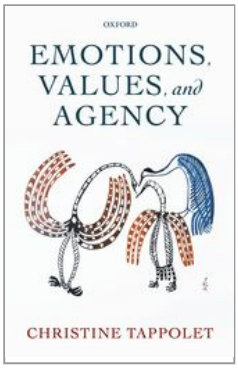

Emotions, Values, and Agency
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Emotion and Perception

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Abstract and Keywords

The first chapter develops the Perceptual Theory of emotions by contrasting it with its main competitors, such as Judgmental Theories, according to which emotions are or involve evaluative or normative judgments. One central feature of the proposed theory is that it claims that emotions represent the world as being a certain way, but that their contents are non-conceptual. The chapter presents the arguments in favor of the Perceptual Theory. In particular, it spells out the many analogies between emotions and sensory perceptual experiences, such as phenomenal qualities or absence of direct control by the agent. The chapter ends with a discussion of the main objections to the Perceptual Theory, such as the objection that by contrast with sensory perceptions, emotions can be irrational.

Keywords: Perceptual Theory, emotions, perception, recalcitrance, irrationality

The aim of this chapter is to present and defend a thoroughly worked out account of emotions, which importantly differs from current accounts in the literature. The first section surveys the somewhat messy territory of emotions and more generally of affective states. Doing so will allow me to introduce common distinctions within emotion theory. The second section presents the main theories of emotions on offer, namely Feeling Theories, Conative Theories, and Cognitive Theories, such as the Judgmental and Quasi-Judgmental Theories, and argues that they all have important weaknesses. Section 1.3 offers arguments in favor of what I take to be a superior account, one which underlines the analogies between emotions and sensory experiences and which I call the "Perceptual Theory." The following three sections of this chapter then turn to

objections which can be leveled against the Perceptual Theory. Section 1.4 discusses the disanalogies between emotions and sensory experiences, and proposes to adopt a liberal account of what counts as a perception. Section 1.5 turns to an objection based on the observation that emotions can be assessed in terms of rationality, and responds to it by appealing to the plasticity of our emotional systems. The final section aims at rebutting two related objections, one according to which the Perceptual Theory cannot make room for the fact that emotions allow for reasons, and another according to which the content of emotions is more dependent on that of other states than the Perceptual Theory can allow.

1.1 Sketching the Landscape

Understanding what emotions are is not an easy task. There is nothing unusual in the fact that there has been, is, and in all likelihood will continue to be, a vast number of competing philosophical theories of **(p.2)** emotions. That is just how things usually are in philosophy, and there is no reason to think that the study of emotions should be an exception.

However, one thing that is special about emotions as compared to free will or reference, say, is that they are not the private hunting preserve of philosophers. In addition to philosophical accounts, theories about the nature and function of emotions have been proposed by experimental scientists, such as psychologists and neuroscientists. Some of the questions philosophers ask about emotions might well be specifically philosophical—the question of how emotions can help make sense of people's action is one example.[1] But a number of these questions are common to philosophers and experimental scientists. The question of what emotions are is one of these shared questions.

This point raises several methodological questions. Are the philosopher's usual tools, that is, conceptual analysis, thought experiments, introspection, and, I should add, observation, the best way to approach emotions, or should emotion theorists all switch to experimental methods? It is not my intention to open this can of worms. Let me simply note that it would be wrong to think there is a deep divide between philosophical and experimental methods. In general, philosophers working on emotions are not oblivious to experimental results, and they often use such results in their arguments. In fact, there are reasons to think that the methods of the natural sciences are simply more systematic ways to conduct everyday observation (Haack 2003: 94). In any case, scientists cannot help using ordinary words and concepts, and they are of course not devoid of imaginative, introspective, and observational skills. So, what scientists do when they put forward theories about the nature of emotion is not different, in essence, from what philosophers do. The proof is in the pudding, so what I propose is to see where empirically informed philosophical methods will lead us.

(p.3) The main reason for the lack of agreement in emotion theory is that emotions form a particularly intricate territory. A first source of complication is that emotional, and more generally affective, phenomena are varied. Episodes of emotions, such as someone's fright when suddenly confronted with a huge dog, are commonly distinguished from dispositions to undergo emotional experiences, such as the fear of dogs a child might have.[2] In contrast with the latter, the former has the form of an episode, which is typically experienced consciously over a certain time, and which has an end and a beginning.

Emotional dispositions further divide into different kinds. Arachnophobia is an example of an emotional disposition, but so is irascibility and hostility. A disposition like spider phobia concerns a specific type of object and can last for years. By contrast, dispositions like irascibility or hostility need not be focused on a particular type of object. Moreover, though such dispositions can be short-lived—your irascibility can disappear as soon as you have had your breakfast, for instance—they are often more deeply ingrained. There seems to be a continuum here between passing emotional dispositions and more permanent dispositions, which are more closely related to the character of persons than passing emotional dispositions.

Following the lead of most philosophers and psychologists, I shall mainly focus on episodes of emotions, which for the sake of simplicity I will simply call "emotions." In contrast with many, however, I will not assume that such episodes are always short-lived. Emotions sometimes last for days, months, and maybe even years. Think of a child who lives in constant fear of bomb shells. It could be claimed that the child undergoes a series of consecutive fear experiences, but this description fails to account for the fact that the tenseness and readiness characteristic of the fear persists over time and even during sleep.[3]

(p.4) A further point to note here is that we use a number of terms and locutions to refer to affective phenomena: "moods," "sentiments," "passions," "feelings," "commotion," etc. So, the question arises whether these terms refer to different kinds of affective phenomena. One distinction which is commonly made is that between emotions and moods.[4] Being gloomy, depressed, grumpy, but also joyful or elated, count as moods.[5] Whereas emotions are taken to involve intentional objects, in the sense that they are directed at something, moods are often supposed to have no intentional objects.[6] You are afraid of a dog or proud of your new bicycle, but when you are gloomy or joyful, there appears to be nothing particular that your mood is directed at. According to others, however, moods do have intentional objects, but these objects are less specific than those of emotions.[7] In contrast with an episode of fear that is directed at a particular dog, the mood of anxiety would be directed at the whole world and the general threat that it is seen to pose. Alternatively, moods can be thought to concern evaluative possibilities and their likelihood. When you are in an irritable mood, for instance, it would seem to you that it is likely that people will behave

offensively.[8] This is a plausible view, but I shall not argue for it. The strategy I shall adopt in this book is to focus on paradigmatic cases of emotions, such as fear and disgust, leaving it an open question whether what is true of these cases also applies to moods.

Some distinguish emotions and moods from yet another class of affective phenomena, which they call “sentiments.” In ordinary language, this term is not very well-defined. We often speak of sentiments of love and of horror, but also of religious sentiments, of patriotic, and of racist sentiments. We also use the term to refer to mere opinions, as when we say that we share a sentiment about a certain question. When psychologists and philosophers use the term, what they usually have in mind are complex dispositions to react affectively to certain objects or kinds of objects.[9] Moral sentiments are thus often taken to be dispositions to undergo a range of emotions, such as guilt if one has committed **(p.5)** something deemed morally dubious, and indignation if the deed is someone else’s. These are interesting phenomena, but again my strategy here is to mainly focus on emotions.

This brings me to a second source of complication. Emotions are usually taken to be of different kinds. If we take ordinary language as our guide, there appears to be a huge variety of different kinds of emotions. In English, we can, it would seem, distinguish between fear, fright, scare, dread, horror, panic, terror, anger, irritation, annoyance, indignation, outrage, fury, rage, loathing, envy, jealousy, disgust, repugnance, abhorrence, repulsion, surprise, aversion, attraction, shame, pride, contempt, admiration, disdain, respect, sadness, unhappiness, grief, sorrow, resignation, regret, remorse, guilt, embarrassment, resentment, gratitude, contentment, happiness, joy, delight, rapture, relief, excitement, serenity, respect, love, pity, compassion, wonder, awe, hope, boredom, interest, and amusement, among others. This list is already long, but it becomes even longer if we take into account distinctions from other cultures, such as the Japanese *amae*, a pleasurable feeling of dependency (Doi 1973; Morsbach and Tyler 1986), the Chinese *pa-leng*, a fear of cold,[10] or *song*, a feeling of admonition with moralistic overtones but no disposition to revenge, to name just a few examples (Lutz 1988; Wierzbicka 1999). Whether such a list resists scrutiny or whether, as seems plausible, a tidier and significantly shorter list should replace it, it is important to keep in mind that what appears to be true of one kind of emotion is not necessarily true of others. Consider the relation between emotion and attention, for instance. It is plausible that when one experiences fear, attention is focused on what one is afraid of. But emotions such as joy or boredom appear to have a very different influence on attention. When you are bored at a concert, your attention drifts away from the music as you start thinking about some philosophical puzzle, say. As experimental work suggests, joy and more generally positive affective states come with a widening of attentional focus.[11] Another striking example of the differences between kinds of emotions is that a number of emotions have a fiery, passionate **(p.6)** quality.

Think of a burst of anger or the pangs of guilt. But you can also be surreptitiously amused by a private joke or feel quiet contentment while sharing a meal with a friend. Hence, it would be wrong to consider the fiery cases to be paradigmatic of all emotions. As Hume would have expressed it, one should not forget the calm passions.[12]

As many have stressed, kinds of emotions appear also to differ with respect to their relation to thoughts. To be proud of having climbed a mountain, for instance, you need to be able to form the thought that you climbed that mountain. But it does not seem necessary to entertain any thoughts to be afraid of a loud noise; it is sufficient to hear it. More generally, psychologists and philosophers have distinguished between “basic” emotions and “higher cognitive” emotions.[13] There are different ways to spell out this distinction, and each comes with different lists of basic emotions.[14] The core idea that is conveyed by the notion of basic emotions is that one has to distinguish buildings blocks, such as the elementary molecules found in chemistry, to account for more complex phenomena. In the recent literature, a common suggestion is that basic emotions are innate and pan-culturally shared, whereas higher cognitive emotions, such as indignation or envy, are culturally variable because they depend on the availability of culturally embedded concepts and thoughts.

Given this great diversity, the question arises whether all the things that are commonly considered to be emotions really form a useful and unified category. Indeed, Amélie Rorty (1978), and later Paul Griffiths (1997), have argued that they do not. What they claim, more precisely, is that emotions do not constitute a natural kind. Often captured by the phrase “nature must be carved at its joints,” natural kind discourse supposes that nature is divided into real, naturally occurring entities that scientific concepts and classifications purport to match. Natural kinds are supposed to have unifying features that are independent of **(p.7)** categories imposed on them by observers. In this way, they contrast with arbitrary collections of objects (e.g., the contents of dustbins) or groupings that depend on human choice or interest (e.g., a collection of jewels). More generally, natural kind terms such as “gold,” “water,” and “tiger” denote types of naturally occurring stuffs and things, but they are also essential to theories in so far as the function of natural kind terms is to allow for inductive inferences and generalizations.

