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The Game of Emotions

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The task I undertake here does not claim originality, but it represents one more effort in the reflective work, in which it is proposed not only not to question our emotional dimension but to pay more care and attention to the ways in which we deal with the construction of our identity as persons.

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THEGAMEOFEMOTIONS

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The Game of Emotions

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> *Our party is over. The actors, as I have already told you, were spirits and have dissolved into air, into light air, and, like the foundationless work of this fantasy, the towers with their clouds, the regal palaces, the solemn temples, the immense world and all those who inherit it, all will dissipate and just as my ethereal function has vanished, not even dust will remain. We are of the same substance as dreams, and our brief life culminates in a sleep.*
>
> William Shakespeare
> *(The Tempest* - Act IV, Scene 1)

I. Overture

Our lives take place in conceptual universes, universes in which we find and at the same time create what there is and what we are. Our experiences as well as our actions have a conceptual nature, which implies, among other things, that for us something of what happens as well as something of what we do makes sense. As conceptual beings, our survival in these mysterious and inexhaustible environments was possible by virtue of having developed a powerful and very complex ability that is part of our cognitive competencies, which we call *understanding*.

> The result of understanding is meaning, the meaning that we ourselves originate in the process of our life, as we try to reconcile ourselves with what we do and suffer.[1]

By speaking of the conceptual nature of experience and action we are not saying that we have resources to label what we perceive or experience, but that we can normatively link the elements of our experiences on the basis of their semantic content, that is, by virtue of the meaning we assign to them. This cognitive resource, if that is what it is called, is not the result of an individual achievement or of a biological development of our species, although these are its premises, it is above all a social product and constitutes an incredible transformation of the conditions in which we humans come to life. In this conceptual space we make reality and we become people; of course, this construction is not free of obstacles, unforeseen events, weaknesses and fears, which on many occasions frustrate our objectives, and even when the path seems to be clear, the achievement of our goals is not assured, we are always exposed to the betrayal of our false beliefs and our emotional configurations.

On the other hand, as members of a community we need to interpret, understand and anticipate the behavior of others in order to coordinate and decide our own. Not many will dare to argue that these conditions create more than uncertainty about the control we have, not only over our own destiny or about our future, but over our present, about the conditions in which we make decisions every day. Nevertheless, and this being our natural condition as rational beings by virtue of inhabiting normative environments, we need to answer (or excuse) ourselves before others for our failures and mistakes.

In fact, the excuse of emotional outburst has not ceased to be, at least since the time of Homer and in those communities that share our way of life, a frequently used resource in order to discharge responsibility for the most reprehensible acts. To illustrate what I am talking about, I take a piece of information presented by the Colombian anthropologist Myriam Jimeno Santoyo in her ethnography on the so-called crime of passion, highlighting the place given to this story in the femicide narrative,

> Crime of passion is a cultural construction that seeks to naturalize itself through a set of discursive devices that give meaning to personal and institutional actions in the face of it. These discursive devices are found in both accounts of personal experience and normative interpretation and their core is the reiteration of the opposition between emotion and reason.[2]

It is precisely on this issue that I want to deal with next, and the proposal is to insist on a concept of rationality that does not reject the emotional dimension but incorporates it and understands it so that we can no longer see, in our current self-imposed self-imposed sense, these concepts as disputed territories or giving in to the idea that the border between them coincides with

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[1] Arendt, H., (1995), p.30.

[2] Jimeno S., Myriam (2004), p.16.

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the boundaries between rational and irrational. This work does not pretend to be original in its task but it represents an effort in the reflective task of self-understanding, a task whose primary objective is educational, in the sense that it can allow us to guide our decisions and actions as a community and also as individuals.

II. A

I begin this section with a brief but necessary methodological digression. ¿ Can we investigate or say something about reason and emotions from a strictly conceptual study or should these approaches be left to empirical sciences such as brain sciences, neurosciences, biology or psychology? What can a conceptual study of this issue provide?

