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Passion

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PASSION

Very little, so far as I know, has been written on our ordinary uses of the term 'passion.' Possibly this is because it has tended to be taken as a classificatory term under which a variety of other terms, such as 'emotion,' 'desire,' and 'feeling' can be subsumed, and taken in such a way that analysis has seemed more requisite to these latter terms than to the term 'passion' itself. I shall argue however, that 'passion' has a connotation specific to itself, and that this has important implications for the explanation of a certain class of actions.

1. As a means of introducing the notion of passion with which I shall be primarily concerned, it will be helpful to consider some relevant comments by R. S. Peters.¹ He distinguishes "the philosophical conception of 'passion' as something which provides an inducement to act,"² from "the ordinary usage of 'passion' which suggests some kind of turbulence or state of heightened feeling." By way of exemplifying "the philosophical conception" reference is made to Hume who saw passions, in Peters' expression of him, as "psychological entities which move people to act."³ The second concept, on the other hand, is said to be the one in question in the case of the "'natural' passions such as fear, anger and sexual desire."⁴ Having introduced the distinction between the two concepts, Peters asks

When a passion, in the philosophical sense, would normally be referred to as a passion in ordinary language. When for instance, would a concern for fairness or an abhorrence of irrelevance be referred to as a passion? Usually, surely, when looking at a situation in a way which warrants the term 'fair' or 'irrelevant', is connected with things that come over us, which we may not be able to control. To have a passion for truth suggests more than just caring about it. It suggests that we are strongly affected by disregard of evidence, inaccuracy and deceit. We are subject to strong feelings if truth is disregarded in any way. This links the use of 'passion' with the Latin *patior* from which it is derived. It suggests being subject to something, being mastered or overpowered
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¹ R. S. Peters, "Reason and Passion," in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures*, Vol. 4 (1969-70).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 138.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 153.

The sort of thing Peters means when he talks about someone having a concern or care for truth, and so a passion for it “in the philosophical sense,” is indicated by his statement that

anyone who is concerned about truth must be concerned about correctness—about getting the facts right; he must care about consistency and clarity; he must abhor irrelevance and other forms of arbitrariness, he must value sincerity. And so on.⁵

According to Peters then, the “usual” use of the term ‘passion’ in ordinary language is restricted to cases where “things . . . come over us, which we may not be able to control.” Although the phrase used here is ‘may not be able to control’ rather than ‘cannot,’ the reference to ‘things coming over us,’ which would presumably be instanced by the case where we say ‘I don’t know what came over me,’ implies an actual loss of control. But Peters’ thesis in that case would seem to overlook a perfectly usual and very important use of the word ‘passion,’ according to which ‘passion,’ far from being overpowering, can actually facilitate the thinking, feeling, acting, judging, or whatever is in question. A veridical example will help to bring out the point here. An ex-boxer, Victor Hermann, has been reported in the press as saying that “*Anything I achieved in the game came from a passion for fighting*. When I was young and knocked over one boy after another I would have fought for nothing. I would have paid those boys to get up so that I could hit them again.” (The italics is mine). It is the italicized statement which is crucial. I quote the others by way of emphasizing that it is indeed a passion that is in question here. Since the boxer was of world class, the achievements he referred to were considerable. My point then is that his ascription of the passion to himself was in terms of its being something from which his achievements “came,” which suggests that in some way, to be examined further at a later stage of my discussion, it facilitated his control of the relevant thoughts and movements rather than disrupted this or overcame him. Although he might well have been subject to strong feelings when prevented from satisfying his passion—for example by feelings of intense impatience when injury prevented him from taking part in a contest—his becoming subject to such feelings would have been dependent on, a result of his already having the passion. It follows that they could not be even part of what, at least primarily, is meant here by ‘passion,’ although they might very well be a sign of it. Comparable points could of course, be made in terms of other passions,

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 151.

for example for painting, serving the community, truth, or the woman next door. Dante, for instance, might conceivably have said 'Anything I achieved in poetry came from a passion for Beatrice.'

No doubt in being preoccupied in his analysis of passion in what he regards as the "ordinary" sense, with cases where the person is "mastered or overpowered" by his passion, Peters is opposing these to situations where, in being moved to act, we are free from passion in this "ordinary" sense. But to act whilst being free from passion in the ordinary sense does not entail being without it. This can be seen from the fact that one way of being free from it is to be dispassionate, whereas 'dispassionate' does not mean 'passionless.' It means, rather, 'free from control by passion.' Thus Victor Hermann's passion for boxing did not cease to exist when he dispassionately executed his skills in the ring, though he was then free from control by it, free to use it in such execution. To be dispassionate in fact entails having a relevant passion for something. A passionless person, i.e., a person lacking any passion for a given object or type of object, could not hope to be dispassionate in relation to it (though he could be impartial), since the connotation of the prefix 'dis-' is 'apart from' and you cannot conceivably stand apart from something which you do not have in the first place. I shall revert later to the question of the relation of such passion as I have been discussing to what one makes of it, or does with it. Meantime, however, I want to concentrate on the concept of the passion itself. For the time being, in talking about passion I shall have in mind that sense of the term according to which we can be said to have a passion *for* something. Later, I shall consider that other prominent ordinary use of the term, according to which we can be said to 'fly into a passion,' and will argue in fact that there is an element basically common to passion in both these senses.