Now, it might well be the case that whether or not emotions form a natural kind is in the last instance up to the scientists to settle. In light of this, it is surely revealing that as of now, the suggestion to abandon the category of emotions appears to have fallen on deaf ears. More importantly, however, there are reasons to believe that the concept of emotion corresponds to a useful and sufficiently unified category, whether or not it corresponds to a natural kind.[15] In particular, it is far from evident that basic emotions are essentially different from higher cognitive emotions. First, emotions that are considered to be basic

emotions can involve higher cognitive states, such as when you fear that it might rain tomorrow. Second, even if we suppose that some emotions depend on higher cognitive capacities, such emotions might well share enough features with basic emotions to justify the claim that emotions form a unified category. It is thus reasonable to assume as least provisionally that the general category of emotions is one that makes sense. Moreover, in view of the wide variety of putative emotion kinds, the strategy I adopt is to mainly focus on paradigmatic cases of emotion kinds, such as fear, disgust, and admiration.

A third source of complication is that emotions appear to be complex. Consider a typical episode of fear. You are strolling down a lonely mountain lane when suddenly a huge dog leaps towards you. Intense fear overcomes you. A number of different interconnected elements are involved here. First, there is the visual and auditory perception of the animal and its movements. In addition, it is likely that, however implicitly and inarticulately, you appraise the situation as acutely threatening. Then, there are a number of physiological changes, involving different systems controlled by the autonomic nervous system. Your heart is pounding, your breathing becomes strained, and you start trembling. These changes **(p.8)** are accompanied by an expression of fear on your face: your mouth opens and your eyes widen as you stare at the dog. You also undergo a kind of experience, such as the feeling of a pang. Moreover, a number of thoughts are likely to cross your mind. You might think that you'll never escape and that the dog is about to tear you to pieces. In addition, your attention focuses on the animal and its movements, as well as, possibly, on ways of escaping or of defending yourself. Accordingly, your fear is likely to come with a motivation, such as an urge to run away or to strike back.

Whatever the details of the story, it is clear that a typical episode of fear involves a number of different components. These components are a) a sensory experience or more generally an informational component, b) a kind of appraisal, c) physiological changes, d) facial expressions, e) characteristic feelings, f) cognitive and attentional processes, and g) an action-tendency or some other kind of motivational component. One central question in the theory of emotion is which, if any, of these components constitute(s) the emotion. For instance, is the fear you undergo a feeling, a thought, or an action-tendency? Alternatively, does it involve several or maybe all of the components on the list? What can we subtract without losing the emotion of fear? In other words, the question is what components are essential to fear.

More generally, emotion theorists have tried to determine what, if any, are the essential components of emotions, regardless of the kind of emotion under consideration.[16] Very different answers are proposed in the literature. In the next section, I will briefly sketch the main theoretical options.[17]

1.2 Theories of Emotion

Theories of emotion often proceed by assimilating emotions to different, and supposedly better understood, kinds of mental states.[18] When doing **(p.9)** so, the theories generally focus on one or the other components involved in a typical emotion episode.[19] According to one view, emotions are kinds of feelings (James 1884; Lange 1885; Whiting 2006). William James thus claimed that fear is the feeling that corresponds to certain physiological changes, such as the racing of the heart, which are caused by the perception of something dangerous. Another view is that emotions are conative states, such as desires or action-tendencies (Frijda 1986; Scarantino 2015).[20] Conative states can have propositional content —one can desire that it rain—and satisfaction conditions—the desire that it rain is satisfied when it rains—but it is usually assumed that conative states lack correctness conditions. In terms of the direction of fit, conative states have a world to mind direction of fit, in the sense that the world has to change in order to fit what is desired.[21] Cognitive states have the opposite direction of fit: it is the mind that has to try to match the world. In contrast with Conative Theories, Cognitive Theories claim that emotions are partly or wholly constituted by cognitive states. This is often taken to mean that emotions are kinds of judgments (Solomon 1976; Nussbaum 2001), or thoughts (Greenspan 1988), or else, construals (Roberts 1988, 2003; Armon-Jones 1991). However, Cognitive Theories can also be spelled out in terms of representational content that is not conceptually articulated.[22] This is the kind of cognitive account proposed by those who adopt the Perceptual Theory, according to which emotions are a kind of perception.[23]

(p.10) Before I spell out the argument for the Perceptual Theory, it will be useful to examine the limitations of the other theoretical options. Let me start with Feeling Theories. As we saw in the fear example, emotions typically involve feelings. Thus, an account that focuses on the experiential aspect of emotions has initial plausibility. But Feeling Theories also raise difficult questions.

First, the nature of the feelings at stake is hard to pin down. Are they *sui generis* feelings (Stocker 1983) or are they bodily feelings (James 1884; Lange 1885)? Another difficult question is whether emotions necessarily involve feelings. According to some, such as Martha Nussbaum (2001: 62), one of the main problems with Feeling Theories is that some emotions lack feelings. This is a moot point, however. Given that paradigmatic cases of emotions come with feelings, one might well claim that alleged cases of emotions involving no feeling, such as an angel’s purely intellectual admiration, say, should not count as genuine emotions. Moreover, most cases of emotions that are claimed to be unconscious and would thus lack feelings appear to be cases in which the feelings are involved but not attended to, or not conceptualized as corresponding to an emotion. Thus you can be angry at your partner without realizing that you are, only becoming aware of your feelings when a friend enlightens you.[24] In light of this, it might well make sense to consider only states

that involve feelings to be genuine emotions. A further criticism of Feeling Theories is that such theories are not in a position to account for the demarcation between different kinds of emotions that are ordinarily distinguished.[25] Thus, it is far from clear that indignation and discontent can be differentiated only on the basis of the feelings they involve.[26] In a similar way, it appears difficult to distinguish regret and shame only on the basis of felt bodily changes. Again, this criticism is not decisive. There might be more to the phenomenology and especially to the physiology of emotions than these cursory observations suggest.

A first decisive objection to the Feeling Theories is that such theories cannot make room for the fact that emotions are assessable in terms of **(p.11)** how they fit the world. My fear can be appropriate or not, depending on whether what I am afraid of is fearsome, that is, depending on whether it calls for fear.[27] But feelings, such as an itch or a headache, are not things that can be assessed in terms of how they fit the world. That emotions can be thus assessed is intimately related to the fact that emotions have intentional objects. So, it is no surprise that a second decisive objection to Feeling Theories is that this theory fails to make room for the intentionality of emotions.[28] When you experience fear when confronted with a dog, your emotion is about the dog. By contrast, your itch or your headache is not about anything. One might reply that this objection falsely assumes that such states lack representational content, whereas in fact, itches and headaches have correctness conditions: they represent bodily states (Tye 1995; Matthen 2005). But this will not do either, for it seems unlikely that emotions represent bodily states. Typically, the assessment of emotions depends on external states of affairs.

Let me now turn to Conative Theories. It is widely believed that emotions are tied to motivation. As made clear in the fear example I gave, an emotion like fear typically comes with an action-tendency, such as the tendency to run away or to strike back. But, here again, a number of difficult questions arise. What exactly is the nature of the motivational component? Is it a behavioral disposition? Is it a desire? And is such a motivational component necessarily present? I will return to these questions in Chapter 2, but what can already be noted is that it is far from obvious that emotions necessarily come with motivation. Consider admiration, for instance. If you admire an alpine landscape, say, you might be tempted to look at it or go for a hike, but surely no motivation at all needs to be involved. As I will argue, even an emotion such as fear need not come with a motivation.

(p.12) A further problem with Conative Theories is that even though they can make room for the intentionality of emotions, they fail to account for the fact that we assess emotions in terms of how they fit the world. Desire and more generally conative states are taken to have intentional content, but the direction of fit that is involved is a world-to-mind one; it is the world which has to change

in order to fit what is desired. So, a desire, indeed even the most foolish desire, cannot be blamed for not matching how things are. In reply, it might be claimed that desires in fact have correctness conditions: to desire something involves the representation of that thing as desirable.[29] A first point to note here is that following this suggestion would essentially amount to adopting a Cognitive Theory, according to which an emotion is accurate in so far as its object is desirable. The main point, however, is that the envisaged account would be quite unconvincing. This is so because all emotions would have the same type of content, i.e., that something is desirable. And in view of the variety of emotions this claim appears much too coarse-grained. When we assess an emotion like amusement, what we check is whether its object is amusing, not whether it is desirable. Negative emotions pose an even more acute problem, for surely what we fear is not represented as desirable. One might reply that escaping from the object of the emotion is represented as desirable, but then it becomes difficult to discriminate between fear, embarrassment, and anger. The moral is that being desirable is thus too general a concept to characterize the content of specific emotions.[30]

By contrast, Cognitive Theories of the judgmental sort have no difficulty in accounting both for the intentionality and the assessability of emotions. Judgmental Theories assimilate emotions to evaluative or normative beliefs or judgments.[31] On the simplest version, to fear something is simply to judge that the thing is fearsome, to be disgusted by something is to judge that the thing is disgusting, to admire something is to judge that the thing is admirable, and so forth for each emotion kind. Other Judgmental Theories claim that further ingredients, such as **(p.13)** feelings or desires, are necessary.[32] Given that such theories place a representational state at the heart of emotions, they easily account for the intentionality and the assessability of emotions.

What Judgmental Theories appear to capture nicely is the intuition that emotions and evaluative judgments are closely related. As we have seen above in the fear example, it is likely that when you experience fear, you negatively appraise the situation as fearsome. Quite generally, our emotions and our evaluative judgments tend to go hand in hand. We usually judge that what disgusts us is disgusting, that what we admire is admirable, and so forth.

The main problem with Judgmental Theories, however, is that they make the relation between emotions and evaluative judgment too close. This can be seen by considering two standard objections to such theories.[33] First, non-human animals and young children experience emotions such as fear, anger, or sadness, but they lack the conceptual skills required to make judgments, and *a fortiori* to make evaluative judgments.[34] A sparrow can certainly experience fear when it sees a cat, but it certainly does not judge that the cat is fearsome. Given the lack of linguistic abilities, we have reason to think that the sparrow’s mental states

do not form the inferential network necessary for concept possession (see section 1.3).

Second, emotions and evaluative judgments can, and often do, conflict.[35] You can be afraid of a minuscule spider that clambers up your arm while judging that there is nothing fearsome. So-called “recalcitrance” characterizes not only the emotions we share with non-human animals, such as fear and anger. Shame, guilt, and envy can also conflict with evaluative judgment. You can for instance feel shame at your big ears while judging that there is nothing shameful in having big ears. The problem with Judgmental Theories is that they are committed to an implausible description of recalcitrance. According to such accounts, recalcitrance involves a conflict between two contradictory evaluative **(p.14)** judgments. But whatever irrationality is involved in recalcitrance, it seems to be of a less acute species than what is involved in contradictory judgments.[36] This is true even if one of the judgments is considered to be held unconsciously, so that the conflict need not involve awareness. As we shall soon see, the Perceptual Theory offers a better account of recalcitrance.