When dealing with concepts such as rationality, belief, desire or emotion, that is, talking about what we think and feel, we are not talking about brains, nervous systems or something in our body; nor do we talk in this way as a provisional resource since we still do not know how things really are and what really happens with the mechanisms that the evolutionary history of our species has been able to select. Psychological concepts such as belief, desire and emotion are not only part of our everyday vocabulary, but shape the authentic understanding we have of ourselves, rational beings.

Of course, there is nothing objectionable in the investigation of the processes and functioning of our nervous systems, and in particular of those that contribute to unveiling the mechanisms that regulate our behavior, however, a person is happy, surprised or enraged by virtue of the assessment he makes of what he believes has happened, is happening or will happen and not because of some blind mechanism that is triggered by receiving some kind of stimulation. A person is not a body, even if he/she has one; he/she is a socially constituted being.

Precisely, our interest is centered on concepts such as belief, desire, perception and action, concepts that define the normative space of rationality; concepts irreducible to more basic terms, as Donald Davidson puts it,

> (...) concepts such as meaning and belief are fundamentally non-reducible to physical, neurological, or even behavioral concepts. However, this irreducibility is not due to the indeterminacy of meaning or translation, (...) It is rather the methods we must invoke in constructing theories of belief and meaning that ensure the irreducibility of the essential concepts of those theories.[3]

Psychological vocabulary works because we have established criteria for its use and in these terms the view we have of ourselves is shaped, without which the formation of a linguistic community is unthinkable. In fact, Jerome Bruner states that "learning the folk psychology that characterizes our culture occurs very early; we learn as we learn to use language."[4] It is important not to lose sight of the fact that when we deal with concepts we are not dealing with lexemes or morphemes of a language, we are talking about social practices (uses and customs or habits), that is, those institutions in which we are inserted and in which we are constituted as rational beings.[5] These institutions are as much a product of our behaviors as our behaviors are a product of such institutions; we are both creators and creations. Although some of our most recognized institutions are the product of our agreements, this is not the case of the linguistic community, since to postulate an agreement or contract between parties would already imply the linguistic institution itself, as John Searle says, "if we take language for a budget, we have already taken institutions for a budget".[6]

Therefore language, and we think of social practices (not verbalized behavior) has to be alternatively thought of as a product of the convergence and institution of individual behaviors. A step many times traveled traced a footprint, a footprint that then became a path, a path that eventually became the guide for other walkers. These are some of the ways in which we create our institutions, communities in which we inhabit, develop our lives and give meaning to our existence, forging meanings as well as our own individual and collective identities. According to Christine Korsgaard's expression, "*personhood* is literally a way of life, and a person as a living being is engaged in an activity of self-constitution".[7]

Each community creates its own institutions and shares, to a large extent, spaces of meaning that we call culture and that allow us to inhabit, to a large extent, the same reality. We perceive, think, feel and act much like other members of our community. We play by the same rules and this, while conditioning us, opens up a universe of possibilities; we speak the same language but we do not have to say what others say, we play the same instrument but we are not condemned to play the same pieces. We share concepts, habits and customs, we inhabit a world, we belong to a culture and we can communicate with others without major difficulties. We share a way of seeing and telling what we see, we share beliefs and values, we share thoughts and emotions. People and the way of life of people living in the same culture have much more in common than we might imagine,

[3] Davidson, D., (1991), p.163.

[4] Bruner, J., (1991), p.49.

[5] We speak here of institutions as systems that order and organize social practices, so that when we speak in this way we are not only alluding to individuals and behaviors but to everything that constitutes our collective and individual reality.

[6] Searle, J., (2006), p.91.

[7] Korsgaard, C., (2008), p.42.

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(...) our most intimate, most elusive sensations, the limits of our perceptions, our most elementary gestures, the very shape of our body and many other features depend on a particular social and cultural environment.[8]

II. B

Being rational implies inhabiting or living in institutional environments such as the community itself, i.e., webs of practices whose nature is unquestionably social. Therefore, our life, that of rational beings, takes place in normative spheres and therefore we can understand what we do and think as well as anticipate to a large extent the behavior of others, just as we can anticipate that a motorist will cross a street with the traffic light on green and stop on a red light. Therefore, we consider rational those beings who have a particular type of behavior that conforms to the norms or social practices instituted in a community; this type of behavior, as well as all behavior subject to norms, presupposes the awareness of the norms to which to conform and therefore the awareness of one's own behavior or actions, that is, it presupposes seeing oneself as an actor or agent, as someone who acts freely, making decisions.