2. Although I deny that being actually subject to overbearing feeling, such as a feeling of impatience when the goal of one's passion is denied one, is part of what is meant by the concept of having the passion, I nonetheless agree with Peters when he says that our ordinary use of 'passion' "suggests being subject to something, being mastered or overpowered." The first point which requires making here is that to be subject to something is to be prone or exposed to it, whereas one can be exposed to something without being in any way mastered or overcome by it. This distinction tends to be lost in Peters' stringing together of 'subject to,' 'mastered,' and 'overpowered' without any comment from him by way of differentiating them. It is a characteristic of the cases of passion in which I am especially in-

terested here, that the person is exposed to his passion but not necessarily mastered or overcome by it. I shall go on now to consider the question of what it is in such cases, that one is exposed to. As a means of working towards an answer I shall return again to the example I gave earlier, of the boxer.

He states that "when I found . . . that the last of the deep urge to fight was draining away . . . I retired." Before drawing the relevant inference it will be helpful to adduce a further example. The television actor, Patrick O'Connell, recently walked out of a star role in a successful currently running television serial. A friend of his was reported in the press at the time as having said of him that "Painting is his passion without which he cannot live," while in explanation of his own action O'Connell, according to the report, stated that "I have been painting as a leisure activity for a long, long time. But the urge was too strong, and it was not enough for me to do it as a hobby. I *had* to paint more." The relevant point which these examples illustrate is that there is an urge built into having a passion for something, which is crucial to it. The passion can be great or slight, but whichever it is there will be a correspondingly proportionate urge built into it, and it is, I maintain, this to which one is necessarily exposed or subject when one has a passion for something. The examples I have given are of major passions because these highlight the relevant point more clearly than do minor ones, and it is a point which is not taken adequately into account by Peters' analysis. It will be as well if at this stage I proceed directly with the development of my own thesis. I shall therefore postpone further comment on Peters' analysis until later, including substantiation of my claim that he fails to take adequate account of the urge which is built into having a passion for something.

In order to open up my discussion, I would like once again to quote the boxer. "I am not ashamed of my time in boxing" he said, "but I sometimes wish *that* passion—and I keep using the word because it's the right one—could have been channelled into something more constructive. I've always loved music and maybe that would have been a better way of expressing intensity. . . ." The relevant implications of this statement are that the passion is describable in terms of "intensity," and as something which can be "channelled" into some activity or other and in fact into alternative activities.

It might be objected to the last implication that passion in the sense in question is a passion for some particular thing, person, activity, or type of any of these, so that the passion for boxing could not

conceivably have been channelled into music whilst remaining the same passion. Given the boxer's virtual equation of 'passion' with 'urge' it might be objected similarly that an urge is an urge to do this or that particular thing, or sort of thing, e.g., box, and not something which could be channelled into any one of a variety of ends whilst retaining its identity. Since, according to the objection I am anticipating here, the connection between the passion in question and its object is presupposed in the very idea of its being the passion that it is (namely the man's passion for boxing), it might be objected, further, that the very idea of the passion being channelled into boxing is mistaken, since it would seem to imply that the passion existed at some stage independently of the activity of boxing (such that it could then be channelled into it).

Before I can state my own position in the face of such comments I need to analyze the notions of 'intensity' and 'urge' as used in the examples I have given, and I shall do that in the remaining part of this section. I need also to discuss the relation between passion in the sense in question, and desire, and this I shall do in section three.

As a means of broaching the first part of the required analysis I shall examine the relation between an urge and the owner's feeling of it. In doing this I shall introduce another term which is sometimes used synonymously with 'urgency' in the relevant sense of this term, and reference to which will be helpful when I go on to state my analysis of 'passion' directly.

The term 'urge' has what seems to be clearly a dispositional use, such that the person's feeling of it is a matter of his feeling disposed to do something. A case in point would have been where the boxer spoke of having felt an urge to knock people down. But sometimes we talk of someone being 'full of urgency' where it is not self-evident that this is a metaphorical way of referring to dispositional feelings. An example would be a recent statement in the press that the members of the Argentine football team in a match with England had been full of urgency. I shall contend that the phrase 'full of urgency' is not being used metaphorically in such cases, but is in fact to be understood literally, i.e., in terms of the person's system or nature being full of something having the quality of 'urgency.'

Instead of talking of someone being 'full of urgency' we talk sometimes in a synonymous way of their being 'full of fire,' 'fire' being intimately associated in these cases with passion. The following statement, made in the press recently, about a boxer called David Green, illustrates this usage. It was said of him, following his involvement in

a national title fight, that "his passion was too much for John Stacey . . . the fire . . . which has taken Green to an unbeaten record of 24 fights, took him into command at the start . . ." In that passion is equated in such cases with a kind of fire, and in that the term 'fire' has a general connotation of heat, it is implied rather that the agent's feeling of it is analogous to a sensation. Insofar as it is analogous to a sensation, the feeling of fire or urgency is not in itself a dispositional feeling, although it may well give rise to one, comparably to the way in which a sensation of warmth as you stand in front of, say, a coal fire, gives rise to and is therefore distinct from any disposition to move away from the heat. It may be as well to adduce here a veridical example of a person talking of their feeling of passion in terms akin to sensation, and a case in point would be the description given in a press interview by Pancho Gonzalez, an ex-Wimbledon tennis champion, of the feelings he had in his first senior tennis tournament, as he set out in pursuit of the object of his passion, which was to become the greatest tennis player in the world. "Deep inside," he said, "something seared me with white heat . . . it was like a pilot light, constantly burning." An example of a disposition arising from the fire or urgency of passion would be what we call 'burning ambition.'

