

AGAINST EMOTIONAL DOGMATISM

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It may seem that when you have an emotional response to a perceived object or event that makes it seem to you that the perceived source of the emotion possesses some evaluative property, then you thereby have *prima facie*, immediate justification for believing that the object or event possesses the evaluative property. Call this view ‘dogmatism about emotional justification’. We defend a view of the structure of emotional awareness according to which the objects of emotional awareness are derived from other experiences such as bodily sensation, inner awareness, sensory perception, memory, and imagination. On this basis, we argue that dogmatism about emotional justification is an untenable position, regardless of whether the special feature of an immediate justifier that makes it an immediate justifier is its presentational phenomenology or its evidence insensitivity.

1. Introduction

Dogmatism about perceptual justification is the thesis that if it perceptually seems to you that *p*, then you thereby have *prima facie*, immediate justification for believing that *p*. Let us postpone the question of whether the view is acceptable as stated and focus on one of its implications:

Sometimes its perceptually seeming to you that *p* *prima facie*, immediately justifies you in believing that *p*.

The ‘*prima facie*’ signifies that the justification is defeasible. And the ‘immediate’ signifies that the justification does not *depend on* your having justification for believing propositions other than *p*.

A number of recent theorists about emotions (e.g., de Sousa, 1987; Johnston, 2001; Döring 2003; Döring, 2007; Goldie, 2007; Roberts, 2003;

Prinz 2004a; Prinz, 2004b; Deonna, 2006; Elgin, 2008; Brogaard, 2015) accept the following:

When you have an emotional response to a perceived object or event, then it thereby seems to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property.

The ‘thereby’ signifies that the emotion, which is triggered by a perceived object or event, bears an evaluative content. The term ‘evaluative property’ is meant to include features that locate something along the good/bad or right/wrong spectrum—e.g., helpful, harmful, kind, cruel, etc.—relative to the agent’s well-being or the well-being of individuals the agent cares about.

It is tempting to work this thought into a dogmatist view of emotional justification that parallels the dogmatist view of perceptual justification. This would result in the thesis that if your emotional response to a perceived object or event makes it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property, then you thereby have *prima facie*, immediate justification for believing that that object or event possesses that evaluative property (cf. Johnston, 2001; Döring, 2003; Döring, 2007; Goldie, 2007; Roberts, 2003; Prinz, 2004a; Prinz, 2004b; Deonna 2006; Elgin, 2008). As with dogmatism about perceptual justification, dogmatism about emotional justification implies a related, weaker claim:

Sometimes your emotional response to a perceived object or event making it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property *prima facie*, immediately justifies you in believing that that object or event possesses the evaluative property.

The aim of this paper is to assess dogmatism about emotional justification. We will develop two arguments against the weaker claim that it implies. If it is false, then dogmatism about emotional justification is false. We will call the first argument the argument from presentational phenomenology, and we will call the second argument the argument from evidence insensitivity. Both depend on claims about the structure of emotional awareness. So here is how we will proceed.

The first two sections develop an account of emotional awareness. In section 1, we discuss what we mean by objects of awareness. In section 2, we provide an overview of the structure of emotions, and show that with some exceptions they represent independently given objects or events as making an independently given valenced difference in one’s body or mind. The upshot is that if there are objects of emotional awareness, they are inherited from other mental states—e.g., perceptions, memories, bodily sensations, or states of inner awareness. The next two sections explore the epistemological consequences of this view of emotion. In section 3, we present the argument from presentational phenomenology, showing that emotional dogmatism is

implausible and unlike perceptual dogmatism has no epistemologically significant, defensible restrictions. In section 4, we present the argument from evidence insensitivity, showing that while one's representing an object as influencing one in a valenced way often is evidence insensitive, this evidence insensitivity turns out to be the wrong kind of insensitivity, depending strongly on the irrationality of the agent. In those case, the object does not merit one's valenced response to it, and so does not immediately justify believing it to possess the attributed evaluative properties.

2. Objects of Awareness

You are in the Costa Rican forest and spot a leaf-litter toad as it jumps out of a nearby pile of forest debris. Contrast the following two claims about your visual experience:

- (1) It makes it visually seem to you that the toad is greenish brown.
- (2) It makes you visually aware of the toad.

The first claim characterizes how things visually seem to you because of your experience. It is about representational content. The second claim characterizes what things you are aware of because of your experience. It is about objects of awareness. It is important to keep the notions of representational content and object of awareness distinct. The aim of this section is to say more about the second.