Recalcitrance in emotions has motivated the move to so-called “quasi-Judgmental Theories,” according to which the cognitive states essential to emotions fail to involve a commitment to the truth of the evaluative proposition. Thus, emotions have been claimed to involve evaluative thoughts (Greenspan 1988).[37] On such views, fear involves entertaining the thought that something is fearsome, or construing something as fearsome. Given that such states involve no endorsement of the proposition that there is fearsomeness, there is no irrationality involved in experiencing fear and judging that there is no fearsomeness. Recalcitrance is no more problematic than judging that it is raining while supposing or imagining that it is not.

Quasi-Judgmental Theories clearly do better than Judgmental Theories with respect to recalcitrance. But they share the problems of Judgmental Theories concerning the emotions of non-human animals and young children. Entertaining evaluative thoughts and construing things as having some value is just as cognitively demanding as making evaluative judgments. Moreover, Quasi-Judgmental Theories are not as well placed as Judgmental Theories with respect to the assessability of emotions. Entertaining the thought that something is fearsome, for instance, is not something that we assess in terms of whether that thing is fearsome or not. On the contrary, it can be perfectly appropriate to entertain that thought in the absence of any fearsomeness. In this respect, entertaining a thought is not different from supposing that something is the case. Finally, it is not clear how the kind of motivation that typically comes with at least some emotions could plausibly be taken to attach to such states. Fear is surely closely related to motivation, but entertaining the thought that something is fearsome, or construing it as **(p.15)** fearsome fails to explain why, when we

experience fear, we are tempted to avoid what we fear. If you construe a cloud as a horse, you are not likely to be tempted to try to ride it.

One might conclude that the attempt to specify the essence of emotions is misguided. Maybe emotions have no essences. Instead, the concept of emotion might be thought to be a prototypical or a family resemblance concept.[38] No feature would be shared by all emotions, but each emotion would share a number of features with other emotions. I shall try to show that this is too defeatist a claim. Emotions, I shall argue, share a common core in that they involve a kind of perceptual experience.

1.3 The Perceptual Theory

According to the Perceptual Theory, emotions are, in essence, perceptual experiences of evaluative properties. The theory is sometimes formulated in terms of perceptions, instead of perceptual experiences, but this is to forget that emotions can misfire. In contrast with perceptions, perceptual experiences are not factive, for you can have the perceptual experience of a gray cat as black, but perceiving that the cat is gray entails that it is gray. Given this, the claim is that emotions are perceptions of evaluative properties unless they misfire.[39] For example, unless it misfires fear would consist in having the perception of something as fearsome, and unless it misfires disgust would consist in the perception of something as disgusting. On this account, emotions are claimed to have representational content. They represent their object as having specific evaluative properties. To use the medieval jargon Anthony Kenny favored (1963), the emotions' *formal objects* are evaluative properties.[40] Thus, an emotion **(p. 16)** of fear with respect to a dog will be correct just in case the dog is really fearsome. In the same way, the fear that a storm is brewing will be correct just in case the brewing of a storm is really fearsome.

The key difference between the Perceptual Theory and the Judgmental Theories is that the former takes the representational content of emotions to be non-conceptual. This means, firstly, that even though emotions might have structured contents that are similar to the contents of sensory perceptions, emotions need not have conceptually articulated, propositional contents.[41] It also means, secondly, that it is not necessary to possess the relevant evaluative concepts, such as the concept of the fearsome in the case of fear, to undergo emotions.[42] Otherwise put, the perception in question, albeit of states of affairs that involve evaluative properties, is simple, non-epistemic perception. As such it is opposed to epistemic perception, that is, to perception that is taken to involve judgments and concepts, such as the perception that the cat is on the mat.[43]

To understand what is at stake it is useful to recall the function of the distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual contents. It is to account for the intuitive difference between sensory experiences and judgments that the distinction is postulated.[44] Consider your visual experience of a jagged and blue

mountain range and your judgment that the same mountain range is jagged and blue. The visual experience and the judgment are both about the same mountain range, but **(p.17)** intuitively, they represent their object and its properties in quite different ways. The visual experience is like a picture of the mountain range while the judgment is like a description involving terms that ascribe properties to the mountain range. In contrast with the case of judgment, it does not appear required to possess the concepts *jagged* and *blue* in order to have a visual experience of the jagged and blue mountain range. This is the contrast that the distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual states aims at capturing with the claim that the content of the judgment is conceptual, while the content of the sensory experience is non-conceptual.[45]

Let me say a bit more about concepts. An important difference between sensory experiences and judgments is that the latter, but not the former, can figure in reasoning. In fact, it is an essential feature of judgments that they form complex inferential networks. To account for the inferential relations between judgments, it appears necessary to postulate constituents of content.[46] For instance, to explain the inference from the judgment that this cat is black and the judgment that this crow is black to the judgment that at least two animals are black it appears necessary to assume that the content of the beliefs is structured, and that all three involve *black* as a constituent. Concepts thus appear to be content elements that (along with logical connectors, etc.) account for the inferential power of judgments and more generally of mental states that are involved in reasoning. Given this, concepts can be defined as inferentially relevant constituents of content.[47] A mental state is conceptual if it has a content that involves such constituents, and it is non-conceptual if that is not the case. Hence a person will possess a concept on condition that some of her mental states have contents that involve the concept at stake. To possess the concept *mountain*, for instance, it is **(p.18)** necessary to have mental states about mountains whose place in the inferential network is determined in part by the concept of mountain, such as the judgment that what you see is a mountain.[48]

In contrast with judgments, the content of sensory experiences appears to be non-conceptual. According to the Perceptual Theory, much the same is true of emotions. Although emotions can, and often do, involve conceptually articulated contents—it is for instance clearly necessary to possess the concept of financial meltdown to experience fear that there will be a financial meltdown—the evaluative appraisal that is part of the content of emotions is non-conceptual.[49] In other words, it is not necessary to possess the concept of the fearsome to experience fear and thereby to represent something as fearsome, or to possess the concept of the shameful in order to experience shame and thereby to represent something as shameful.

Important epistemological implications follow from this account of emotions. If emotions are non-conceptual representations of evaluative properties, then it should be expected that emotions are like sensory experiences in that they allow us to be aware of certain features of the world. Just as the visual experience of a blue mountain allows us to be aware of the color of the mountain, the experience of fear would allow us to be aware of the fearsomeness of things. More precisely, since emotions can misfire, fear would allow us to be aware of fearsomeness under favorable circumstances, when nothing interferes with it. Given this, it appears plausible to claim that evaluative judgments that are grounded in emotion are *prima facie* justified.[50] This claim is controversial, but since it is an implication of the Perceptual Theory, let me start with a defense of that theory (I return to this question in section 1.6 and in Chapter 5, section 5.2).

Part of the attractiveness of the Perceptual Theory comes from the fact that it consists of an improvement on both Feeling and the Judgmental **(p.19)** Theories.[51] The reason is that the Perceptual Theory combines the claim that emotions involve feelings with the claim that they involve representations. Thus, while acknowledging the importance of the experiential aspects of emotions stressed by Feeling Theories, the Perceptual Theory does not founder on the objections against Feeling Theories. And while it does as well as the Judgmental Theory with respect to the intentionality and the correctness conditions of emotions, it is not affected by the objections against Judgmental Theories. Since the representations of values are non-conceptual, there is no difficulty in attributing emotions to non-human animals and young children. Moreover, as we will shortly see, recalcitrance is nicely accounted for by the Perceptual Theory.

The main argument for the Perceptual Theory is an argument by analogy. It is based on the observation that emotions and paradigmatic perceptual experiences, such as the visual experience of a field of blue poppies, share a number of important features.[52] Let me consider these in turn.

A first point of analogy is that both emotions and paradigmatic sensory experiences are conscious states, which are characterized by phenomenal properties. There is a way it is like to see something as blue, just as there is a way it is like to experience fear or disgust.[53] Even if, contrary to what I suggested above, we suppose that there are genuine unconscious emotions, it remains true that emotions can be, and usually are, consciously experienced states. As should immediately be conceded, there are also differences between the phenomenology of emotions and that of sensory experiences, a point I will discuss later.

Let me turn to the second point of analogy between emotions and sensory experiences. It is widely agreed that emotions are automatic, in that they are not directly subject to the will.[54] Both types of experiences differ from voluntary action in that they are triggered automatically, in response to the world. You can

neither decide to feel fear when you do **(p.20)** not happen to experience this emotion nor choose to see white snow as orange, say. Though there are indirect ways to control our emotions, such as breathing slowly to avoid panic, or going for a walk to attenuate one's anger, emotions are passive states. If a dog attacks you and you react with fear, this fear is not caused by a decision or an intention to feel fear. In general, emotions, whatever their kind, automatically arise in response to the world. They are reactions, as opposed to things we do.

The third point of analogy is closely related to the previous point. Put simply, emotions are world-guided. Sensory experiences are usually caused by facts or events in the world. The poppy and its color are causally responsible for your experience of the poppy as blue. In the same way, emotions are usually caused by facts or events in the world. The huge dog that runs towards you causes you to experience fear. While it is true that imagining something can also cause an emotion, such as when fear results from vividly imagining that you are walking over a narrow cliff or when sadness is induced by imagining the sudden death of a friend, it remains true that in general, emotions are world-guided, in the sense that they are responses to how things are in our environment. In fact, even when emotions are about imagined objects, they can be held to be world-guided in the sense that they are responses to how things are with these imagined objects.

A fourth point of analogy is that both emotions and sensory experiences are commonly taken to have correctness conditions. As noted above, emotions can be assessed in terms of their appropriateness. We are prone to assess our emotions with respect to how they appear to fit evaluative states of affairs. We criticize someone's fear when it bears on something that is not fearsome, such as an innocuous little spider. This practice strongly suggests that we assume that the emotion represents the spider as fearsome. Thus, fear appears to have correctness conditions in much the same way as the visual experience of poppies as blue has correctness conditions.

As we have seen above, the fact that emotions and evaluative judgments can conflict is a problem for Judgmental Theories. Emotional recalcitrance also directly militates in favor of the Perceptual Theory, for it makes for a further point of analogy between emotions and sensory experiences. Just as emotions of all kinds can conflict with evaluative judgments, perceptual experience and perceptual judgments can come **(p.21)** apart.[55] This is what happens in the case of perceptual illusions such as the Müller-Lyer illusion, in which you see lines as having different lengths, though you can rightly judge that they have the same length. Thus, both the emotion and the sensory experience can conflict with and persist in spite of opposing judgments. It is worth stressing that it is not necessarily the emotion that gets things wrong. In some cases, such as when you experience fear while walking on a street at night in spite of your judging

that there is nothing to be afraid of, it might well be your emotion, and not your judgment, that is correct.