What, then, if anything, could passion conceivably be, such that it has the characteristics of intensity and 'fire,' can drain away, be channelled, or take us with command of a situation, and such that we can be subject to it, full of it, and can feel it in some way akin to sensation? The answer, I think, is that it is an energy, and one whose quality can reasonably be described in terms of 'urgency,' in distinction for instance from energy having the quality of heat. As regards the very idea of calling it an energy, the following sorts of points have to be taken into consideration. We do talk of energy in terms of intensity. For example, in the case of the energy which is heat, intensity is spoken of as temperature. We also speak of energy as 'flowing,' for instance through a transformer, whereas only something which flows could conceivably be channelled. Again, we sometimes talk of energy 'draining away,' for example from an electric battery. As regards the idea that energy could take us into command of a situation, it has to be borne in mind that we do on occasions talk of 'summoning our energies,' when we are inclined to make an effort of some kind to enter into command of a situation, although the energies summoned need not be only of the kind which I am now identifying with passion. I consider therefore that such ordinary uses of language as I have just cited, when taken together with the ordinary uses of the term 'passion'

which I illustrated earlier, justify the identification of passion as a kind of energy.

By way of tying in this conclusion with what I said earlier about the epistemological character of the feeling we have of our passion, it could be put that where energy having the quality of heat is experienced as a sensation of warmth, the energy which is passion is experienced as a feeling of urgency or fire, this feeling being in itself no more a dispositional one than is a sensation of warmth. Where a dispositional feeling has what might be termed a directive character to it—in feeling disposed to do something you direct your thoughts, feelings, and ultimately movements to the given end—the feeling of fire or urgency referred to has rather a receptive than a directive character. A build up of energy in us is an occurrence, not a disposition, although having received it we can rapidly become disposed to do something with it.

I shall comment further on the concept of energy as I go along, but want now to state explicitly that I take the energy which is passion to have spatiotemporal existence, so that the concept of it is in this basic respect at least, altogether unlike Bergson's concept of 'Élan Vital.' The proposition that passion has spatiotemporal existence is clearly implied by a press statement about two football managers, that at the end of a game played by their two teams they "exchanged congratulations with the fire of the nights football still burning in their eyes." The fire referred to is the kind I have been discussing, so that the use made here of the term 'fire' refers to quanta of a certain type of energy existing in specified areas of space.

As regards my general analysis of passion as being an energy it is, I think, worth noting that we talk sometimes of passion being 'spent,' whereas we also talk on occasions of 'expending our energies,' on some undertaking. This is worth noting because the notion of expenditure being common to both passion and energy suggests at least that they are akin to one another. One context in which passion is commonly spoken of as being 'spent' is where two people with a passion for one another have engaged together in sexual intercourse. Since a lack of energy is characteristic of persons at that stage of such a relationship, what is spent here seems to be quanta of energy having the quality of urgency (operating primarily in the sexual center), so that the term 'passion' is actually used here to symbolize this.

It might be argued that what happens when a passion for something becomes spent is that the person's interest in the object, activity, or other person lapses. This would be true, but it would not be

damaging to my analysis, since the person's interest will have manifested in terms of thoughts, feelings, and movements directed towards the object, and these will have been infused with energy of the type in question, such that their interest was a passionate one. In this way the lapse of interest would be coterminous with the expenditure of energy, so that the two concepts are in no way incompatible.

In writing about what he calls 'psychic energy,' Charles Taylor identifies this with "what are usually called feelings or emotions."⁶ Gilbert Ryle, on the other hand, held that "energy is obviously not a feeling,"⁷ his reason being that while the statement "I feel a tingle" announces a feeling, the statement "I feel energetic" is not comparable to it in any relevant way. I agree with Ryle's view that energy is not a feeling, my reason being that since the energy of heat is distinct from any sensation of warmth which may result from it, it is reasonable to infer that a comparable distinction would hold in the case of other qualities of energy besides heat. Energy, then, of which passion is a type, is not a feeling. It is, rather, something which can be felt.

3. Before facing the fact that we talk of passion in the sense in question as a passion *for* this or that particular person, thing, or kind of thing, with its implication that the passion is *not* something which, as I have implied so far, can be channelled into any one of a virtually unlimited range of activities or ends, I need to look at the relation between this passion and desire.

My first comment is that it would be inconceivable to have a passion for something, and not desire to pursue the object in some way or other. If, for instance, someone has a passion for tennis, it is inconceivable that they should not desire either to play the game or to watch it or whatever, and in fact to desire this passionately. But although the concept of 'a passion for X' entails the concept of '(passionately) desiring X,' the term 'passion' does not itself symbolize the desiring. My reason for saying this can be brought out by reference to two overlapping points. Firstly, there is the widely canvassed point, to which I subscribe, that 'desire' is a dispositional term in that part of what we mean by it is a disposition to bring about whatever it is that is desired, whereas I have argued that passion at least of the type in question is not, in itself, a disposition (although it can give rise to a

⁶ Charles Taylor, *The Explanation of Behaviour*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964, p. 38.