Awareness is a two-place determinable relation between a subject and an object. It is determinable because there are different ways a subject can be aware of an object. Seeing, hearing, and feeling are examples. When you see the toad you are visually aware of it. When you hear the toad croak you are aurally aware of it. And when you feel it land on your lap you have haptic awareness of it. What makes all of these instances of awareness? We have no intention to try to define awareness in more basic terms. But there are two related characteristics that we take all forms of awareness to share.

First, seeing, hearing, and feeling the toad all enable you to entertain simple demonstrative thoughts about it. Suppose it is the moment before the toad reveals itself and you think:

- (A) The largest living creature in that nearby pile of forest debris is greenish brown.

Then the toad—which happens to be the largest living creature in that nearby pile of forest debris—makes its jump, and you think:

- (B) That is greenish brown.

Thoughts (A) and (B) attribute the same property to the same toad, but they are different in nature. (A) attributes being greenish brown to the toad because it attributes greenish brown to whatever is the largest living creature in that nearby pile of forest debris, and the toad happens to be the largest living creature in that nearby pile of forest debris. It picks the toad out by description. (B) attributes being greenish brown to the toad because it attributes being greenish brown to the object you refer to using ‘that’, and the toad is the object you refer to using ‘that’. It picks out the toad demonstratively. You could not have entertained thought (B) had you not been aware of the toad. Your visual—or aural or haptic—awareness of the toad enabled you to entertain a demonstrative thought about it. This is a special property of all forms of awareness: being aware of something enables demonstrative thoughts about that thing (cf. Snowdon, 1990; Siegel, 2006; Tye, 2009).

Second, seeing, hearing, and feeling the toad all phenomenally differentiate the toad from other things in your environment. Let us focus on visual awareness. Leaf-litter toads are adept at camouflage. Suppose it is the moment before the toad reveals itself and you are looking right at the pile of forest debris from which the toad will eventually make its jump. You do not know it is there because you cannot see it. You cannot see it because it is camouflaged. The toad’s coloring—that greenish brown that will eventually impress itself on you—makes it blend into the pile of nearby forest debris—the leaf litter from which the toad gets its common name. The toad is playing a role along with the debris in causing you to have a visual experience with a certain phenomenology. But that is not enough for your visual experience to make you aware of the toad. In addition your visual phenomenology must be so structured that the toad is differentiated from its environment, so that it is no longer camouflaged. Similar points hold for aural and haptic awareness. Though we do not use the term ‘camouflage’ in these cases, potential objects of aural and haptic awareness can also blend into a background and so fail to be actual objects of aural and haptic awareness. You do not hear the individual components of white noise. You do not feel the individual droplets of surrounding water. So there is this general characteristic of awareness: it is a condition on being aware of something that it phenomenally stand out from other things in your environment (cf. Dretske, 1969; Siegel, 2006).

These two characteristics—enabling demonstrative thought and phenomenally differentiating—are related. If seeing the leaf-litter toad didn’t phenomenally differentiate the toad from its environment, then seeing the leaf-litter toad wouldn’t enable demonstrative thoughts about it. A similar point holds for hearing or feeling the leaf-litter toad. In general, states of awareness enable demonstrative thoughts about objects of awareness at least in part because they phenomenally differentiate those objects from their environments.

3. The Structure of Emotional Awareness

Current theories of emotions, for the most part, take the historical James-Lange theory as their starting point (e.g., Rorty, 1980; Prinz, 2004a; Brogaard, 2015). Emotions, on the James-Lange theory, are experiences (or ‘feelings’) of changes in the body state, primarily changes in facial expression and bodily physiology. For example, the facial aspect of anger may manifest itself in a lowering of the eyebrows, the eyes opening widely, the upper eyelids becoming raised in a stare and the lips turning tightly closed and thinner. Anger, on this theory, is an experience of changes of this kind. As James famously put it:

My theory . . . is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion. Common-sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequence is incorrect, that the one mental state is not immediately induced by the other, that the bodily manifestations must first be interposed between, and that the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and not that we cry, strike, or tremble, because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be. Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in form, pale, colorless, destitute of emotional warmth. We might then see the bear, and judge it best to run, receive the insult and deem it right to strike, but we should not actually feel afraid or angry (James, 1884: 450).