Emotions thus appear to be informationally encapsulated, in the sense that the other mental states of the person have a limited impact on the emotions she experiences.[56] This is not to say that these mental states have no influence at all. To claim this would be to forget that emotions depend on cognitive bases—we need to see or hear a dog, or else to believe or imagine that there is a dog to feel fear towards a dog.[57] Rather, the point is that when they are in competition, the emotion wins the day. As Jesse Prinz puts it, "bottom-up inputs *trump* top-down inputs when the two come into conflict" (2008: 140).[58] So, both emotions and sensory experiences have what is generally considered to be the most important characteristic of modular systems, i.e., informational encapsulation.[59]

A further analogy between sensory experiences and emotions is that both manifest inferential isolation, in that neither sensory experiences nor emotions are involved in inferential networks.[60] As we have seen above, sensory experiences, unlike judgments, are not caught in inferential networks which require postulating concepts. Cases of emotional **(p.22)** recalcitrance make it clear that this is also true of emotions. Suppose you are watching a huge and angry tiger and feel intense fear. The fact that you have good reasons to believe that there is nothing to fear—you realize that tiger is behind solid iron bars, for instance—might well have little influence on what you feel. The reasons you have for believing that there is nothing to fear appear severed from the fear you feel. Note that in this case, the cognitive basis of the emotion is the visual perception of the tiger. In cases in which a belief is the cognitive basis of an emotion, a change in the belief is likely to make a difference as to what you feel. If you feel fear because you believe that a friend might have been harmed in an accident, and you find out that he has in fact survived the accident unharmed, your fear will dissipate. However, such causal relations are not inferential. Moreover, even though your fear will incline you to believe there is a threat, the latter belief is not one that is inferentially deducible from your fear. In this regard emotions are similar to sensory experiences. Sensory experiences can justify perceptual beliefs, but at least according to many the relation between the two is not inferential. The belief that the poppies we see are blue is *prima facie* justified by our perception of the poppies, but it is not inferred, be it by deduction, induction, or abduction, from that perception. Moreover, unlike the judgment that the situation is fearsome, fear need not come with a raft of inferentially related judgments. Again, this point holds generally. That you believe you have no reason to feel guilt at being the only survivor of an avalanche might well fail to alleviate your feeling of guilt; and in contrast to the belief that you are guilty, the feeling of guilt need not be caught in an inferential network.

One might protest that the relations that require postulating conceptual contents are relations among emotional states. As Nussbaum has noted, many of our emotions are structured around cares.[61] To care for something or someone is to be disposed to feel a number of emotions, depending on how what you care for fares. When you care for someone, you are happy when things go well for that person, afraid when she is under threat, hopeful that things will improve, sad when things fail to go well, etc. On this basis, it might be argued that emotions are caught in normative webs that are akin to inferential networks.[62] However, it **(p.23)** would be a mistake to think that these relations among emotions are inferential. Obviously, you do not *infer* your hope that things improve from your fear that someone is under threat. Neither do you *infer* your joy when things go well from the sadness when things fail to go well. In reply, it might be argued that rational requirements are nonetheless imposed. Suppose you have poppies in your garden, and there is a good chance of heavy rain. If you care for your poppies, you will fear for the poppies, hope that there will be no rain, and feel relief if the poppies escape unscathed. In fact, to fear something is plausibly seen as internally related to being disposed to feel relief when the feared event doesn't transpire.[63] The question is whether rational requirements are involved. If you fear that the poppies will be damaged by rain, are you thereby rationally required to feel relief if the poppies escape unscathed? The answer, I take it, is negative. Even if the failure to feel relief tells us something about how much you care for the poppies, there is certainly no irrationality involved in not feeling relief.[64]

The last main analogy between sensory experiences and emotions also concerns the nature of their content.[65] Both appear to have analogical content, that is, a content that changes continuously depending on the variations of what is perceived. Simplifying Christopher Peacocke's definition, one can say that the content of a state is analogical if and only if there is a dimension of variation in some perceptible magnitude such that for each pair of points on that dimension there can be a corresponding difference in the content.[66] Consider color experiences. The content of such experiences is analogical because there is a match between the variation of color experiences and variations in colors. Such content is not conceptual, because the range of possible content is not limited by the number of color concepts that we have. Interestingly, emotions share this feature with sensory experience.[67] There is a dimension **(p.24)** of variation in the object of emotions that corresponds to a dimension of variation at the emotion level. Emotions vary with respect to their intensity, and these variations are plausibly taken to correspond to the degrees of the corresponding evaluative properties. To paraphrase C. D. Broad (1954: 293), intense fear might be appropriate with respect to a furious bull, but not with respect to a mildly irritated cow. One might wonder what emotional intensity consists in. Even though there is some controversy surrounding this issue, it is likely that in general the intensity of emotions involves phenomenological salience,

physiological arousal as well as motivational force, a more intense fear coming with a stronger pang, a higher arousal, and a stronger motivation.[68] But the point concerning the correlation between emotional intensity and evaluative degrees holds independently of the precise account of emotional intensity.

To sum up, the numerous analogies between emotions and sensory experiences gives us what appear to be decisive reasons to adopt the Perceptual Theory. Yet, this is not the whole story. There are also important differences between emotions and sensory experiences.[69] The question is whether or not these are real and clear-cut differences, and in the cases in which they are, whether they threaten the claim that emotions can constitute a kind of perception. I believe that taking heed of these differences makes for a more nuanced picture of emotions than the analogies with sensory experiences initially suggest.[70] Even so, the disanalogies do not impugn the core of the Perceptual Theory.

1.4 The Disanalogies Between Emotions and Sensory Experiences

A first alleged difference between emotions and sensory experiences is that in contrast to sensory experience, there are no organs underlying **(p.25)** would-be value perceptions. Instead of directly connecting to the world, so to speak, emotions rely on cognitive bases—you need to see or hear, or else to remember or imagine something, to be afraid of it. Furthermore, perceptions are answerable to a causal constraint in that the perceived object and its properties have to be causally responsible for the occurrence of the perceptual experience, whereas we can be afraid of monsters that only exist in our imagination. What happens downstream of emotions appears to make for further points of contrast with sensory experiences. Unlike sensory experiences, emotions appear closely tied to motivation and action. Emotions also have an important influence on the content of our thoughts and on the focus of our attention.

Furthermore, the phenomenology of emotions differs from sensory experiences in a number of ways. Even if such feelings are experienced as largely unified wholes, what we feel when undergoing emotions appears much more complex, compared to sensory experience. Very different elements contribute to what it is like to experience an emotion. As we have seen, an episode of fear typically involves physiological changes involving a variety of systems controlled by the autonomic nervous system, which regulates adrenaline flow, cardiac rhythm, and digestion.[71] What it is like to feel an emotion is likely to depend on the awareness of such changes. However, it also depends on the way thought and sensory experience are affected. Fear, as I have noted, at least normally comes with an intense attentional focus on its object; and it can also come with a characteristic panicky way of thinking, such as when your mind is rushing through innumerable and more or less realistic ways you could escape from a building that is on fire.[72] Now, consider seeing a field of blue poppies. In

comparison with emotions, what is striking is the simplicity of such a visual experience.

Another point of contrast is that emotions, but not perceptions, are valenced, in the sense that there are negative emotions, such as fear, disgust, and shame, and positive emotions, such as hope, admiration, and joy. Relatedly, emotions typically come with hedonic feelings. Unlike negative emotions, such as shame or disgust, for instance, positive **(p.26)** emotions, such as joy and pride, have a pleasant feel. By contrast, sensory perceptions do not typically come with hedonic feelings. In addition, emotions that are polar opposites, such as fear and attraction or joy and sadness, are sometimes felt towards the same object, while there appears to be no equivalent of such ambivalence within sensory perception.

A further difference is that emotions appear to lack the kind of “transparency” which is often thought to characterize sensory experience.[73] The idea is that introspection regarding what it is like to have sensory experiences reveals that what we are aware of in such experiences are mind-independent objects and their properties, and not any intrinsic features of the experience or qualia. By contrast, when we experience an emotion, an important part of the experience appears to consist in feelings. In order accurately to describe how it feels to be afraid of a wolf, what you would mention is not the wolf and its properties, but the feelings associated with bodily changes, such as your heart beating or your muscles freezing. Correspondingly, what we say about our emotions is different from what we say about our sensory experiences. We say that we fear the wolf, not its fearsomeness, while when we see blue poppies, we can describe this as seeing poppies as well as seeing their blueness.[74]

The dependence on cognitive bases is one of the factors that explain why emotional responses differ from sensory experiences. But emotions are not only dependent on cognitive states. They are also importantly influenced by a number of psychological factors, such as expectations, projects, goals, preferences, desires, moods, or character traits. Whether or not you fear that it will rain might depend on whether you plan to go for a hike or whether you would like your garden to get some water after a drought. When in a serene mood, you are likely to feel less indignation at an offensive remark, for instance. By contrast, sensory experience is mostly immune to such influence. Moreover, our emotional dispositions are shaped by cultural or social factors, be it with respect to what kinds of objects tend to trigger emotional reactions or with respect to other aspects of emotions, such as their expression. This is related to an additional point of contrast. Emotional dispositions are plastic at least to a **(p.27)** certain extent, in the sense that they are subject to important changes over the lifetime of an individual. These two points make for a difference with sensory perception,

for our perceptual apparatus appears largely unaffected by cultural and social factors and it hardly changes over the lifetime of individuals.

Finally, a number of differences between emotions and sensory experiences are related to the question of the rationality of emotions. First, it would seem that emotions that conflict with evaluative judgments can be considered to be irrational, while we would not say that a sensory experience that conflicts with a judgment is irrational. Second, since “why-questions” can be, and typically are, asked about emotions but not about sensory experiences, emotions would seem to be in no position to justify beliefs nor to inform us about anything. Relatedly, that emotions are claimed to be perceptions of evaluative properties makes for a potentially significant difference. In contrast to common objects of perceptions, such as shapes and colors, evaluative properties are normative. The question thus arises as to how one could perceive evaluative properties in the same way as one perceives shapes and colors.

This list of alleged differences is impressive. However, as I shall presently argue, the Perceptual Theory remains a live option. First of all, we should not forget the analogies between emotions and sensory experiences. We have seen that both have correctness conditions and phenomenal properties, that both fail to be subject to the will, but are instead triggered by the world, that both manifest informational encapsulation, and that both are characterized by inferential isolation and have analogical contents.

A second point to make is that some of the alleged differences are arguably not as deep as they might first appear. For instance, it might plausibly be claimed that the phenomenology of sensory experience is not as simple as one might think at first sight. The claim that sensory experiences are transparent can be questioned, for there appear to be differences in what we experience that do not derive from properties and their objects, such as when we remove our tinted glasses. It should also be noted that we quite often describe what our emotions are about in order to explain what we feel when experiencing them.[75] The best way to **(p.28)** give a sense of what it felt to be disgusted by a rotting carcass, say, is to give details about the carcass and the worms devouring it. Moreover, what we believe, what we feel, and what we are motivated to do are likely to influence how it feels to undergo sensory experiences, such as looking at a mountain landscape. In the same way, it has to be acknowledged that psychological factors, such as expectations and moods, influence the focus of our attention, and thus the content of what we experience. Similarly, a close look at emotional ambivalence reveals that such cases are not different from cases in which we have sensory perceptions of contrasting but compatible aspects.[76] Consider fear and attraction. It can be perfectly appropriate to feel both fear and attraction toward something. This is so when the object of your emotions is both

fearsome and attractive, such as, for instance, following a *via ferrata* that takes you over a high cliff that plunges into the void.