⁷ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, Hutchinson, 1958, p. 101.

disposition). Being something that builds up in us, it manifests, rather, the character of an occurrence. Secondly, there is a point to be made through reference to Charles Taylor's remark that

'Desire contains more than the notion of disposition, it contains that of a 'spontaneous disposition', one which 'comes from us', as against one which is imposed by fate or by others, or by convention, or whatever.'⁸

I agree with this proposition, and the point which I then want to make is that the passion someone has for something, unlike his desire for that thing, does not come *from* him. It does not come from him since, as I argued earlier, the passion is something he is subject to, whereas what you are subject to comes *to* you rather than from you. Comparably, what comes from you could never conceivably come over you, whereas we can certainly be overcome or carried away by our passion for something. What being overcome would amount to here is that one's thoughts, feelings, and movements related to the object of passion would become energized by the passion to the extent that one is overcome by passionate thoughts, feelings, and impulses. This would be the case when, for instance, we become obsessed by the object of our passion, to the point where we ignore all our responsibilities in life. Whereas we can be overcome by our passion we cannot, I maintain, be overcome by desire, precisely because, as Taylor says, desire "comes from us." I think that the reference sometimes made to 'overwhelming desire' rests on a confusion between passion and desire. Some desires being passionate ones, the person's being overcome by his passion is in these cases, misrepresented as his being overcome by desire.

I conclude, then, that although the concept of 'a passion for X' entails the concept of 'desiring X,' the term 'passion' does not symbolize the desire. It is my further contention that in the context of someone having a passion for something, the object-directedness of passion is due to the intervention of desire. Desire *is* desire for this or that particular thing, i.e., 'desire' is an intentional term, whereas 'passion' is not. Our passion for something is the passion which, through desiring, we direct to, or use for, a particular end. This is to say that we do not apply the concept of 'a passion *for* X' until the desire for X has intervened. A very important subordinate distinction is therefore required here between the concept of 'passion in itself,' and the concept of 'having a passion for something.' The latter but not the former entails the concept of a desire for a particular thing, the connection between a given quantum of passion and a particular

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

object being purely contingent.

Because, by virtue of desire, we have the concept of a passion *for some particular thing* or type of thing, we talk sometimes, by extension from this, of the object itself as being our passion. We might say, for instance, that 'music is his passion.' But passion in itself, I have argued, is actually a type of energy. The extension of the word 'passion' to refer not to the passion itself but rather to its object, broadly parallels the case where someone uses the phrase 'my love' to refer to what is in fact not his love but, rather, an object of it.

Because a desire for X is not the same thing as a passion for X, Gabriele Taylor and Sybil Wolfram are mistaken when they write of the desire to stay in bed in the morning when you have work to do, as being a passion,⁹ (implying that it is a passion *for* staying in bed in the morning). Apart from the reasons I have already given for distinguishing desire from passion in this general sense, the point would arise that if desire were a species of such passion, it would make no sense to talk, as we do, of 'passionate desire,' with its implication that some desire is not passionate.

I want now to elaborate my contention that 'desiring X' is a different concept from 'having a passion for X,' by looking into the fact that while we say 'I desire,' we can only say 'I *have* a passion.' An implication of the word 'have' here is that the passion is something which we own and are therefore distinct from, while the term 'I' in this case has a purely referential function, indicating who the person is that is speaking. Desiring on the other hand is being, at least in part, as Charles Taylor puts it, 'spontaneously' disposed to try and attain the object desired such that the desiring 'comes from us.' In that it comes *from* us, desiring could be said to be a function of our power of agency, and it is my contention that the term 'I' as used in 'I desire X,' apart from being referential, actually symbolizes this power which controls and directs the relevant thoughts and feelings. Desiring, as reflected by the statement 'I desire X,' is therefore a direct function of the power which 'I' symbolizes here, whereas the passion under discussion, being something I *have*, is distinct from what I am. In another paper¹⁰ I have argued at some length that the term 'I,'

⁹ G. Taylor and S. Wolfram, 'Virtues and Passions', *Analysis*, Vol. 31, (1970-71), p. 77.

¹⁰ R. Lawrie, 'Personality,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXXIV, March 1974.

besides being referential, sometimes symbolizes a power of direction and control (whilst I gave quite a different analysis of the term 'myself'). Perhaps I could just say here that one way in which I developed my analysis of 'I' ('he,' 'she,' or 'you') in that paper was through an examination of such a statement as 'He's not all there,' applied to mentally disturbed persons. I noted that in such cases the mental processes are chaotic, lacking a controlling center, such that the term 'he' here symbolizes this center. In a similar vein I drew attention to the statement of a psychiatrist about someone suffering from schizophrenia, that "in being with her one had for long periods that uncanny 'praecox feeling' described by the German clinicians, i.e. of being in the presence of a human being and yet feeling that there was no-one there . . ." ¹¹ The feeling of there being none there derived, I suggested, from the virtual absence of a controlling center such as, I am now arguing, is symbolized by the term 'I' in the statement 'I desire X.' In my analysis this is the feature of desiring on account of which it is correct to say that desire, unlike passion in the sense in question, comes 'from you.'