To exemplify this, let's consider something as simple as soccer (not the 'American' one, but the one played in the rest of the world). We are talking about a system of rules whose practice is constitutive, which means that those who practise it are the players, that is to say individuals who take a certain way of life, to speak like Wittgenstein. A soccer player usually finds himself inhabiting a normative space already designed, a scheme of rules to which he must conform if he intends to play the game. Well, once on the playing field you will have to decide what to do, how to act in that field, you will need instructions or guidelines that will allow you to achieve the ultimate goal of winning the game. Those who approach things this way may understand that they will need such things as hypothetical imperatives, statements such as 'if you intend to achieve *x* you must do *y*', which will involve analyzing, designing tactics and strategies and finally looking for reasons to justify the decisions taken in each case, decisions that will lead to a particular course of action leaving aside all others.

By the way, our player can adopt the maxim that the most effective way to win a game is to be a good player, if it is an individual game (although there is probably also a team behind the player) or in a good team if it is a collective sport (which does not exclude the need to be a good player or the coaching staff that works to build and improve the group). When we talk about being a good player, we are no longer thinking only about results, but about doing our best, about our own education. Mediocre players and mediocre teams are almost certain to be in the majority in any field of human activity. Why is that? What prevents us from devoting a little more time and commitment to the task and becoming one of the good guys?

If things were as linear as we like to imagine, all or most of us would achieve our goals in life and we would all live with a very high degree of conformity with who we are and what we have made of ourselves, but things don't work that way. Rationality is a complex matter and has its flats, to put it in musical language. Shaping one's own identity constitutes, in the words of Jerome Bruner, "probably the most remarkable work of art we produce at any time, and certainly the most complex".[9]

III

We start then from assuming a concept of rationality that is essentially normative in nature and that we become rational beings insofar as we participate in systems of norms or social practices that define a linguistic community. In this sense, we employ the not at all original strategy of focusing on the game to talk about rationality and to talk about language. The result is to think of rationality as an immersive practice rather than as a property of individuals; on the other hand, by affirming that our understanding of human actions depends on the horizon of social practices instituted at a given moment in a community, we also think of individual and collective actions constituted as texts and contexts. We cannot establish that someone is playing poker until we have elements that allow us to establish that having thrown three covered cards on the table was not something casual or arbitrary, and those elements are provided by a temporally broader look at the behavior of the subject in question. In short, the behavior of a subject begins to make sense to us to the extent that we can identify it as a chain of actions, to the extent that we can say that such behavior is consciously oriented by norms or instituted practices. Institutions are the medium in which we develop the ability to give meaning to human actions and we do so by narrating stories, we learn to narrate as we learn to speak, as if language were the tool we design to make our stories; Bruner himself goes so far as to say that "what determines the order of priority with which the child masters grammatical forms is the "impulse" to construct narratives".[10] John MacIntyre states that "we live our lives narratively and because we understand our lives in narrative terms, the narrative form is appropriate for understanding the actions of others".[11] ¿What does this mean? That in the narrative condition in which we are constituted lies the mystery and the power of our human rationality. There is no person without a story,

[8] Le Breton, D., (2009), p.18.

[9] Bruner, J., (2013), p.30.
[10] Bruner, J., (1991), p.83.
[11] MacIntyre, A., (2004), p.279.