While the James-Lange theory was a vast improvement on existing theories of emotions, it has its shortcomings. We shall focus here on the two main ones. The first is its excessive focus on experiences of changes in the body state. As is well known, emotions need not give rise to experienced changes in the body state (Nussbaum, 2004). While fear and anger can often be measured in the form of changes in the galvanic skin response, heart beat and alterations in facial expression, these changes often are not experienced. In those cases, emotions tend to be manifested metacognitively. For instance, upon watching an anger-provoking image, there may be measurable changes to subjects’ galvanic skin responses but the subjective reports will focus on observations on changes in the subjects’ mental states. Subjects may describe their ‘feelings’ as a sudden sense of unfairness or injustice (Thomasson, 2008).

Relatedly, many complex emotions have components that are purely cognitive in nature. According to the Kübler-Ross model of grief, also known as ‘The Five Stages of Grief’, first introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book, *On Death and Dying*, grief involves five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, sadness and acceptance. Current theories of grief sometimes add further basic emotions, such as disgust, but it remains undisputed that

complex emotions like grief involve purely cognitive changes, denial being a prime example. Denial typically isn't manifested metacognitively but simply involves a straightforward cognitive refutation of the facts, a refusal of accepting them as true.

The second serious problem with the James-Lange theory, as originally formulated, is that it fails to distinguish between 'free-floating' moods and emotions proper. Upon hearing that the department only marginally approved you for tenure, you may fear that the faculty senate or the provost will reject your tenure case. As a result, you may experience tightness in chest or throat, breathlessness, a dry mouth, oversensitivity to noise, muscle weakness, fatigue or crying spells. But these same changes in the body state could occur out of nowhere, as it were. They could be the result of a panic attack, generalized anxiety or just occurring once without there being any apparent external cause.

Despite the same experienced changes in the body state, these two types of affective states are remarkably different. In the first case, the bodily experiences are directed at something external to you: the likelihood that you will not get tenure. In the second case, the directedness is absent. We call the first type of affective state an 'emotion' and the second a 'mood'. But the James-Lange theory, with its focus on experiences of changes in the body state, would need to take them to be the very same type of affective state. They would both be emotions.

Most current theories of emotions that take the James-Lange theory as a starting point supplement the theory with a form of directedness or intentionality (see e.g. Prinz, 2004a; Prinz, 2004b). They recognize that emotions, unlike moods, represent an external object or event. This external object or event is also sometimes referred to as the 'formal object' of the emotion (de Sousa, 2014). The formal object of an emotion is sometimes (but not always) a value object in the sense that it is implicitly evaluated relative to the agent's overall well being (D'Arms and Jacobson, 1993; Mulligan, 1998). Relative to the agent's well-being, the object is rendered, say, threatening, angering, surprising or joyous. The very same object may be valued as, say threatening by one agent but not by another. A bag of peanuts on a United flight to Newark may be taken to be threatening by May who has a deadly peanut allergy but not by Zoe, who has no such allergy.

The formal object of emotions need not be a mind-independent external object or event. Upon remembering what John said to you yesterday, you may come to consider his remark an insult, and this may lead to a bodily or mental response. You may also experience the same emotion recurrently as a result of successive reminders of what happened in the past. Even more interesting: sheer imagination can trigger a bodily or mental response and hence emotional responses can be responses to figments of the imaginations. Emotions of the latter sort are the sorts of affective states we have in response to fiction. When engaging in fiction, we respond with emotions. We feel pity

for Anna Karenina and fervently desire for her suffering to end. We are genuinely distressed by her tragic suicide and wish she could have found a less disastrous way to dissolve her inner emotional conflicts.

As noted above, the formal object of emotions is often an object of appraisal in the sense that the bodily sensation or mental movement (which itself has a valence relating to the agent's well-being) is attributed to the formal object. Affective reactions in response to imagination and fiction are not objects of appraisal in the same sense. In a famous scene in the movie *Hannibal* from 2001 Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) removes the top of the still-conscious-but-dazed Krendler's skull, cuts out a piece of his brain, sautées it in a pan by the table and feeds it to Krendler while he is fully conscious. We know the scene is completely fictive, but it nonetheless is capable of inducing a strong feeling of revulsion in us, or maybe an uncanny, vicarious thrill.

The emotion-provoking pictures and the revulsion to which they give rise have no bearing on your wellbeing or the wellbeing of others. You are well aware that no one is harmed when you watch Lecter feed Krendler's own brain nicely sautéed in butter to him. You know that Krendler does not exist and hence does not suffer. You do not really desire for his suffering to end. So if genuine emotions always implicitly attribute values to real objects, then your emotional responses to fiction are not genuine. This is what Noël Carroll has called the 'paradox of fiction' (1990).