The distinction I note between 'I desire X,' and 'I have a passion for X,' with the implication that the former but not the latter use of 'I' is not only referential but also symbolic of what might be termed 'will,' accords with the fact that we hold people responsible for what they desire, but not for having passion in their nature, although we do hold them responsible for what they do with this passion, i.e., passion in itself is not subject to rational appraisal. Passion is so appraised only when it is directed, through desire, to an object. As regards my analysis of desiring as being a function of will, this is rather similar to Melden's comment that desires are among "those items that come under the general heading of the term 'will' . . .," ¹² though he does not connect the notion of 'will' to the term 'I.' The sort of reason he has for making this statement is apparent from the following comment which he makes in assessing (and then rejecting) the notion of wants or desires as internal events and causes.

. . . the whole idea of . . . wanting as an internal event that plays a causal role will not square with our notion that wanting or desiring, like doing, is subject to rational appraisal . . . there is none of the logical setting for the appraisal of desire as reasonable or unreasonable, since as internal happening the desire occurs in and to one for causes of its own . . . ¹³

¹¹ R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self*, Tavistock Publications, 1960, p. 214.

¹² A. I. Melden, *Free Action*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 220.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

I agree that we regard desires as subject to rational appraisal. On the other hand, the advent of the energy which is passion (which then becomes directed, through desire, to some object or other, such that we can then be said to have a passion for that particular thing) has the character of being, not a function of will, but rather what Melden calls an 'integral happening,' and it is for this reason that we do not hold people responsible for having such passion.

Earlier, in Section 2, I noted that the term 'urge' has a dispositional connotation, in that to feel *an* urge is to feel disposed to do this or that particular thing or kind of thing. But I also noted that we speak sometimes of people being 'full of urgency,' where this is not self-evidently a metaphorical way of referring to dispositional feelings. The phrase 'full of urgency' has a literal significance, I argued, since urgency is the quality of an energy which we can be full of. I refer again to these comments only to add now that, on the other hand, *an* urge (to do this or that particular thing or type of thing) is this same energy as used in the thinking and feeling built into a desire, (where the desire is a passionate one). i.e. My point now is that the individualization of urgency is a function of desire.

It is perhaps worth remarking aside here that, as I see it, it is possible to believe passionately in (or think or feel passionately about) something without necessarily having a passion *for* this thing. An example will help bring out the point. It was said recently that "The British Prime Minister passionately believes that just to get some of the world's leaders talking to one another . . . at number 10 Downing Street is an achievement in itself," i.e., a worthwhile achievement in itself. My point is that I do not think we would talk here of the Prime Minister having a passion for getting western leaders together at 10 Downing Street, and I think the reason for this is that we only ascribe a passion for something where this thing is in itself the relevant ultimate object of preoccupation as distinct from being merely a means to this. What seems likely to be the relevant passion in the case I cite would be something like a passion for western democratic institutions, for sustaining the viability of which the meeting of western world leaders would be a means. Nonetheless the thoughts and feelings of the Prime Minister associated with his belief would, I consider, have been infused with energy of the type I have been discussing, with the result that his belief was a passionate one.

In Section 2 I analyzed the concept of passion applied when we talk of having a passion for something, and in this third section, have discussed the relation between such passion, and desire. In the follow-

ing section I want to examine the relation between passion of this kind and the actions which may ensue from it.

4. As I noted earlier, when someone is moved to act by their passion for something Peters talks of passion "in the philosophical sense," as distinct from the "ordinary" sense which he thinks implies a loss of control and hence an outcome which is more a matter of reaction than action. I then claimed that passion "in the philosophical sense" is in fact passion in one very ordinary sense. It will be helpful to begin this part of my discussion by looking at Peters' account of what it is that moves us to act in the case of the "philosophical passions." His view is that what moves us to act here is our seeing the situation in a way "which is not a matter of indifference to us." An example which he gives in this context is a passion for truth, in which case what moves us to act might be, presumably, our seeing that certain relevant facts have been overlooked, where this matters to us a good deal because we are partial to getting the facts right and abhor intellectual negligence. The point I want to make about this account is that something needs adding to it regarding what might be called the 'quality' of the seeing. In the case I cited earlier of the boxer David Green whose passion for success in his sport was said to be too much for his opponent, what, according to the journalist "took him into command" of the fight was not simply seeing his situation in terms of certain propositions, for example that he was in danger of failing to achieve his ambition where this was (of course) not a matter of indifference to him. What, allegedly, took him into command was his fire, i.e., the energy which was his passion. Plenty of boxers in such a predicament as Green's could have seen their situation in a way that was not a matter of indifference to them, such that they really did want to win, but who would have failed to do so because they lacked fire, or energy of the requisite type, i.e., because they did not actually have a passion for boxing. What I am arguing here is not incompatible with Peters' view, because the fire or urgency would enter into the person's seeing of his situation, by way of energizing his relevant thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. But actual specification of this energy is, I maintain, crucial to any description of how we are moved by our passion for something to take action in terms of it, since, as I argued earlier, the energy is fundamental to what is meant by the concept of such passion.