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"the concept of person is that of a character abstracted from a story".[12]

Nevertheless, as storytellers we have a history that sustains the conditions and conventions to which we are subjected at the moment of creating, therefore we are not creators *ex nihilo*, but we are creators, even when this seems so incredible to us that our intuitive sense stubbornly affirms that the story is at most the representation of a previously constituted reality and not a matrix that imposes its form, but "our stories not only tell, but impose on what we experience a structure and an irresistible reality".[13]

We constitute our ontological furniture of actions and situations on a narrative background by means of judgments in which we describe and evaluate at the same time. We do not first describe events and then evaluate them in some way, but we describe by evaluating, and this in no way constitutes a skeptical retreat into a variant of radical relativism, but on the contrary we assume in this way all the objectivity of the case, exposing ourselves to the demand for justification, that is to say that we will sometimes find it necessary to clarify *what* and *why* we do, say or think what we do, say or think. We perceive and understand reality not in a neutral way but by evaluating events and actions, estimating according to a scheme of values imposed on us by culture and in which we also seek to make our own traces, to draw our own identity. In short, our behaviors can be explained and justified, they can be understood and questioned, they can be commended or condemned, they can be excused, etc. In any case, actions become intelligible because they find their place in a narrative sequence, as MacIntyre puts it, "a certain kind of narrative history turns out to be the basic and essential genre for characterizing human actions".[14] In this way we say that a judicial or sporting judgment is unfair, that behaviour is violent, that an intellectual is arrogant, that a leader is dishonest, that a writer is brilliant and many other things, in short, ' man, in his actions and practices and in his fictions, is essentially an animal with stories'.[15]

These descriptions/valuations of what we do and do to ourselves, what happens and happens to us account for the way in which situations affect us, but also for the way in which the culture we inhabit constitutes its inhabitants. Even our own systems are a product of culture, which of course does not mean that we learn to see, it means that we learn to look, and it does not mean that we learn to hear, it means that we learn to listen. Arguably, these are good examples of how education should not be thought of as simply adding information, but fundamentally as the design or redesign of our perceptual systems. In each of us there is a whole sample of the beliefs and values that predominate in our culture, the way we describe and value but also the way we transform the environment and the way we educate ourselves.

If there are stories there are actors, there will be protagonists and there will be role-playing; our lives take place within the stories we tell, but we are not previously constituted actors, we do not become who we are in order to tell a story of our lives; we become who we are by virtue of the stories we tell, we constitute our identity in those stories, in this sense Hyden White states that "to raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and possibly even on the nature of humanity itself".[16]

IV

As if we had not already had enough complications with the concept of rationality, we face an even greater challenge when we allow the concept of emotion to enter the scene. In relation to this concept, let us remember that one of the most famous philosophical discussions in the history of the West had to do with the way in which we could link the concepts of rationality or reason and emotion. This, like many others, was not a minor issue, since the way in which we draw the image of ourselves, our self-understanding, was being debated. Whether emotions are part of our animal nature, whether they are phenomena of the body rather than mental, whether or not they have a cognitive nature, etc., are some of the debates that have long been held. I do not want to say that the case is closed or that we have reached sound agreements, although I do not think that many of us today would question the cognitive and evaluating traits of emotions, but nor the behavioural and body manifestation of them.[17]

Today we can say that emotions are part of our identities, that of collectives and also of individuals, "we are creatures of culture and history" as Hanna Pitkin[18] states, and in this sense our own emotional schemes also bear the mark that speaks of what we are and of the world we inhabit and what we have made of ourselves. To put it in the words of Catherine Lutz,

> The concept of emotion plays a central role in the Western worldview. While words like "envy," "love," and "fear" are invoked by anyone who wants to talk about the self, the private, the intensely meaningful, or the ineffable, they are also used to talk about devalued aspects of the world: the irrational, the uncontrollable, the vulnerable, and the feminine.[19]

[12] MacIntyre, A., (2004), p.286.
[13] Bruner, J., (2013), p.125.
[14] MacIntyre, A., (2004), p.275.
[15] MacIntyre, A., (2004), p.284.
[16] White, H., (1980), p.1.
[17] Although the latter - the bodily and behavioral manifestation - has been more readily accepted, the former - the cognitive trait - has been and continues to be a strong point of contention, even more so since the entry on the scene of neurosciences.
[18] Pitkin, H., (1984), p.xviii.
[19] Lutz, C., (1998), p.3-4.