Even so, what I want to argue is that in spite of some real and important differences between emotions and sensory experiences, the Perceptual Theory remains a live option. The central point to keep in mind is that the mere fact that there are differences with sensory experience need not, as such, entail that emotions are not perceptual experiences. Whether emotions can be considered to be perceptual experiences depends on how perception is conceived of. Thus, it is only if one takes organs to be required for perception that the absence of organs threatens the perceptual account. But it is far from clear that it is only if a state directly depends on organs that it should count as a perception. To require this would make it impossible to consider proprioception, that is, the perception we have of our own bodily movements and spatial orientation, as a kind of perception. Though proprioception is mediated by mechanisms such as joint receptors, these hardly count as sensory organs.[77] Similarly, multimodal perception does not depend on specific organs. For instance, speech perception arguably involves both vision and audition but has no dedicated sense organ.[78] Thus, that emotions do not depend on organs is only a reason to think that they are not sensory experiences; it is not a reason to think that they are not perceptual experiences. Even if we can agree that sensory experiences are paradigmatic cases of perceptual **(p.29)** experiences, there is surely no conceptual barrier to the claim that perception need not depend on organs. Hence, if a theory of perception denies this, it is not merely on the basis of the concepts involved.

Much the same appears to be true of most of the other differences. On the face of it, there is nothing conceptually wrong with the claim that emotions are perceptual experiences that require cognitive bases, and thus that they are perceptual experiences that can concern objects which are merely remembered or imagined; nor is there anything conceptually wrong with the claim that emotions are perceptual experiences that are closely tied to motivation and that influence what we think and what our attention focuses on; nor with the claim that emotions are perceptual experiences which have a phenomenology that differs from that of sensory experiences, or which are grounded in dispositions that depend on psychological factors, that are influenced by social factors, and that exhibit more plasticity than sensory experiences. Finally there appears to be nothing conceptually wrong with the claim that emotions are perceptual experiences that can be considered to be irrational, and that emotions are perceptual experiences of evaluative, and thus normative, properties.[79]

But what are perceptions, it will be asked? Why should we insist in calling emotions a kind of perceptual experience if there are differences with the paradigmatic case of sensory experience? According to a liberal, but plausible account, perception can be defined as a kind of awareness of things and

qualities.[80] Put metaphorically, perception is a form of openness to the world; when things go well, what we are aware of is a fragment of the world.[81] As far as I can see, the features that are most **(p.30)** important on such a liberal account are among those that emotions share with sensory experiences: phenomenal properties, automaticity, world-guidedness, correctness conditions, and informational encapsulation. In so far as emotions have these features, nothing bars us from making the claim that emotions involve a genuine kind of perception.

One worry that might arise even for those who are sympathetic to this liberal account of perception is that emotions cannot, in any robust sense, be considered to be a form of openness to the world given that they require cognitive bases.[82] Whether or not emotions have correctness conditions, the access to the world that they afford is mediated by their cognitive bases, and could not count as a form of openness. And things appear to look even less promising for the Perceptual Theory if one keeps in mind that the cognitive bases involve memories and imaginings. Surely emotions cannot be considered to be forms of openness when they are about past or imagined, fictive objects.

In reply, it has to be conceded that the openness that is afforded by emotions is not as direct as the one characterizing sensory perceptions. But then, what needs to be stressed is that it is not clear why the access to states of affairs afforded by emotions when things go well should not count as a form of openness nonetheless. It is not as if the cognitive bases are a kind of *qualia* that mediate our access to the world, after all. Similarly, as long as one is not tempted by too strict a causal constraint on perception, there is no particular difficulty in the claim that emotions can allow us to be aware of the evaluative properties of past or fictive entities and thus count as a form of openness to past and fictive states of affairs.

For those who are uncomfortable with this liberal account of perception, it might be easier to accept the claim that emotions are *quasi-perceptions*.[83] In my view, this is more a terminological than a substantive issue. What is important is that emotions are recognized to be states which share a number of features with sensory experiences, such as phenomenal properties, etc., but which also differ from sensory experiences in other respects. Whether emotions are as a consequence considered to be a genuine kind of perception or merely a **(p.31)** quasi-perception seems hardly relevant. This is so at least if quasi-perceptions are taken to be states that have representational content, so that they can be said to be correct depending on whether their objects have the corresponding evaluative properties or not, but that are nonetheless different from evaluative judgments. Given the agreement on the list of analogies, someone who claims that emotions are quasi-perceptions agrees with what is essential to the Perceptual Theory.

The worry that might linger is whether some of the differences between emotions and perception are not such as to invalidate the claim that emotions involve a kind of perception or quasi-perception. Later in this chapter, I will consider two related arguments to the effect that emotions cannot be seen as informing us about evaluative properties. Before doing this, let me turn to an objection that draws on the notion of emotional irrationality.

1.5 The Irrationality of Emotions

Maybe one of the most striking differences, from a philosophical point of view, between emotions and sensory experiences is that unlike the latter emotions can be assessed in terms of rationality. This consideration is the starting point of Bennett Helm's argument against what he calls "anti-judgementalism," and which can be easily adapted to counter the Perceptual Theory.[84] According to Helm, there is an important difference between recalcitrant emotions and sensory illusions. In a nutshell, recalcitrant emotions involve irrationality, whereas sensory illusions fail to involve irrationality. Helm agrees that recalcitrant emotions are a problem for accounts that claim emotions involve evaluative beliefs or judgments, because "conflicts between emotions and judgments do not verge on incoherence, for they are readily intelligible and happen all too often" (Helm 2001: 42). But the denial that emotions involve beliefs or judgments fares no better:

> Although…anti-judgmentalist accounts clearly avoid the problem of assimilating conflicts between judgments and emotions to incoherence, it is not clear that they are thereby able to provide a proper understanding of the nature of the resulting irrationality. After all, it is not at all irrational to have a stick **(p.32)** half-submerged in water look bent even after one has judged that it is straight. (2001: 42–3)

Helm concludes that we have to reject both judgmentalism and anti-judgmentalism and opt for a third kind of theory, according to which emotions are a special kind of assent.[85]

According to Michael Brady (2007), there are two further considerations that can be used to bolster this argument. The first pertains to justification. While sensory experience can be assessed in terms of accuracy, it is not the kind of thing that allows for justificatory reasons. By contrast, we usually assume that emotions can be justified. Let me put this consideration aside, for it raises a different issue, which I consider in the next section. The second consideration is introduced by Brady in the following terms: "someone who is suffering from recalcitrant emotions is subject to a certain rational requirement" (2007: 276). It seems indeed correct that emotions are related to requirements of rationality. In particular, someone who experiences a recalcitrant emotion seems to be required to change either her emotion or her judgment to resolve the conflict.[86] No such requirement seems to be in order in the case of sensory illusions: "it

makes no sense to claim that someone experiencing the Müller-Lyer illusion should either stop seeing the lines as unequal, or change her perceptual belief" (2007: 276).

There thus appears to be an important difference between emotions and sensory experiences, one that would seem to seriously threaten the Perceptual Theory.[87] Before presenting what I take to be the correct solution to what one could call the "Irrationality Problem," let me discuss two proposals that have recently been made.[88] The first has been made **(p.33)** by Brady. According to him, the significant difference between emotions and sensory experience is grounded in the relation between emotions and attention. As Brady notes, emotions typically have an impact on attention: "emotions such as fear and shame do not just automatically and reflexively direct and focus attention: they also *capture* and *consume* attention" (2007: 279).[89] The influence of emotions on attention has been underlined by philosophers as well as by empirical researchers, such as neurologists and psychologists.[90] In fact, it seems that one important function of emotions is to orient the attention toward emotional stimuli. As Douglas Derryberry and Don Tucker put it, emotions "serve to regulate orienting, directing attention toward perceptual information that is important or relevant to the current state" (1994: 170).

Now, according to Brady, the tight connection between emotion and attention explains why recalcitrant emotions, but not sensory illusions, are irrational. The irrationality comes from the fact that the recalcitrant emotion consists in what is considered by the person who experiences the emotion as an unnecessary focusing of attention. In Brady's own words: "this means that the persistence of attention in recalcitrant emotion is, by the subject's own lights, a *waste* of his attentional resources" (2007: 281). For example, given that you judge that there is no reason to be afraid of this dog, you are likely to judge that focusing on the dog to check the accuracy of your perception is a waste of time and energy. Brady concludes that "recalcitrant emotions involve conflict between *three* elements: a perception of value, a conviction that this perception is inaccurate, and—in spite of this conviction—a continued attempt to determine the accuracy of the perception" (2007: 281).

This is an ingenious proposal, but it is open to serious objections. A first problem is that Brady's explanation would only hold for a limited number of emotions. Different kinds of emotions have quite different relations to attention. It must be emphazised that there is in fact a variety of attentional phenomena. Selectivity in information processing, be it **(p.34)** voluntary or involuntary, is considered to be the essence of attention.[91] However, different aspects of attention are usually distinguished. First, there are the different movements of attention, such as orienting oneself towards, or shifting away from a stimulus, as well as the maintenance of attention on a stimulus. Then there are differences in the scope of attention. Attention can zoom in and concentrate on details, or it can zoom out

and focus on global features. Finally, vigilance or alertness, as a state in which attention is not yet focused on anything, but is ready to focus on a range of stimuli, is also considered to be an important form of attention.

As I underlined earlier, however, different types of emotions involve different kinds of attentional phenomena. Quite generally, there seems to be a difference between negative and positive emotions. As Barbara Fredrickson argues, a number of studies suggest that "negative emotional states—particularly high arousal ones like anxiety and fear—serve to narrow people's attentional focus," while "positive emotions, even high-arousal such as elation and mania, lead to an opposite effect: an expansion of attentional focus" (1998: 307).[92] In fact, even more fine-grained distinctions are required. While interest comes with an orienting of attention towards its object and the maintenance of attention towards it, this does not seem true in the case of happiness, where attention is likely to wander away from what we are happy about. If we consider negative emotions, it would seem that when experiencing disgust your attention often quickly shifts away from the object of your disgust—what Kenneth Hugdahl and Kjell Morten Stormark have called "cognitive avoidance"[93]—whereas it tends to orient itself towards the object of fear or anger. Or consider boredom: if you are bored while watching a film, your attention will simply drift away. Vigilance or alertness, another form of attention, is something that would seem to come with fear and perhaps anger, but certainly not with boredom or sadness.

(p.35) Now, the problem with Brady's suggestion is that all these emotions—fear and anger, but also disgust, boredom, interest, happiness, and joy—allow for recalcitrance. However, given the difference with respect to attention, their irrationality could not be explained in the same neat way as it can be in the case of fear. Maybe it could nonetheless be suggested that by the agent's lights, recalcitrant emotions interfere with the agent's attention in one way or another. But this appears too strong a claim, given the variety of attentional phenomena triggered by emotions. Suppose that you feel a bit of disgust at a tiny bug in your salad while judging that in fact there is nothing disgusting involved, so that you should just keep eating your salad. It is simply not clear that the slight shift of your attention away from the bug which is likely to come with your emotion needs to be considered problematic.