In saying that the fire energizes the person's thoughts and feelings I do not mean that the energy provides the directedness of these. I mean rather that *we* direct our thoughts, etc., when they are

directed at all, and use our energies, of whatever quality, to do so. It does cost us energy to do things, or at any rate that it is the implication of our talking, for example, of being too depleted or drained of energy to think out a problem, or engage our feelings in some way. Correspondingly, we speak sometimes of 'summoning our energies' when faced with some demand, and of 'directing' them towards some objective. For instance a sports commentator has written of a runner in an Olympic race that he "summoned his energies for a last effort," while an historian has put it that for some long time "the energies of European civilization were directed towards making the whole of reality visible to the human eye or the eye of reason."

By way of elaborating what I have said about the relation between passion of the kind in question and the action which ensues from this, I would like to consider a remark by Charles Taylor. In discussing the kind of explanation of behavior given by reference to desire, and in expounding the thesis that desires do not operate as efficient causes of the behavior they lead to, he writes that "to say of someone that he desires something is not to say anything about the antecedent conditions for the corresponding behavior,"¹⁴ 'antecedent conditions' signifying antecedent conditions connected only contingently with the behavior, it being part of Taylor's thesis here that desires are "non-contingently linked with doing"¹⁵ whatever is desired. But whilst I agree that desires do not operate as efficient causes of the behavior they lead to, the first proposition quoted here is, I think, mistaken, at least in the case of passionate desire, since to say of someone that he passionately desires something implies the antecedent existence of passion. It is, of course, true, as I have argued myself, that to have a passion for something entails (passionately) desiring it, so that this relation *is* a logical one. But I drew a distinction earlier between the concept of passion in itself, and the concept of passion becoming directed to a particular thing through desire such that we can then, and only then, be said to have a passion *for* that particular thing. The phrase 'passion in itself,' I said, symbolizes in any given case *quanta* of energy, and the point I want to make now is that this energy is only contingently connected with the particular object towards which it becomes directed through desire. It could conceivably have been directed to a different object. I quoted earlier the boxer's statement that he wished he had "channelled" his "intensi-

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

ty" into some activity other than boxing, it being clearly implied by such a statement that the intensity or energy was only contingently connected with his boxing. I consider this implication to have been philosophically correct, and think therefore that to say of someone that he passionately desires something *is* to say something about antecedent conditions connected only contingently with corresponding behavior.

It would seem to follow from this, insofar as the causal relation is a contingent one, that passion could operate as a cause of the behavior which stems from it. I want now to consider whether this is in fact the case.

The first point I want to make arises from the fact that where energy of whatever quality builds up in a person, it is sometimes said to be then on the point of 'bursting out.' For example, after Mr. Dennis Potter, television playwright, had recovered from a crippling illness of some years duration which had prevented him from working, his wife was reported in the press as having said of him that "suddenly all his creative energy is simply bursting to be let out," i.e., the energy which, it is implied, through not being used had built up inside him. It was said, similarly, of Mr. Joe Frazier (an ex-world heavyweight boxing champion), after a long period of his training for a world title fight, that "all the pent-up energy inside him was bursting to get out." My point then is that the pressure from such a build-up will be liable to act as an efficient cause of the person behaving in *some* way, although the *particular* form of his behavior will depend on what he desires in the situation, and consequently on his intentions. In saying that it will only be 'liable' to act as an efficient cause of behavior I have in mind that through desire and intention the person may perhaps prevent behavior taking place at all. I do not want to suggest here that every action stemming from someone's passion for something is preceded by a build-up of the extent characterizing the two cases which I cited. It is a matter of degree. I do claim that every action stemming from someone's passion for something is preceded by the existence in him of a quantum of the energy which is passion, and that if this is not used it will build up. Where there is a continuing build-up the energy will progressively acquire the role of an efficient cause of their taking place behavior of *some* kind since, on account of it, the person's feeling of the energy will progressively translate into his feeling disposed to do something i.e., *anything*, although what in particular he does, will depend, as I have said, on his desires and intentions.

I turn now to the second point I want to make about the sort of causal influence which passion could possibly be said to have on the action someone takes in order to attain the object of passion. This very posing of the question, with its use of the phrase 'in order to' incurs a notion of final causality. But more needs to be said here than just this. After remarking of the boxer David Green that it was his fire which "took him into command" of the fight, the journalist I have referred to went on to say that it was 'burning ambition' which "kept Green going" when all seemed lost, and it might seem that a complete explanation of the boxer having won after all could be given in terms of his having acted for the sake of attaining the object of his ambition. But such an account, whilst true, would be incomplete since the assertion was that the ambition in this case was a 'burning' one. The point is that what burns in such a case is the person's 'fire,' and that this operates as a kind of fuel which, in the particular case in question, enabled the boxer to move around the ring boxing his opponent as effectively as he did. I contend therefore that in every case of someone acting from a passion for something, their passion operates as a kind of fuel, such that any explanation of how they are moved to act by their passion would be incomplete without reference to this. Not to take this fundamental character of passion into account in explaining the relevant kind of actions would be comparable to trying to explain how a motor car moves, without making any reference to petrol or electricity, or whatever its fuel happens to be, although my analogy of the motor car is not meant to imply that in the case of human action the fuel is not used within an overall framework of final as distinct from mechanical causality.

