinator of the emotion present. For all that, the point remains that the nature of feelings present need not be secondary or derivative, and that feelings seem capable on some occasions of trumping judgments. Certainly the modern analytic view has drawn too simple a sketch.