The best way to get around the paradox is to reject the idea that emotions must always implicitly attribute a value to what is considered a real external object, and that this value must have some bearing on your well-being. In this regard emotions are analogous to belief. We don't think that beliefs must always be true for them to obtain. You can believe that Haitians suffer, respond with emotions to their suffering and desperately wish to go on some mankind-saving mission, even if it does not have any bearing on your well-being. It's your realization that they suffer that triggers your emotional responses, not their suffering in relation to your well-being. Similarly, the suffering portrayed in fiction can give rise to feelings of compassionate love, anger and sadness, even if the feelings fail to attribute any well-being related value to what is taken to be a real object. The case of fiction shows that emotions do not require beliefs or appearances as of something being the case for them to obtain. Merely imagining your young beautiful child lying dead in a white casket can produce a grief response, merely imagining your partner having sex with another person can produce jealousy, and visualizing children with progeria can trigger strong sympathy and an urge to cure their disease, because imagination and visual imagery can lead to emotions. Visualizing frightening or sad events can activate the sympathetic nervous system in much the same way as external stimuli. Reading a story, seeing a movie or visualizing an event can produce the same changes in the nervous system as real-world stimuli, making us unstrung, panic-stricken and restless.

What we referred to as the ‘formal object of emotions’—be it a mind-independent object or event, a memory or an imagination—does not exhaust the content of the emotion. Many theories of emotion take the content of emotions to be composed of the formal object in conjunction with the experienced changes to the mind or body. We can call theories of this kind ‘conjunctive theories’.

In some instances, conjunctive theories of emotions run into a problem we might call ‘the combination problem’ (Brogaard, 2015). Consider the following case. Alfred is working for the police catching stray dogs. He is currently in front of a stray dog. The dog is a wild beast. It could kill him any second. As Alfred is used to being around mad, stray dogs, he does not normally have any fear response to them. But today his body is in a state of intense fear. He perceives the state of his body as being a response to a deadly poisonous brown snake next to the stray dog. In the envisaged scenario, Alfred is afraid of the snake, not the dog. Yet the conjunctive approach predicts otherwise: Alfred perceives changes in his body state, *and* he judges that both the dog and the snake are dangerous. So the conjunctive approach predicts that Alfred’s fear is fear of the dog *and* fear of the snake. But intuitively, Alfred is not afraid of the dog.

The easy fix, of course, is to treat the content of emotions, not as the experienced changes in the mind or body conjoined with the formal object (the thing that is rendered dangerous or threatening or surprising) but rather as a negative or positive bodily or mental response to the formal object—a response that implicitly attributes a value to the formal object (Brogaard, 2015). On this view, an emotion (unlike a mood) is an experience of the body or mind responding to, and thereby attributing value to, an external object or event, for instance, an attribution of an experience of a tightening of the throat to the departmental vote on your tenure. Accordingly, the formal object just is the perceived source of the emotional response.

If cashed out in this way, emotions can fail to be veridical, or accurate, in several different ways. To mention just a few: You may mistakenly attribute the tightening of your throat to a slightly insulting remark when in fact you just had an allergic reaction. Or you may attribute your angry bodily sensations to the fact that your partner overcooked the potatoes when the sensations are in fact a misplaced reaction to a bad day at work.

At this point we have only considered theories that take their starting point in the James-Lange theory of emotion. A word about two alternative theories is here in order. Some theorists have held that emotions simply are cognitive appraisals of external objects or events (see e.g. Nussbaum, 2004). Others have held that emotions are perceptual appraisals of external objects or events (Johnston, 2001). Both of these views, we think, fail to capture a crucial aspect of emotions, which is the attribution of the bodily sensations or mental movements to the external object or event.

Assuming the perceived-response theory defended here, we are now faced with the question of whether emotions provide us with an object of awareness over and above its source. We will argue that they don't. As argued above, an experience makes you aware of an object just in case it enables demonstrative thoughts about that thing by phenomenally differentiating it somehow. Emotions often are responses to experiences of mind-independent external objects or events. In those cases the experiences of the external objects or events make you aware of the object or event. The emotion presupposed awareness of this object and does not itself add any new objects of awareness. This is not to say that emotion adds nothing further than the experience, for there is its content. You may experience a child who has gone down the wrong path set a cat on fire and respond with thoughts of immorality and pity and body reactions of disgust and revulsion but those evaluative and causal attributions do not add any new objects of awareness; rather they attribute properties and relations to whatever you are already aware of via perception, bodily sensation, and inner awareness.