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The entry onto the scene of the concept of emotion leads us to reflect on the ways in which we have designed our self-image as rational, an image whose paradigms are still found today in scientific and calculating activity rather than in artistic or physical activity. Our emotional dimension, as Lutz puts it, has wanted to be swept under the rug of accuracy, control and algorithm; the so-called 'artificial intelligences' are a good example of what we still think about ourselves today.

Emotions are recognized in others by both verbal and non-verbal behavior, (gesticulations, etc.), which offers us not only a clue to recognize emotions in others but to distinguish what is canonical from what is unusual, what is ordinary from what is extraordinary. Even though it is a matter of degree, emotionally affected behaviors give us an account of events relevant to people's purposes or objectives, of what others believe and value as important or relevant to their lives.

We are aware that our life is traversed by emotions of all kinds and this is not a product of our choice but neither is it a feature on which we intend here to introduce any distrust, on the contrary we intend to consider our emotional dimension as a defining expression of our rationality, so that human rationality, if there were any other, would be incomprehensible without emotional expressions. What interests us or moves us, what we love or hate, what bothers us, what motivates us and what outrages and violates us is also what constitutes us and defines who we are. Our emotional schemas are basically made up of beliefs and values. Emotional manifestations as supposedly spontaneous responses to present, past or future events, or to put it more rigorously, as responses to beliefs about what is happening, occur even when these beliefs prove to be false. However, admitting that these are 'spontaneous' and out-of-control responses, this does not mean that they are unrelated to what we think, feel and value; in fact, what we respond to, in one way or another, is what we consider to affect our interests, our expectations, our well-being and that of the people we care about.

Our personal identity is largely shaped by our emotional expressions of which social practices are the true context of meaning, that is, that which allows us to understand a person's actions or reactions, a basic condition for being part of a community, as Judy Dunn states,

> To become a person, a member of that complex world, children must develop powers to recognize and share emotional states, to interpret and anticipate the reactions of others, to understand the relationships between others, to understand the sanctions, prohibitions and accepted practices of their world.[20]

[20] Dunn, J., (1988), p.5

Consider the case of a person who reacts violently by insulting another person whom he has just collided with in his hurried walk. Perhaps the person has just been fired from his job or has just been swindled in a real estate company, or perhaps he has just found out that his partner has left him and has taken his children and also his dog, etc. Let us suppose that these situations have disturbed him excessively and the subject throws fire out of his mouth. Seeing his overreaction in the street, we can presume that the subject has not had a good day and that he will hit the first person who crosses his path, perhaps even in a collision that he himself provoked. We see the reaction, we see his face, we hear his insults, and we can almost say we see his desire to hit someone. Do we understand what it does? Perfectly, in fact we can describe this behavior without any inconvenience whatsoever. This behavior speaks of our subject, of who he is, of how he has forged his character or his identity as a violent subject, of little patience, of excessive reactions. These emotional manifestations are what tell us about people, otherwise the subject walks down the street and crosses the traffic lights on green, goes to get his car to go home, maybe he makes sure he has his keys in his bag, maybe he lights a cigarette, but this tells us nothing about him as these are habitual or ordinary behaviors, we do not get much more from this than what we would get if we were told that he is a rational being. This habitual behavior is part of the horizon on which the extraordinary rises, that which deserves to be narrated, as Bruner says "social interaction creates a sense of the canonical and the habitual that constitutes the backdrop against which to interpret and narrate the unusual".[21]

We need to speak of the unusual, of what is different, of the unexpected, we need the story to account for life forms and idiosyncratic manifestations and emotionality is, to a large extent something that clearly contributes to that story. In the same vein Donald Davidson has stated,

> The task of giving meaning to the emissions and behaviour of others, even to their most aberrant behaviour, requires us to find a great deal of reason and truth in them. To see an excess of unreason in others is simply to undermine our ability to understand why they are so unreasonable. If the vast dose of agreement on current issues that is assumed in communication escapes attention, this is because the truths shared are too many and too insipid to be worthy of mention. We want to talk about what is new, surprising, or in dispute.[22]

Emotional responses are not the kind of thing that can be controlled, nor is it clear what a rational control would be in this context; perhaps it would be more appropriate to speak of certain ways of disguising them. However, just as an actor can play an angry,

[21] Bruner, J., (1991), p.75.
[22] Davidson, D., (1990), p.162.

