Acting out one’s emotions – extract for proofs

Another argument for an action-oriented account of emotions lies in their availability to normative assessments, since it is precisely *qua* (/as/insofar as they are...) performances that emotions are accountable to the relevant standards that society places on their management. When emotions are evaluated as appropriate or inappropriate, it is far from being simply a matter of whether the judgment sustaining them is correct, as appraisal theories would have it. I can acknowledge that an offense has been committed or even agree with the reasons behind someone’s anger, and still deem that her anger – precisely as it is expressed in her loud shouting and insulting gestures – is an inappropriate conduct given the situation and the relational links between its participants. Once expressed in our overt conducts and acknowledged by relevant others, our emotions become our commitments and only then are they morally significant and rationally assessable for their appropriateness. As I have made clear above, my claim is not to assimilate emotions to actions *stricto sensu*:to be sure, most of them are not performed with an explicit aim or purpose in our minds, so that is it difficult to evaluate them as successful or unsuccessful.[[1]](#footnote-1) Rather, they are conducts because they are to be acted out more or less correctly. In acting out what I feel, I am supposed to meet multiple expectations regarding emotional expressions, which have been dubbed "display rules".

1. In this, I part my ways with Solomon’s identification of emotions with actions. Solomon has not only proposed an over-intellectualized account of emotions (emotions are actions, because they are judgements), but also he endorses “a mind first account of action” that I propose to reject. For him, there is first a moment of judging, reasoning and deciding distinct and preceding the moment of “doing”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)