Emotions often are not simply responses to experiences of mind-independent objects or events. As noted above, memories, imagination and visual images can trigger equally forceful bodily or mental reactions as experiences of actual state of affairs. In those cases, the immediate source of the emotion is the memory, imagination or visual imagery. But the object of awareness derives from a prior experience. A particularly illuminating example comes from G. E. M. Anscombe:

A child saw a bit of red stuff on a turn in a stairway and asked what it was. He thought his nurse told him it was a bit of Satan and felt dreadful fear of it. (No doubt she said it was a bit of satin.) What he was frightened of was the bit of stuff; the cause of his fright was his nurse's remark. (Anscombe, 1957/2000: 16)

In Anscombe's example, the child's fearful reaction is triggered by his imagination that the bit of satin is a bit of Satan. But the emotion does not provide an additional awareness of Satan. The only awareness it provides derives from the child's prior experience of the satin in the stairway.

It may perhaps be thought that emotions provide us with additional objects of awareness insofar as they sometimes provide us with insight into our bodily phenomenology or the internal workings of our minds. And emotions no doubt can sometimes teach us new things about ourselves: you may learn that you have a deeply jealous nature upon being exposed to your partner's infidelity or you may discover for the first time that you fear snakes when the animal trainer asks you to hold their pet snake at Everglades snake farm. But insights about our bodies or the internal workings of our minds are not accompanied by new objects of awareness. They are already capable of being entertained in demonstrative thoughts about them. The emotion does not enable them to play this role. Rather, the emotion implicitly attributes

the bad or good bodily sensation or mental movement to an external object or event.

4. The Argument from Presentational Phenomenology

If you believe that a siren is wailing because you can hear it, then it is difficult to see how you could be under any further epistemic obligation. The belief represents the world as being a certain way and the state of affairs in virtue of which the world is that way is right there before you impressing itself on your senses. Say you are hallucinating so that you only seem to hear a siren wailing but do not really do so. Still, if there is nothing to alert you that anything is amiss, then you are perfectly reasonable in believing that a siren is wailing. These thoughts lend credibility to dogmatism about perceptual justification.

But they also suggest that unrestricted dogmatism is too strong. Consider the following cases:

- Your visual experience as of a cat behind a picket fence represents it as having parts occluded by the pickets, but it does not make you seem to see the parts that make this so (they are occluded).
- An antique dealer's visual experience as of a desk represents it as being made in 18th century France, but it does not make her seem to see the event that makes this so (it is too spatiotemporally distant).
- A parking attendant's visual experience as of a car parked next to a fire hydrant represents it as being illegally parked, but it does not make him seem to see the state of affairs that makes this so (it partly consists of laws).

Unlike your auditory experience as of a siren wailing, these three experience represent the world as being a certain way without, and without making it seem as if, the state of affairs in virtue of which the world is that way is right there before you impressing itself on your senses.

We use the term 'presentational phenomenology' to mark the contrast just highlighted. My auditory experience as of a siren wailing has presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that the siren is wailing. The three visual experiences described above lack presentational phenomenology with respect to the propositions about occluded parts, 18th century vintage, and illegality. In general an experience has presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that p just in case it both makes it seem as if p and makes it seem as if it makes you aware of a portion of the world making it true that—i.e. a truthmaker for— p (Chudnoff, 2011; Chudnoff 2012; Chudnoff, 2013).

The phenomenological difference between my auditory experience and the three visual experiences marks an epistemic difference. I need only trust

my hearing to tell that a siren is wailing. My auditory experience immediately justifies me in believing that a siren is wailing. Now consider the three visual experiences. You know that the cat has occluded parts. You also know that the cat has seen parts. Plausibly your knowledge that the cat has seen parts just depends on seeing them, whereas your knowledge that the cat has occluded parts depends on your knowing something about cats. Your visual experience only mediately justifies the second belief. The antique dealer knows that the table is from the 18th century. The antique dealer also knows that the table has a certain shape, size, color, and ornamentation. Plausibly her knowledge that the table has a certain shape, size, color, and ornamentation just depends on her seeing them, whereas her knowledge that the table is from the 18th century depends on her knowing about antiques. Her visual experience only mediately justifies the second belief. The parking attendant knows that the car is illegally parked. The parking attendant also knows that the car is parked next to a fire hydrant. Plausibly his knowledge that the car is parked next to a fire hydrant just depends on his seeing it there, whereas his knowledge that the car is illegally parked depends on his knowing the parking laws. His visual experience only mediately justifies the second belief.