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happy, surprised, fearful, etc. person, so too it is possible to some extent to disguise anger, joy or whatever one feels, but emotions are like itching or pain, they are had or felt and once they have manifested themselves there is not much we can do to control them. However, we do not say little if we say that our emotional schemas, as well as our perceptual systems, are not innate, but a product of culture, of the wefts of meanings we inhabit. Of course, this does not mean that we learn to rage or rejoice, but we learn about the circumstances in which it is worthwhile to rage or rejoice, which is forged in the history of our interactions and which lends an idiosyncratic trait to our emotionality. For what really constitutes a product of our education, of the way in which we shape our identity, is not the way in which we react to what happens, but the scheme of values that will shape our emotions, our behavioral responses.

V

None of the above is intended to suggest that reconfiguring or deconstructing our most irrational edges is a simple task, nor is it a matter of controlling or canceling all emotional manifestations as if that would make us more rational. We can be or act in an 'irrational' way, for if anything enables the possibility of such behavior it is precisely belonging to the space of rationality. To quote Davidson again,

> (...) the methodological presumption of rationality does not make it impossible to attribute irrational thoughts and actions to an agent, but instead imposes a burden on such attributions.[23]

Indeed, irrationality does not make our actions incomprehensible, but it requires us, in order to preserve their meaning, to look for contexts that make it possible to adjust the idiosyncratic, contexts in which excuses, the narrative device designed for the discharge of responsibility, work very well. To speak of irrational behavior or conduct does not necessarily imply speaking of abnormal or sick beings; rather, irrationality is the expression of the behavior of perfectly rational beings, as Hanna Arendt rightly expresses when reflecting on the Adolf Eichmann case,

> The most serious thing, in the case of Eichmann, was precisely that there were many men like him, and that these men were not perverted or sadistic, but were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the point of view of our legal institutions and our moral standards, this normality turned out to be much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, in that it meant that this new type of criminal – as the accused and their defenders put it to their hearts in Nuremberg – who actually deserves to be described as *hostile to humani generis*, commits his crimes in circumstances that almost prevent him from knowing or intuitioning acts of evil.

How is it possible that some subjects, such as Eichmann, do not consider the brutality of their actions? Should we consider Eichmann to be mentally ill? As Arendt points out, the case of Eichmann is that of a subject whose moral constitution, a product of the absence of reflective engagement, is extremely poor. There are no convictions for their own behaviour simply because they are not perceived as reprehensible; the way in which they were set up did not allow him to see and feel what many of us feel and feel. Yet Eichmann was rational, like all of us, even if it is hard to say. The irrationality we attribute to their actions does not have to do with the difficulty of understanding them, in fact, they are perfectly understandable, and it is precisely that which makes their judgment and subsequent condemnation possible. The irrationality of their acts has to do with the absolute impossibility of justifying them.

The irrationality that we can attribute to the behavior of an individual does not consist in the total ignorance of the basic rules that make up the linguistic community, otherwise we could hardly understand it. The irrationality of a behavior is undoubtedly closely linked to the beliefs and evaluations made by a perfectly rational person, in which case the only question to ask is why he/she does it. The irrationality or cruelty that we can attribute to a behavior is a product of its constitution, of the construction of one's own identity. We consider the act performed by an individual to be irrational or reprehensible when responsibility for such action is out of the question. In that case, we must consider their moral constitution. Perhaps we could say that some of his beliefs are false, that some of his values are inadequate for community life, all of which will be expressed in the account of his life, but we could not say that his life does not fit a narrative plot.