Another problem is that the emotions' attentional influence is insufficient to explain the accusation of irrationality. To see this, let us suppose that sensory experiences also influence our attention.[94] Seeing a bent stick that is half-immersed in water, for instance, would get you to focus your attention on the stick and its strange shape. Now, if you simultaneously judge that the stick is straight, does this entail that your perception will be deemed a waste of attentional resources and thus irrational? This is far from clear. The fact that your attention happens to be captured by the bent stick might be considered to

be less than ideal, but since there is not much you can do about it, it is not clear that it warrants the accusation of irrationality.

In a follow-up paper, Brady argues that the irrationality in such cases is due to the fact that the capture and consumption of attention involves epistemic and motivational inclinations: it inclines the agent to assent to an evaluative construal and to act according to this evaluative construal (Brady 2009). Now, it is certainly true that emotions come with epistemic inclinations. However, this is also true of sensory experiences: when you see the stick as bent, you are surely inclined to believe that it is bent. It might thus be more promising to appeal to the idea that emotions involve motivational inclinations. Although even an emotion like fear does not necessarily involve behavioral tendencies, it is true that **(p.36)** many emotions facilitate action given their physiological underpinnings. Moreover, an emotion such as fear also generally involves a desire that sets a goal, such as the avoidance of a specific harm or loss (see Chapter 2). Thus, even if perceiving the stick as bent might lead to inappropriate action, there remains a significant difference between sensory illusions and recalcitrant emotions. Indeed, sensory experiences appear to neither facilitate actions nor involve desires, or so I shall assume for the sake of the argument.

Would we then have an explanation of why recalcitrant emotions involve irrationality though sensory illusions do not? One problem with this suggestion is, again, that it is not clear it can be generalized. It does not seem that all emotions involve motivational inclinations. As I noted above, no motivational inclination needs to be involved when you admire a landscape. Moreover, the question arises as to why the lack of motivational inclination would make such a difference. There is no question that there is something wrong with both sensory illusions and recalcitrant emotions. But why would the mere fact that sensory illusions lack motivational inclinations immunize them against irrationality accusations? The close tie to motivational inclinations might explain why we suspect many emotions lead to practical irrationality, but, as such, it fails to explain why we are inclined to consider recalcitrant emotions themselves to be irrational.

Let me turn to a second and better explanation, which is proposed by Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson 2003. D’Arms and Jacobson consider the case in which the recalcitrant emotion, and not the judgment, is to blame, and wonder how it can be that we assess such an emotion in terms of rationality:

> If fear is indeed a tropism—an involuntary, reflexive reaction—then in what sense is it *unreasonable* when one knows one isn’t in danger? If fear need not involve the thought that one is in danger, then why should it yield to the judgment that one is not actually in danger, as Deigh suggests? In what

> sense is it recalcitrant?…[H]uman beings are evidently able to exert some measure of rational control over their emotional responses. (2003: 144)

According to D'Arms and Jacobson, we not only critically assess our emotions in terms of their fittingness, something which "can ground the specific force of the 'should' in Deigh's claim" (2003: 145), but these critical assessments can also have an impact on what we feel.

(p.37) I think that this explanation points towards the right solution, but it will not do as it stands. We might have some control over our emotions—we can take a deep breath in order to try to calm down when we are afraid, or we can go for a walk when we feel anger, for instance (Ben-Ze'ev 2000: chap. 8). But in general, as we have seen above, the emotional experiences we undergo are automatic responses to the world. They are world-guided and not subject to our will.

What is true, however, is that we can have a considerable influence on our emotional dispositions. As I shall argue, this point constitutes the heart of the solution to the Irrationality Problem. Quite generally, it is important to see that emotional systems manifest an important degree of plasticity, in the sense that they are largely shaped, and can also be reshaped, by their socio-cultural environment (Prinz 2004: 234; Faucher and Tappolet 2008a). Though there is disagreement about the exact degree of plasticity, this is something that is acknowledged both by biological determinists (Ekman 2003; Tooby and Cosmides 1990), who claim that basic emotions are pan-culturally and universally shared as well as innate, and by social constructivists (Harré 1986; Averill 1985; Armon-Jones 1986), according to whom emotions are complex structures, composed of cognitions, expressions, experiences, action tendencies, etc., that are created and disseminated by socio-cultural groups. For instance, biological determinists claim that while fear is adapted to dangers, disgust to noxious stimuli, etc., the specific conditions that elicit our emotional responses may depend on the natural or cultural environment in which the individual develops. Learning is involved in selecting which stimuli activate the emotional systems. And this learning can depend on the natural and social environment. For instance, though it is generally believed that the Rhesus monkeys' disposition to fear snakes is innate, it is also acknowledged that this disposition puts itself into place only when the young monkey sees other monkeys manifesting fear when confronted with snakes.[95]

Now, what seems clear is that in contrast with our sensory apparatus, our emotional systems are characterized by plasticity.[96] Though both **(p.38)** emotions and sensory experiences have the characteristics of Fodorian modules, emotions are not, or at least much less, diachronically modular, compared to sensory experiences. Hence, though there is often little we can do about it at the time we experience the emotion, there is nonetheless good reason to subject

emotions to requirements of rationality and to consider inappropriate emotional responses as not just inappropriate but also as irrational. The irrationality accusation is an indication that something might be wrong with the emotional system that is responsible for the emotional reaction. But it is also the claim that if there is something wrong, some action *ought* to be taken to improve the reliability of emotional system.[97] The important point is that in contrast to the case of sensory perception, there is some hope that we can get rid of inappropriate emotions. Although there is a debate about the efficacy of both drugs and psychotherapies, no one doubts that it is possible to undergo deep changes in our emotional dispositions, even if only by immersing ourselves in a different kind of environment. If our emotional systems lacked plasticity, it would not make sense to require that we try to improve them.

This solution has the advantage of being thoroughly general. All of our emotional dispositions are plastic. Moreover, it is perfectly consistent with the claim that emotions are perceptual experiences. Of course, it is grounded in a difference with sensory experiences, which lack the plasticity that characterizes emotions. However, the claim that emotional dispositions are plastic does not take away any of the analogies between emotions and sensory experiences. And it does not impugn the claim that emotions allow us, when things go well, to be aware of values. To assess this solution fully, we would need to have a better idea of what requirements of rationality involve. In particular, we would need to examine the idea that such requirements are tied to the possibility of satisfying them. Even so, in so far as it relies on what I take to be a plausible version of the principle that *ought* implies *can*, according to which you are off the hook if there is nothing at all you can do, even indirectly, to improve things, the plausibility of this solution cannot be denied.[98]

(p.39) 1.6 Two Further Objections

Let me turn to a pair of arguments that aim to show that emotions cannot inform us about evaluative properties. The first one is based on the observation that emotions are states for which it makes sense to ask for reasons. As Brady notes, “the fact that the dog has sharp teeth and a short temper is a reason to fear it” (2007: 276; see also Brady 2013: 112–13). Brady uses this observation to argue against the Perceptual Theory, and more specifically against the epistemological claim, which he takes to be at the core of the Perceptual Theory, that emotions are thought to have the same role with respect to evaluative judgments as sensory experiences have with respect to sensory beliefs. His point is that in contrast to sensory experiences, emotions typically fail to silence demands for justification even when the conditions are normal and there are no defeaters (2013: 86–9). This is explained by the fact that in typical cases the question arises as to whether or not the emotion is justified. Suppose that in answer to the question “Why do you find Sarah admirable?” I simply say that I

admire Sarah. This answer will surely appear unsatisfactory and I will immediately be asked why I admire Sarah.

This admittedly makes for a difference between emotions and sensory experiences. But this difference does not entail that emotions are deprived of justificatory power. A first point that should be underlined is that in the face of widespread emotional disagreements, it is natural to turn to a discussion regarding the features of what is evaluated instead of simply invoking what we feel. As Adam Pelser highlights, this is akin to the strategy of pointing out of the window when trying to convince an interlocutor that it is raining, the hope being that he will gain a similar perceptual experience (2014: 120).

A second point concerns the justification of emotions. The reason why emotions allow for justification is due to the fact that the evaluative features that are perceived in the emotion depend, and in fact supervene, on the natural features of the world.[99] Fearsome dogs usually have sharp **(p.40)** teeth and short tempers, for instance. And if a dog has sharp teeth and a short temper, it is likely to be dangerous (at least for a normal human being), and thus fearsome. So, the fact that a dog has these features gives you reason to perceive it as fearsome, for after all, such a dog is likely to be fearsome, that is, to make fear appropriate. Thus, while it is true that emotions differ from sensory experiences with respect to justification, this has more to do with the nature of values than with the nature of emotions.

However, there is also a difference at the level of emotions. As I noted earlier, the former have cognitive bases, while sensory perceptions do not. Given this, it is natural to suggest that emotions have justification conditions, which can be articulated in terms of the cognitive states—sensory experiences, beliefs, memories, etc.—on which they are based.[100] The fear you experience of a dog on the basis of an unjustified and possibly false belief that it has sharp teeth and a short temper—suppose that fierce-looking dog is in fact a toothless puppy and that you've been told this by a trustworthy friend—appears to be unjustified. In the same way, admiration is surely not justified if it is based on an unjustified and possibly false belief about what has been achieved by someone. Thus, emotions can be justified or not, and their justification depends on the justification of the cognitive states on which they are based.

What remains true, however, is that even if emotions have justification-conditions, the modest epistemological claim that undergoing an emotion makes the corresponding evaluative judgment *prima facie* justified is not affected. *Prima facie* justification is quite a minimal epistemic status, which is not that difficult to attain. If you are afraid of a dog, it is surely something that makes your belief that the dog is fearsome *prima facie* justified. In the same way, it is plausible that the belief that your friend's accomplishment is admirable is *prima facie* justified given the admiration that you feel. One should, it seems, grant

that an emotion can confer *prima facie* justification.[101] (I return to these issues in section 5.2.)

What about the claim that emotions are perceptions of evaluative properties, and thus can inform us about such properties? Parallel to the worry regarding the justification of evaluative beliefs, one might **(p.41)** argue that the fact that emotions are open to why questions is a problem for the claim that emotions can inform us about evaluative properties. On this view, only if emotions were immune to such why questions could they be trusted to tell us something about evaluative properties. Consider anger. How could my being angry at someone's remark inform me about that remark's offensive quality if the question as to whether or not my anger is justified is wide open?

The key point to make in reply to this objection is that the thesis under consideration recognizes that emotions can misrepresent their objects. All it says is that emotions, in so far as they are a kind of perceptual experience, *can* inform us about evaluative properties. Emotions only do inform us about such properties when they are appropriate, that is, when they represent things correctly. The question is thus how it could be that an appropriate emotion that represents things as they are could inform us about evaluative properties when we have no idea whether or not the emotion is justified. But now it becomes clear that this is just like asking whether a belief could be true when we have no idea whether or not it is justified. And, of course, the answer to that question is that this can indeed be true. Indeed, on most accounts of epistemic justification, it is accepted that a belief can be true while being unjustified. Similarly, it may well be the case that an emotion is appropriate even though we have no idea whether or not it is justified. So, emotions can inform us about evaluative properties even though the question as to whether or not they are justified remains open.