The foregoing motivates the following constraint on dogmatism about perceptual justification:

- (1) Its perceptually seeming to you that p *prima facie*, immediately justifies you in believing that p only if *your perceptual experience has presentational phenomenology with respect to p* (Chudnoff, 2013; Chudnoff 2014).

It would be odd if emotional justification were held to lower standards than perceptual justification. So we should endorse an analogous constraint on dogmatism about emotional justification:

- (2) Your emotional response to a perceived object or event making it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property *prima facie*, immediately justifies you in believing that that object or event possesses that evaluative property only if *your emotional response has presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition attributing that evaluative property to that object or event*.

The account of emotions and emotional awareness developed in the previous sections, however, supports concluding the following:

- (3) Emotional responses to a perceived object or event lack presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition attributing that evaluative property to that object or event.

The reasoning in favor of (3) requires some spelling out.

According to the view of emotions that we endorse, emotions are intentional states that relate experienced changes in bodily and mental states

to experienced objects and events. So if an emotional response makes you aware of anything it inherits its objects of awareness from other experiences, specifically the experiences of changes in bodily and mental states and the experiences of objects and events. The emotional response adds intentional content. But it does not introduce any new objects of awareness. Nor does it seem to do so. It is not as if when one has an emotional response one begins to hallucinate new merely seeming objects of awareness. So whether premise (3) is true turns on whether one's experiences of changes in bodily and mental states or one's experiences of objects and events make one, or at least seem to make one, aware of the sorts of things that might be truth-makers for attributions of evaluative properties.

Let's consider an example. Suppose you fear a seen snake. You experience the bodily and mental turmoil associated with fear. You experience the snake. And you represent the snake as responsible for the bodily and mental turmoil. So far it seems you are just aware of truthmakers for propositions such as that there is a snake with a certain look moving a certain way, that you feel such and such unpleasant sensations and have such and such alarming thoughts. Are you also aware of an evaluative property of the snake, say fearsomeness or threateningness? Perhaps you attribute this property as part of the intentional content of your emotional response. But it is implausible that it is an object of awareness. The reason is that the property consists in the snake meriting and not just causing a certain range of bodily and mental changes in you. Whether the snake does merit those changes is not something that lies on the surface to be taken in by experience. It depends on whether the snake really is a threat. And that depends on what the snake can and cannot do. These are states of affairs that require further probing than the senses are equipped to accomplish. Similar reasoning applies to other evaluative properties.

So reflection on the structure of emotional awareness—its essential dependence on awareness of other forms—and on the limitations on the available other forms of awareness provides some reason for endorsing premise (3). From (1) through (3) we can conclude:

(4) It is not the case that sometimes your emotional response to a perceived object or event making it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property *prima facie*, immediately justifies you in believing that that object or event possesses the evaluative property.

This conclusion is incompatible with the considered version of dogmatism about emotional justification. This gives us reason to think that dogmatism about emotional justification is mistaken.

Further, unlike dogmatists about perceptual justification dogmatists about emotional justification do not have recourse to a restriction. The restricted claim would be:

If your emotional response to a perceived object or event makes it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property and *your emotional response has presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition attributing that evaluative property to that object or event*, then you thereby have *prima facie*, immediate justification for believing that that object or even possesses the evaluative property.

Perhaps some such claim is true. But the restriction is never met, so it is epistemologically idle.

5. The Argument from Evidence Insensitivity

It's incumbent upon the phenomenal dogmatist to explain what it is about experience (or seemings) that makes it the kind of entity that can confer immediate justification upon belief (or other similar mental states). As we saw in the previous section, one suggestion for what grants at least some forms of experience this special role is the experience's presentational phenomenology. In the case of emotions, the presentational phenomenology of the emotion turns out to derive from the experienced, memorized or imagined object or event and hence emotions to not provide us with further objects of awareness beyond those already given by the original experience, memory or imagination.

