Emotion-For and Goal Simulation

Some emotions can be experienced on another's behalf. We can feel fear for a child playing near traffic, or we can feel embarrassment for a man who is giving a speech while he has spaghetti sauce on his shirt. Other emotions do not easily admit of 'emotion for' constructions. Can I love my daughter for another person, or feel guilt for a criminal, or feel envy on behalf of my friend who was passed up for a job? What distinguishes emotions that afford 'emotion for' constructions from those that do not? In the first part of the talk, I present three readings of 'emotion for' locutions. They can be used to express reasons for holding the emotion, or to express the content of the emotion, or to express the recipient of a vicarious emotion. The latter reading will be the one I focus on. In the second part of the talk, I distinguish vicarious emotions from empathetic emotions, and I offer a model of vicarious emotions using the resources of appraisal theory and simulation theory. Vicarious emotions are emotions generated by the simulation of goals within primary appraisal checks. Finally, in the third part of the talk, I discuss applications to which this model can be put, and I argue that the intentional structure of vicarious emotions helps explain why only some emotions can be vicariously experienced for another.