II. Finale

An individual is rational or irrational as long as he acts. The mere fact of being situated, whether on the playing field, on the board or in the city does not in itself tell us what to do; if we know the rules we know what we can and cannot do, what is allowed and what is forbidden, but no rule yet tells us what to do. To act we need to take decisions, to choose one course of action for others. We need to act because this is the way to self-constitute ourselves, as Korsgaard says[24], to shape our identity.

Rationality requires action, but it is undeniable that not any course of action is the same, everything will depend on the objectives, both those proposed in the short, medium and long term. What, then, will these objectives be? If the ultimate goal is at stake, it is to win, but with the desire it does not achieve, but it must set itself objectives as well as tactics and strategies for

[23] Davidson, D., (1990), p.168.

[24] Korsgaard, C., (2008), p.25.

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achieving the ultimate goal, or at least create conditions for achieving it. That is to say, it will be necessary to have certain devices that justify the choice of some courses of action over others, and these devices are the reasons, that is, judgments or evaluative beliefs, which in no way means renouncing the possibility of justification. As I pointed out earlier, in making this kind of judgments we are not describing facts and then valuing them; we perceive and judge things in this way without pretending to consider that there are two basic components in this kind of judgments, a descriptive one linked to facts and a normative or discriminative one linked to values. Consistent with this, we do not make judgments about facts in order to then appraise them and respond emotionally; our evaluative judgments are basic judgments that exhibit the shape of our experience. Our response to what is relevant to us is always emotional.

Now, what will be our ultimate goal when we talk about the game of rationality, that is, our own life as members of a community? Of course, we are not asking ourselves about the end of our life, but about what we should do or at least how we should live in order to make it worthwhile. Far from wanting to enter now into ethical discussions, it could be said that the objective will be to achieve a good life or a high quality of life, which will perhaps include something like ensuring affective environments, taking care of physical and mental health, valuing commitment to the community and to oneself, privileging education and free expression, developing a reflective attitude, etc. The reflective attitude will be necessary since we will need almost permanently to evaluate courses of action, therefore we will look for reasons that tell us what to believe and what to do. In MacIntyre's words,

> (...) each human life will embody a story whose form and shape will depend on what is considered harm and danger, success and failure, progress and its opposite, in short, on how it is understood and valued. To answer these questions is also to answer, explicitly or implicitly, the question of what virtues and vices are.[25]

No one who intends to achieve a goal will act randomly; decision making is not only about getting moving, but also about carrying out an evaluative process by which we take control over our beliefs and actions.

We make decisions about what to believe and what to do in an environment in which we constitute ourselves and in which we acquire the capacity for normative self-government, as Korsgaard says,[26] and by making decisions we are constituting our identity, we are educating ourselves, deciding who we are or who we want to be. That is why we are responsible for what we feel, it is the result of what we have done and done for ourselves, which does not mean that we cannot regard ourselves here as a mitigating factor of all kinds, but we are still ourselves.

Our own identity is revealed, not so much in the games we play as in the way we play them, in our evaluations, in our emotional configuration, in the characteristic ways of intervening in the community. We express ourselves in the activities we perform; our thinking is expressed in the practices we carry out on a daily basis; we attribute to others and self-attribute to ourselves mental states that give meaning to our behaviors in the context of those practices; we perceive ourselves in this as persons. We express ourselves emotionally, therefore, as the philosopher Remo Bodei states,

> (...) nothing prevents us from thinking of the "passions" (emotions, feelings, desires) as states that are not added from the outside to a zero degree of indifferent consciousness to cloud and confuse it, but are constitutive of the tonality of any physical mode of being and even of any cognitive orientation.[27]

Being rational does not mean, as we have long thought, riding ourselves of all emotions when it comes to taking action or taking decisions, nor does it mean stripping ourselves of any assessment in order to put ourselves in a position of aseptic neutrality, for without evaluation all possible courses of action and all events would be indistinct and irrelevant to us. Our emotional schemas play a primary role as Catherine Lutz states, "[emotion] retains its value as a way of orienting us toward things that matter rather than things that simply make sense."[28] And something shows us how meaningful we are as we act, that is the game of rationality. Without evaluation there is no action, and without action nothing can be considered rational or irrational.

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