A second suggestion for what grants some experiences the special role of conferring immediate justification upon belief is that they (at least in some cases) are insensitive to evidence (Brogaard, 2013; Brogaard, in press). This is particularly apparent in the case of low-level experience. The perceptual principles organizing the visual system can explain the permanence of certain optical illusions. The Müller-Lyer illusion is the quintessential example often cited in support of evidence insensitivity (or cognitive impenetrability) since it is taken to signify that how things appear is unaffected by cognitive states (Brogaard & Gatzia, in press) (Fig. 1). The direction of the arrowheads at the end of lines that are equal in length affect one's perceptual experience: the line appears shorter when the arrowheads are turned inward, but longer when they are turned outward. The illusion persists even when we come to believe that the lines have the same length. We only see the lines as having the same length when we add vertical lines that allow us to compare their lengths.



Figure 1. **The Müller-Lyer Illusion.** Even when you learn that the line segments on the left have the same length, they continue to appear as if they have different length.

Another example of evidence insensitivity is the Kanizsa amodal completion case, provided by Zenon Pylyshyn in his (1999):

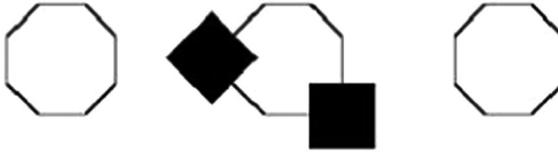


Figure 2. **Kanizsa amodal completion.** Despite the flanking cases of octagons, the occluded figure is not seen as a regular octagon. From Pylyshyn (1999).

Statistic evidence strongly indicates that the occluded figure is indeed a regular octagon. But regardless of how many flanking octagons we add to the image, the occluded figure is not seen as a regular octagon. It remains insensitive to evidence.

Such cases suggest that a mark of low-level experience is its insensitivity to evidence, which in turn gives us some reason to think that it is just this feature that confers the special role on the experience as an immediate justifier. That would imply the following:

- (1) Its perceptually seeming to you that p prima facie, immediately justifies you in believing that p only if *your perceptual experience represents p in an appropriately evidence insensitive way.*

As noted above, it would be odd to hold emotional justification to lower standards than apply to perceptual justification. Hence:

- (2) Your emotional response to a perceived object or event making it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property prima facie, immediately justifies you in believing that that object or event possesses that evaluative property only if *your emotional response represents that that object or event possesses that evaluative property in an appropriately evidence insensitive way*

We can compare experiences meeting this insensitivity constraint to mental states that do not. Consider a case where you hear on the radio that a hurricane is headed toward South Beach. It comes to seem to you that you ought to evacuate. A few hours later, however, the hurricane has taken a different route and is definitely not going to hit South Beach. At this point, it will no longer seem to you that you ought to evacuate, at least not if we assume a certain level of rationality. The fact that your seeming is so volatile suggests that its not a candidate to confer immediate justification upon belief. Experiences that bear the special mark of being immediate justifiers differs from these more volatile states by being evidence resistant, making them a

better candidate for playing the role of immediate justifiers in virtue of their lack of volatility.

This raises the question of whether those emotions that attribute a value to an external object or event can confer immediate justification on beliefs about the value of the external object or event in terms of their evidence insensitivity.

At first glance, this may seem to be the case. Our good friend Ethan has an intense fear of flying. Yet he is a smart guy. He knows perfectly well that flying is safer than riding a tractor. But his heart performs quadruple salchows long before the flight attendant has poured a few drops of Sprite over the mountain of ice in his plastic cup. His fear is so disorienting that he feels like vomiting. The negative value his emotion attributes to flying is clearly insensitive to evidence, making it seem a bit like the sorts of low-level experience we considered above (Goldie, 2003).

There is, however, an important difference between emotions and low-level experiences. Low-level experiences are not the sorts of things that can be assessed for rationality. Emotions differ in this respect. They are assessable for rationality. Ronald de Sousa (2004) has argued that emotions are irrational (or what he calls ‘unsuccessful’) when the emotional response does not fit the perceived object. Fear of flying is an example of this. Flying, despite being safer than eating lunch in the campus cafeteria, may elicit fear responses. Because flying isn’t dangerous—or at least is safer than other modes of transportation—the responses do not fit the object.

But lack of rationality can also reside in a misperception of the properties that sustain the emotion (Brogaard, 2015). If a child misperceives a dangerous spider as Satan and responds with trembling, the trembling fits the dangerous object, but the fear is based on a misperception of the object as Satan and hence is irrational. So, the emotion is irrational despite perhaps being perfectly reasonable from the child’s own point of view. The same goes for emotional responses to a ghost or an invisible friend or the demons in your head.