In discussing the relation between wanting or desiring and doing, Melden at one stage uses the phrase 'steeds of desire.' He does not analyze out the force of the metaphor beyond implying that it is on account of these 'steeds' that desire can move a man to do something. I think myself that the metaphor is quite a good one in that quanta of the energy which is passion can carry us to a desired goal, or enable us to attain it. It was, for instance, as I have noted, passion which carried the boxer through a difficult contest; enabling him to obtain the object of his desire. This is to say, then, that the 'steeds of (passionate) desire' are in fact quanta of passion.

What I have argued in my discussion so far constitutes, I think, a limited defense of Hume's much criticized account of how passions are related to the actions which ensue from them. According to Peter's expression of him, Hume held that passions operate as "psy-

chological entities which move people to act," implying also I think 'move them in acting,' this being a view which Peters himself totally rejects in favor of the type of analysis which I explicated briefly in the opening paragraph of this section of my paper. But in that passion has a spatially extended character as instanced by the journalist's reference to the fire in the football managers' eyes, it is reasonable to conceive of it in terms of entities; and in that we do not ascribe passions to anything of a purely physical nature, it is reasonable to conceive them as psychological in character. Given these conceptions, and also that passion can be said, for example, to 'take' someone into command of a boxing context, it can reasonably be maintained that Hume was not totally misguided in seeing passions as psychological entities which move people to act. To say this, however, is not to support his identification of desire as being a passion and his then presenting desire as a kind of entity which moves people to act. As I have argued it, desire is *not* a passion, and is in fact of a very different character from it. Again, Hume's view that passions are, to use Melden's phrase, 'internal contents' of the mind i.e., mental existents only contingently connected with the actions which ensue from them, is not totally mistaken. Passion in itself, I have argued, *is* only contingently with the object to which it becomes directed by the intervention of desire. Desire itself, however, contrary to what Hume held, *is* necessarily and not contingently connected with its object, as is forcefully pointed out by Melden.

5. So far I have been concerned with that ordinary use of the term 'passion' by means of which we can be said to have passions for things. I want now to examine briefly the other most common use of the term, according to which we can sometimes be said to 'fly into a passion,' this being a matter of reacting to something with intense anger. My intention here will not be to offer anything like a thorough analysis of the concept of anger, but only to bring out the respect in which it is implicative of passion.

In the statement of his which I quoted in the first section of this paper, R. S. Peters draws attention to the etymological connection between 'passion' and the Latin word 'patior' from which it derives, the latter word having a connotation of suffering and hence passivity. He regards this connotation as philosophically appropriate on the grounds that emotion is a matter of passion to the extent that one is overcome by, and so passively related to it. What exactly one is passive to, in his view, is strong feelings of a turbulent type. On this account then, to fly into a passion would be a matter of passion since

it would involve being carried away, such that you are in a passive rather than an active frame of mind. I agree with this account so far as it goes, but I think that there is more to be said. What this amounts to I shall try to bring out in the first place by considering Peters' further discussion.

Having argued that passion in what he calls the "ordinary" sense is a matter of being passively related to strong feelings of a turbulent kind, he raises the question of why philosophers have "referred to motives for action as passions," i.e., he raises the question of what it is that is basic to "the philosophical conception of passion" which I contended in the first section of my paper is, in fact, one quite ordinary conception of it, an example given by Peters being a passion for truth. He then notes that someone acting from a passion "is not necessarily subject to strong feelings or in a turbulent state." Given this circumstance, of strong feelings of a turbulent type not being basic to the passion we can have for something, while they *are* basic to the other kind of passion, Peters has to look elsewhere for the factor which is common to passion in both the senses in question. What he thinks is common is "the non-neutral appraisal of a situation from which both derive." When we are moved to act from, say, a passion for truth, or, on the other hand, when we fly into a passion, Peters would say that in either case it will have been a consequence of our having seen a situation "in a certain light which is not a matter of indifference to us." In the case of flying into a passion the nonneutral appraisal might be, for example, of someone's remark, which we see as a personal insult; whereas in the case of someone's being moved to act from a passion for truth it might be that we see certain crucial facts to have been overlooked where this matters to us a good deal since we are partial to getting the facts right. This nonneutral type of appraisal provides, in Peters' view, "a close enough connection" between the two senses of passion "to explain the use of the term 'passion' by philosophers to refer to that which moves us to act." I disagree. Earlier, in discussing the relation between the passion we have for something and our action which may ensue from it, I rejected Peters' account of this relation as being inadequate in the sense of insufficient. What moved the boxer to act in such a way as to win the contest, I said, was not just his seeing his situation in the ring in a way that was not a matter of indifference to him. What moves him to act as he did was his 'fire.' Plenty of boxers in his sort of predicament, I pointed out, could have seen their situation in a way that was not a matter of indifference to them, such that they really did want to win,

but who would have failed to do so because they lacked the fire, or energy of the requisite type, i.e., they did not actually have a passion for boxing, and so did not passionately want to win. My point now is that in failing to show what is basic to the passion we can have for something, Peters, according to his own statement of intention, has failed to bring out what is common to it and to the passion we can fly into, and in failing to do this it is reasonable to suppose that he may also have failed to discern what is basic to the passion we can fly into. I shall now argue that he has in fact failed to do this.