What might lie at the bottom of Brady's objection is the suspicion that even though emotions have representational content, this content is too heavily dependent on the content of other states for it to be true that emotions themselves inform us about evaluative properties. In effect, this is the objection raised by Jérôme Dokic and Stéphane Lemaire (2013), an objection to which I now turn. As Dokic and Lemaire argue, there are several epistemological stories that someone who argues that emotions are a kind of perception can have in mind.[102]

A first option is to embrace a reliability-based account. Thus, according to Prinz's neo-Jamesian view, emotions are both perceptions of characteristic bodily changes and reliable indicators of what he calls "core **(p.42)** relational themes" or "concerns"—what are commonly called "formal objects"—namely organism-environment relations that bear on well-being, such as dangers, losses, and offenses (Prinz 2004; 2007).[103] Assuming a Dretskean account of representation,

according to which reliable indication is at the heart of representation, Prinz argues that emotions can be genuine representations of concerns, and that given the important analogies with sensory experiences, emotions can be considered to be perceptions of concerns (2007: 146 and 158). An initial problem with this account is that it is far from clear that the relation between emotions and concerns is a reliable one. More often than not, emotions misfire—we are afraid of a great number of innocuous things, and we are angry at a great many non-offensive people.

The account I favor, which Dokic and Lemaire call the "direct access thesis," is the main alternative to the reliabilist account. According to this account, perception is a form of "openness" to the world, in the sense that we perceive fragments of the world, which are presented in our perceptual experience.[104] Perception can thus be considered to constitute first-hand and direct evidence for our ordinary empirical judgments. According to the most common version of the direct access thesis as it applies to emotions, emotions can be modeled on color perceptions, or more generally on the perceptions of secondary qualities.[105]

Against the color model, Dokic and Lemaire argue that unlike the color content of visual perception the evaluative information that is carried by the emotion is in fact not given in the emotion, but imported into the content of the emotion from outside. As they put it, the evaluative content cannot be *presented* in the emotional experience, though it can be *represented*, something which depends on informational enrichment. It is thus *via* informational enrichment that the emotion comes to represent evaluative properties, so that what is represented goes beyond what is perceptually presented. Such informational enrichment, they explain, can derive from a variety of sources: habits, past experience, general beliefs, or mere association. According to Dokic and Lemaire it is **(p.43)** only on the basis of beliefs that are independent of the emotion that emotions represent evaluative properties. Here is what they write: "But why is it so tempting to think that emotions present response-dependent values? Our response is that although emotions have no response-dependent evaluative presented content, they appear to have one because their non-evaluative presented content has been evaluatively enriched" (2013: 237). This enrichment can take various forms, since it can include "explicit and implicit beliefs, cognitive habits, past experience and associations" (2013: 243).[106]

It can be agreed that if the evaluative content of emotions were imported by informational enrichment, it would be misleading to say that emotions inform us about evaluative properties. At best, emotions would carry information that has been gathered by different mechanisms. The only role that one could attribute to emotions is that of highlighting such independently collected information, so as to ensure that the organism takes good notice of that information. Emotions

would be like red flags that happen to be attached to informational states, which have an independent source.[107]

Why should we think that the evaluative content of emotion is imported by informational enrichment? The heart of Dokic and Lemaire's argument is that in so far as evaluative properties are normative, they are ill-suited to be the kind of thing that can figure directly in the content of a perceptual state.[108] They claim that if the properties in question were merely dispositional properties, such as the property of being disposed to cause fear or to cause disgust, it could be the case that emotions present things as having such properties. If this were the case, evaluative properties would be no different from color properties, and of course, nobody doubts that color properties can figure in perception without requiring informational enrichment. The problem, they argue, is that in contrast with color properties, evaluative properties are not **(p.44)** dispositional properties, but normative properties. In their words, the color model "leads directly to the conclusion that emotions are perceptions of dispositional properties such as *fearsome, disgusting, amusing*, etc" (2013: 234). They conclude that "[w]e have not earned the right to conclude anything stronger and especially not that emotions are perceptions of value properties that bear the same name but are plainly different" (2013: 234).

It is quite right that evaluative properties are not dispositional properties. Being admirable, say, is not merely being such as to cause admiration. There are many things that cause admiration, but are not admirable. The question, then, is why emotions cannot inform us about evaluative properties understood in non-dispositional terms. After all, sensory experiences can inform us about non-dispositional, or primary, properties.[109] We see shapes, for instance, and shapes can figure in the content of perception without requiring informational enrichment. So, if one allows that primary properties such as shapes can figure in perception in the absence of informational enrichment, there appears to be no reason to doubt that evaluative properties can do so as well.[110]

In reply, Dokic and Lemaire could deny that non-dispositional properties can be presented in experiences. In fact, when they introduce the color model, they argue that what is presented in the experience has to be dispositional because of another feature of the color model. They claim that according to this model "emotional experiences must present values just as visual experiences of red present redness. In other words, the evaluative intentional content of emotions must be presented through our emotional feelings, under the guise of the emotional experience" (2013: 233). And according to them, it is only in so far as colors are dispositional properties that we may say that such properties are presented in our visual experiences, under the guise of the emotional experience. However, what the analogy with shape perception suggests **(p.45)**

is that there is no need to accept the claim that only dispositional properties can be presented in our visual experience.

The question that arises, then, is whether there is something special about evaluative properties that make their perception impossible without informational enrichment. Quite generally, it might be claimed that the normativity of evaluative properties makes for a sufficiently important difference with natural properties to threaten the Perceptual Theory. More should and will be said (in Chapter 3, section 3.9) about what is involved in being an evaluative and normative property. In particular, one question that arises is whether the normativity of evaluative properties prevents them from playing the kind of causal role that seems required for them to be the object of perceptual experiences. However, the point to make is that it would amount to simple-minded empiricism to claim that evaluative properties are barred from being presented in perception. And indeed, it is not a point that Dokic and Lemaire make. So, it turns out that their argument only threatens what they call the color model of the Perceptual Theory, not the Perceptual Theory per se.

Conclusion

I have argued that emotions are perceptions of a kind on the basis of the important analogies with sensory experience. What I would like to emphasize, however, is that these analogies should not make us blind to the differences between emotions and sensory experiences. True, given the liberal account of perception I proposed, these differences do not threaten the Perceptual Theory. But even so, understanding in what ways emotions differ from sensory experiences is crucial.

What are the implications of the Perceptual Theory? As we will see, the proposed account throws light on the nature of evaluative judgments, on the concept of responsibility, as well as on our understanding of autonomous agency. Before turning to these implications, I will consider the question of how emotions relate to motivation and action. This will allow us to address the worry that the motivational aspect of emotions sits ill with the claim that they consist in a kind of perceptual experience. More importantly, examining the relation between emotions and motivation will set the stage for a better understanding of the role of emotions in agency. **(p.46)**

Notes:

([1]) Thus, Peter Goldie distinguishes between scientific explanation and prediction, and another sort of endeavor: “Our thought and talk of emotions is embedded in an interpretative (and sometimes predictive) narrative which aims to make sense of aspects of someone’s life. These concepts give us, so to speak, the equipment with which to understand, explain and predict what people think, feel, and do: a personal and thoroughly normative approach” (2000: 103). Also

see Roberts 2003, chap. 1 for the claim that conceptual analysis and scientific methods are complementary because they address different aspects of emotions.

([2]) See for instance Pitcher 1965: 331–2; Lyons 1980: 142; Mulligan 1998: 163; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 8.

([3]) This appears to correspond to a common understanding of emotions. As Nico Frijda remarks, when people are asked to describe one of their recent emotional incidents, more than 50 percent describe episodes lasting more than an hour and 22 percent describe episodes longer than twenty-four hours. His studies show that these people have a sense of continuity of their experience; they perceive the episodes as wholes (see Frijda 1994: 62). See also Goldie 2000 for the distinction between emotions and episodes of emotional experience, where the former are claimed to be more enduring and more complex than the latter.

([4]) See for instance Griffiths 1997: chap. 10; Prinz 2004: 182–8; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 9.

([5]) Moods seem related to temperaments, which can be thought of as tendencies to undergo moods. See Deonna and Teroni 2012: 105–6.

([6]) See for instance Elster 1999: 272.

([7]) See Lazarus 1991: 48; Goldie 2000: 143; Prinz 2004: 185.

([8]) See Price 2006; Tappolet forthcoming.

([9]) See Frijda 1994: 64–5; Lazarus 1994: 80; Prinz 2007: 84; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 8.

([10]) Thanks to Jingsong Ma for information on this emotion. According to her, it is not clear that *pa-leng* is a morbid fear of the cold, associated with a yin/yang imbalance (but see Prinz 2004: 135 and Kleinman 1980).

([11]) See Fredrickson 1998: 307. More generally, on the interaction between emotions and attention, see de Sousa 1987: 195–6; Damasio 1994: 197–8; Derryberry and Tucker 1994; Faucher and Tappolet 2002; Brady 2013: 20–3, 2014.

([12]) See *Treatise*, II. 3. iii.

([13]) See for instance Ekman 1972; Plutchik 1980; Cosmides and Tooby 2000; Griffiths 1997; Panksepp 2000; D’Arms and Jacobson 2003.

([14]) Ekman’s initial list is fear, anger, happiness, sadness, surprise, and disgust (Ekman 1972). Later on Ekman proposed a list of fifteen basic emotions: amusement, anger, contempt, contentment, disgust, embarrassment, excitement, fear, guilt, pride in achievement, relief, sadness, satisfaction, sensory pleasure,

and shame (Ekman 1999). D'Arms and Jacobson (2003) propose the following list of what they call "natural emotions," as opposed to "cognitive sharpening": amusement, anger, contempt, disgust, embarrassment, envy, fear, guilt, jealousy, joy, pity, pride, shame, and sorrow.

([15]) See Goldie 2000: 103; Roberts 2003: 14–36; Prinz 2004: 81–6; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 25–6.

([16]) This is what Prinz calls "the problem of parts" (2004: 4).

([17]) A theory that I will not discuss here is social constructionism (see Averill 1980, 1985; Armon-Jones 1986; Russell 2003, 2008). For an excellent book-length discussion of emotions theories, see Deonna and Teroni 2012.

([18]) But see de Sousa 1987 and Goldie 2000 for the claim that emotions are *sui generis* states. Note however that according to de Sousa the analogy with perception is nonetheless important. He speaks of emotions as "apprehensions" of values. In a later text, de Sousa claims that some emotions "are plausibly characterized as perceptions of values" (2002: 255). See also de Sousa 2011: 20–1; 36–7.

([19]) Another possibility is to opt for hybrid views. For instance, according to a view that used to be popular, emotions are desire-belief pairs (Gordon 1974; Marks 1982; Searle 1983; Green 1992). For critical discussion of hybrid views, see Goldie 2000: chap. 3 and Deonna and Teroni 2012: chaps 3 and 5.

([20]) In so far as the Attitudinal Theory defended by Deonna and Teroni (2012: chap. 7, esp. 79–80; 2014: 25–9) claims that emotions are felt bodily attitudes, which have to be understood in terms of felt action readiness, it is plausibly interpreted as a conative theory. For a critical discussion, see Dokic and Lemaire 2015.