While all qualities of the object or event are important for determining whether your emotional state matches it, not all qualities of the object or event are relevant to whether your emotional state misrepresents. If you are red/green colorblind, you cannot distinguish red and green. Red and green things look ‘grayish’ to you. So, you may misperceive a colorful spider, but the color of the spider is not normally what triggers your fear of it, so this misperception would not normally be relevant to whether your emotion is rational.

This difference in evaluability for rationality between low-level experience and emotions play an important role in whether the evidence insensitivity matters to the justificatory role of emotions. Ethan’s fear of flying is insensitive to evidence but his emotion is clearly irrational. The evidence insensitivity is due to his irrationality, not to the intrinsic features of the

emotion itself. We can likewise imagine a case where someone living on South Beach making arrangements for evacuating long after being told that the hurricane isn't going to hit South Beach but has taken a different direction. To this person, it continues to seem like he ought to evacuate, owing to his irrationality. His irrationality does not confer any special justificatory role upon his seeming. The same goes for people who are subject to irrational emotions. It's their irrationality that makes the emotion volatile, not any intrinsic feature of the emotion.

In more idealized circumstances people are capable of amending their emotional reactions upon learning about evidence that counters the value they implicitly attribute to the external object or event (or type of event). But this indicates that the emotional attribution of values to external entities isn't evidence insensitive in the right way. Because they lack this sort of evidence insensitivity, the value attributions cannot confer immediate justification on beliefs about the value of things.

The foregoing gives us reason to assert:

(3) Emotional responses do not represent objects and events as having evaluative properties in an appropriately evidence insensitive way.

From (1) through (3) we can conclude:

(4) It is not the case that sometimes your emotional response to a perceived object or event making it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property *prima facie*, immediately justifies you in believing that that object or event possesses the evaluative property.

6. Conclusion

In *Emotional Insight: The Epistemic Role of Emotional Experience*, Michael Brady makes the following acute observation:

...we often feel the need to discover reasons or evidence in support of our emotional experience in normal circumstances, and hence in the absence of defeaters. Consider one's experience of fear, upon hearing a noise downstairs as one is trying to get to sleep. Let us stipulate that circumstances are normal: our hearing is good, we have not been taking hallucinogenic drugs, etc. In this situation, we are typically motivated to seek out and discover additional reasons or evidence. In particular, we are motivated to seek out and discover considerations that have a bearing on whether our initial emotional 'take' on the situation, namely that we are in danger, is accurate. We strain our ears to hear other anomalous noises, or rack our brains trying to think of possible

non-threatening causes for the noise. We do not, in other words, think that the demand for justification is silenced, or take the representational content of our emotional experience as true by default. It would be a strange and paranoid person indeed who took each and every such feeling of fear as a sufficient reason to believe that he was in danger (Brady, 2013: 86–87).

Brady's observation about fear applies to other emotions such as guilt and anger (cf. Greenspan, 1988; Greenspan, 2000). When you feel guilty, it is more rational to think about why rather than immediately condemn yourself. When you feel anger it is more rational to consider whether it is warranted rather than immediately retaliate. Further reflection is rational not just because you have extra reasons to step back from your initial emotional responses. Its rationality is default.

Dogmatists about emotional justification endorse a view that makes it difficult to see why further reflection is default rational. According to it the following holds:

If your emotional response to a perceived object or event makes it seem to you that that object or event possesses some evaluative property, then you thereby have *prima facie*, immediate justification for believing that that object or event possesses that evaluative property

If this were true, then fear, guilt, and anger, absent defeating evidence, would immediately justify beliefs rationalizing avoidance, self-condemnation, and retaliation. The rational default would be to take these emotions at face value and act accordingly. But this just doesn't fit how we ordinarily think about and treat our emotions. Contrast how we treat our perceptual experiences. There some form of dogmatism does fit our ordinary thought and action. For if you can just see or hear something to be the case—see it or hear it in the way you can see a light right before you or hear a siren right next to you—then it would be unduly, irrationally cautious to suspend judgment prior to gathering supporting evidence.

In this paper we have tried to give a theoretical grounding for our ordinary practice of differentially treating emotional responses and perceptual experiences. One theoretical grounding rests on phenomenological considerations. The perceptual experiences we take to immediately justify believing their contents have presentational phenomenology with respect to those contents. Emotional responses do not meet this standard; hence the argument from presentational phenomenology. Another theoretical grounding rests on considerations about evidence sensitivity and rational evaluability. The perceptual experiences we take to immediately justify believing their contents represent those contents in a way that is evidence insensitive without being open to rational criticism. Emotional responses do not meet this standard. Hence the argument from evidence sensitivity.

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