We talk of habitually angry people as being 'fiery tempered,' which suggests that the passion we fly into is not basically distinct from the passion which, through desire, becomes a passion *for* something, in that we qualify both as having a character of 'fire.' But whereas in acting from a passion for something we direct our energies to the end in question and so use up the given charge of passion, in flying into a passion we react rather than act, in that the energy, which is not used up in action, builds up in us to a point at which we can no longer contain it, and we 'explode.' We talk sometimes of an angry person 'blowing a fuse.' This suggests that rather as an electric system can become overloaded (with electricity) and so blow a fuse, in some analogous way a person flying into a passion has become overloaded (with unused passion) and so explodes in anger, his passion being thereby discharged. I mean to suggest here that we *react* in anger precisely because our action taken in pursuit of an object of our passion is frustrated, or our prospective action is threatened with frustration, so that we are then lumbered with summoned but unused energy, which we are unable to contain. In saying this I do not mean to imply that whenever action taken in pursuit of an object of passion is frustrated, or prospective action threatened with this, we fly into a passion. Whilst anger entails some such frustration, no reverse entailment holds. I take a similar general view about fear, which is cited by Peters as being like anger, a matter of passion in what he calls the "ordinary" sense. To take an example, a common fear is the fear of death, and this I consider to be a reaction to an anticipated frustration of a passion for life, or rather of action stemming from such passion.

Whilst I am not attempting here anything remotely like a thorough analysis of the concepts of anger and fear, it is perhaps worth noting that my comments on them are in line with the general view of emotion taken by T. Dembo, at least to the extent that he

held, as understood by Sartre, that emotion arises "because the path to action is blocked."¹⁶

My point here against Peters is, then, that the concept of 'flying into a passion' cannot be sufficiently analyzed in terms purely of our being rendered passive by turbulent feelings, since what makes such feelings passionate is something more than their rendering us passive. What makes them passionate, I contend, is what has been called 'fire' or 'urgency,' i.e., the energy which is passion itself.

6. As I have said, passion is not ascribed to purely physical entities. We do not, for example, ascribe passion to a stone, or a machine. On this criterion, therefore, it might reasonably be regarded as psychological or psychic in character. However, I argued earlier that passion in itself is not internally connected to an object, and if intentionality is held to be a necessary condition of something's being psychological, then, on this criterion, passion would not qualify. A more thorough discussion of whether passion is physical or mental would take me beyond the confines of this paper. The little I have said here would seem, however, to support the view that the distinction between the physical and the psychological is relative rather than absolute, relative, that is, to varying criteria.

Since there seems to be at least some good reason for regarding passion as psychological, and since I have held passion in itself to be an energy, I am in the position of employing a concept of psychic energy. Insofar as such a concept has been discussed at all in the literature, it has come in for a good deal of criticism, mainly in the form of adverse comments on Freud's use of it. It may be as well therefore if, briefly, I differentiate my use from his, although in doing this I shall not be offering a systematic defense of the notion of psychic energy; not, at any rate, beyond incurring the implications about such a notion which arise from the analysis I have given of the concept of passion. Such a defense would require much more space than now remains available to me in this paper. My first point is, then, that whereas for Freud the concept of psychic energy was a theoretical construct, for me it is an observational concept. Commensurately, passion is something that we quantify, albeit only in a very crude manner, as when we say, for example, 'He's full of passion.' It is in my view a purely contingent matter that passion cannot now be more exactly quantified. Secondly, Holt, amongst others, has criticized Freud's view that psychic energy is directional, in having a cer-

¹⁶ J. P. Sartre, "Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions," Methuen, 1961, p. 44.

tain kind of end—either sexual or aggressive—built into it. Whereas “force is directional,” Holt remarks,¹⁷ “energy is not.” In arguing that passion in itself is not internally connected with an object or type of object I imply that it is not directional. Desire, on the other hand, according to my analysis, would be directional, since it is necessarily connected with an object. In my view therefore desire, but not passion in itself, could be regarded as a force.

In calling passion a psychic energy, I do not want to imply that it is necessarily the one and only energy which could reasonably be so called. There may be others. Furthermore, so far as anything I have had to say goes, it would remain a possibility that in given circumstances, passion i.e., energy having the quality of urgency, could be transformed into some other quality of energy, or, for that matter, be itself the result of some such transformation. In saying this I have in mind the fact that the different forms of physical energy, such as heat, electricity, or magnetism, are commonly held within physics to be interconvertible, and so far as anything I have had to say goes, it seems possible that passion also is convertible or can be the result of conversion. But assessment of the question of whether it is or is not would require a systematic examination of the concept of psychic energy and of the relation of psychic to physical energy, and this would require passing well beyond the range of my present undertaking.

This undertaking has been simply to analyze the concept of passion which we apply in our ordinary uses of language. The main points in my analysis of this concept are that passion is an energy; that it becomes individualized through desire such that we can then, and only then, talk of having *a* passion (for something); that through energizing our thoughts and feelings (including, ultimately, our kinaesthetic sensations) it enables us to take action appropriate to attaining the desired object; and that when such action is frustrated or threatened with frustration we may be unable to contain the passion which has been invoked, so that it runs away with us and we undergo an emotional reaction. It is part and parcel of my analysis therefore, that the passion we can have for something, and the passion we can fly into, are one and the same.

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¹⁷ Robert R. Holt, ‘Beyond Vitalism and Mechanism, Freud’s Concept of Psychic Energy,’ in *The Historical Roots of Contemporary Psychology*, edited by B. B. Wolman, Harper, New York, 1968, p. 213.