([21]) For the notion of direction of fit, see Searle 1983.

([22]) See Lacewing 2004: 176 for this broad use of the concept of cognition.

([23]) See Meinong 1917; de Sousa 1987, 2002, 2011; Tappolet 1995, 2000a; Charland 1995, 1997; Elgin 1996, 2008; Stocker 1996; Johnston 2001; Döring 2003, 2007, 2008; Zagzebski 2003, 2004; Prinz 2004, 2008; Deonna 2006; Tye 2006, 2008; Betzler 2009; Wringe 2015. In so far as Roberts claims that construals are reminiscent of sense perception and that they need not be propositional, he might be considered to defend a perceptual theory (2003: 75; see also Roberts 2013: chap. 3). Goldie (2000) is sometimes interpreted as defending a Perceptual Theory, but even though his account of emotion underlines the analogies between emotions and sensory experiences, he in fact advocates that emotions are *sui generis* states.

([24]) See Goldie 2000: 62–72; Dainton 2000: chap. 2; Hatzimoysis 2007; Lacewing 2007; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 16–18.

([25]) See Cannon 1929: 352; Bedford 1957: 282–3; Alston 1967: 482; Green 1992: 32.

([26]) See Bedford 1957: 282–3.

([27]) See Brentano 1889: 11; Scheler 1913–6: 263; Meinong 1917: 129–31; Broad 1954: 293; Bedford 1957: 295–6; Hall 1961: chap. 12; Warnock 1957: 52; Pitcher 1965: 329 sqq.; de Sousa 1978: 686; 1987: 122; Lyons 1980: 8; Wiggins 1987: 187; Greenspan 1988: 83; Gibbard 1990: 7 and 277; Armon-Jones 1991: 135; Mulligan 1995: 76 and 1998; Elster 1999: 312–14.

([28]) See Bedford 1957; Kenny 1963: 60. For the claim that emotions are intentional, also see Brentano 1874; Pitcher 1965: 327; Alston 1967: 482; Wilson 1972: chap. 6; Lyons 1980: 104 sqq.; Marks 1982: 228; Gordon 1987: 22; de Sousa 1987: chap. 5; Husserl 1988: 252; Gaus 1990: 50; Elster 1999: 271–3. Because the “feelings towards” Peter Goldie (2000) postulates as essential to emotions are intentional, his account is not a Feeling Theory as specified here.

([29]) See Stampe 1987.

([30]) See Brady 2013: 32.

([31]) See Solomon 1976; Lyons 1980; Nussbaum 2001. Psychologists have defended the same kind of theory under the name of “Appraisal Theory”: see Arnold 1960; Lazarus 1991. See also the more sophisticated theory in terms of a multiplicity of appraisal dimensions advocated by Scherer et al. (2001).

([32]) See Lyons 1980: 207; Budd 1985: 5.

([33]) For a more complete discussion of such objections, see Griffiths 1997: chap. 2; Tappolet 2000a: chap. 5; and Robinson 2005: chap 1.

([34]) The first to make this point are Morreall (1993: 361) and Deigh (1994: 839).

([35]) See Rorty 1978; Gordon 1987: 195; Stocker 1987: 64; Greenspan 1988: 17 sqq.; Gibbard 1990: 130; Deigh 1994: 837; Helm 2001: 42; D’Arms and Jacobson 2003; Brady 2007.

([36]) See Rorty 1978; Greenspan 1988; Deigh 1994; D’Arms and Jacobson 2003.

([37]) Roberts’ theory in terms of concern-based construals (2003) is often counted as a form of quasi-judgmental theory, but this is not accurate, for according to Roberts, construals can be non-propositional and perceptual in a broad sense (2003: 67).

([38]) Ben-Ze’ev claims that the category of emotion is prototypical (2010: 42). See also Elster who suggests that the category is open-ended and ambiguous (1999: 241).

([39]) In a similar way, D’Arms and Jacobson write: “emotions (somehow) present the world to us as having certain value-laden features” (2000a: 66), whereas Goldie states that “[w]hen we respond emotionally to things in the environment, we also, as part of the same experience, typically perceive those things are having the emotion-proper property” (2004: 97).

([40]) According to Kenny, the formal object of a state is the object under that description which must apply to it if it is possible to be in this state with respect to it (1963: 132). He claims that the description of the formal object of an emotion involves a reference to belief: one has to believe that something is dangerous in order to feel fear. More recently, however, it has become common to claim that the formal object of an emotion is a property. Thus, de Sousa writes that “[t]he formal object of fear—the norm defined by fear for its own appropriateness—is the Dangerous” (2002: 251; also see Teroni 2007). Formal objects are distinct from the constitutive aim of emotions, i.e., truth or more broadly correctness (see de Sousa 2002 and 2011, chap. 3). Thanks to Mauro Rossi for discussions of this issue.

([41]) See Peacocke 1992; Crane 2009; Burge 2010. Thanks to Michele Palmira for drawing my attention to this point.

([42]) Following Heck (2000: 484–5), some distinguish between what is called the “state view,” according to which what is non-conceptual are states, and the “content view,” which is the claim that the contents of some states are not constituted by concepts. As others have argued, there are reasons to resist this distinction. See Bermúdez 2007; Bermúdez and Cahen 2012; Toribio 2008. There is no space here to discuss this issue, but friends of the distinction are welcome to read my claim as being merely a “state view.” Thanks to Jake Beck for help on this question.

([43]) See Dretske 1969 and Mulligan 1999. Note that in contrast to the perspective taken here, Goldie 2007 is concerned with the question of whether *epistemic* perception can be afforded by emotions.

([44]) See Evans 1982: 122–9, 154–60; Peacocke 1989, 1992: chap. 3; Crane 1988, 1992, 2009; Lowe 1992, 1996; Tye 1995: 139; Bermúdez 1998: chaps 3 and 4; Heck 2000: 489 sqq.

([45]) The distinction between these two types of content is congenial to that between two kinds of cognitive systems that is commonly made in psychology: System 1, which “operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control”; and System 2, which “allocates attention to the

effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computation” (Kahneman 2011: 20–1). See also Stanovich and West 2000; and Haidt 2001. In contrast with the view that System 1 is quick and effortless but mostly misleading, the conception of emotions I propose bestows on them a more positive role (see Chapter 5).

([46]) See Crane 1992: 144. As Crane notes (1992: 146), this suggestion goes back to Frege 1980: 115.

([47]) See Evans 1982: 132; Crane 1992: 147.

([48]) See Crane 1992: 149. Similarly, Prinz writes: “When one ascribes a propositional attitude, one generally assumes that the person to whom it is ascribed possesses the concepts that correspond to the words in the that-clause of the ascription” (2004: 23).

([49]) See Tappolet 1995 and 2000a: chap. 6; Charland 1995; Johnston 2001; D’Arms and Jacobson 2003; Tye 2006: 13–14, 2008: 40; Prinz 2007: 61. See also Griffiths 1997: 95 for the related claim that some types of emotions are cognitively encapsulated.

([50]) See Tappolet 2000a; Döring 2007, 2008: 89; Cuneo 2006: 70.

([51]) See Salmela 2011: 1 for this point.

([52]) See Tappolet 2000a: chap. 6; Prinz 2004: chap. 10, 2008; Deonna and Teroni 2012: chap. 6; Brady 2013: chap 2.

([53]) According to some, such as Siewert (2011), propositional attitudes such as beliefs are also characterized by phenomenal content. Whether this is so or not, it remains true that emotions and sensory experiences share a kind of phenomenal richness that is unlikely to characterize beliefs.

([54]) See Descartes 1649: art. 45; Alston 1967; de Sousa 1979: 141; Gordon 1987: chap. 6; Calhoun 1984; Deonna and Teroni 2012: chap. 1.

([55]) See Tappolet 2012, as well Tappolet 2000a: 154; D’Arms and Jacobson 2003: 142; Döring 2007, 2008; Prinz 2008: 157–8; Deonna and Teroni 2012: chap. 6; Brady 2013: 35.

([56]) See Fodor 1983.

([57]) See Hume 1739–41, II, 1, v; Meinong 1917: 30; Arnold 1960, vol. 1: 176–7; Pitcher 1965: 332; Thalberg 1977: 31; Lyons 1980: 71–2; Gordon 1969: 408; Husserl 1988: 252; Mulligan 1995: 67 sqq., 1998: 162; Elster 1999: 249–71; Deonna and Teroni 2012.

([58]) This is why Prinz (2008) speaks of “stimulus dependence” instead of informational encapsulation and of “quasi-modularity” instead of modularity.

([59]) In fact, many emotions appear to have all the characteristics of Fodorian modules (Fodor 1983: 63; Charland 1995; Griffiths 1997; Öhman and Mineka 2001; Prinz 2004, and especially Prinz 2008: 154–8). I will return to the question of modularity in Chapter 2, where I discuss the claim that the mechanisms that underlie emotional motivation are modular.

([60]) See Tappolet 2000a: chap. 5; Döring 2007, 2008.

([61]) See Nussbaum 1994: 41; Helm 2001: chap. 4, 2010: 57–66; and Shoemaker 2003: 94.

([62]) See Helm 2001: 43–4, 2010: 60–1; Salmela 2011: 13–14.

([63]) Thanks to Michael Lacewing for suggesting this point.

([64]) Salmela (2011) acknowledges this point, but claims that there is nonetheless a *prima facie* rational requirement at work in such cases. Even this weakened claim appears problematic, however. It is far from clear that if you care for your poppies you are *prima facie* required to feel relief if your poppies are not damaged.

([65]) See Tappolet 2000a: chap. 5.

([66]) See Peacocke 1986: 6, 1989: 304, 1992: 68. Also see Goodman 1968: chap. 4; Dretske 1981: chap. 6; Tye 1995: 139.

([67]) Emotions also satisfy the criterion proposed for analogical content proposed by Dretske. According to Dretske, a signal contains the information that x is F analogically only if it also contains information about x that is more specific than being F (1981: 137). This appears to be true of emotions, for it can be claimed that they contain information about the evaluative properties of their object as well as information about the degree of that evaluative property.

([68]) See Ben-Ze’ev 1996; and Frijda 2007: chap. 6.

([69]) See de Sousa 1987: 150; Helm 2001; Salmela 2011; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 68–71; Dokic and Lemaire 2013; Brady 2013: chap. 3.

([70]) Perhaps it gives a more nuanced picture of perception, too. Thanks to Adam Morton for suggesting this last point.

([71]) See Damasio 1994: 135.

([72]) According to Morton, who conceives of emotions as doing their own information processing, a great part of the phenomenology of emotions can be explained in terms of what happens at the level of thoughts: “[o]n the experiential side, there is the rhythm of the thinking that is prompted by the emotion, whether it is frantic or measured” (2013: 43).

([73]) See Deonna and Teroni 2012: 68–9. For the transparency of sensory experience, see Harman 1990 and Tye 1992, 1995, and 2000: 45–7, and for critical discussion, Martin 2002 and Crane 2014.

([74]) See Deonna and Teroni 2012: 68.

([75]) Thanks to Mark Nelson for suggesting this point.

([76]) See Tappolet 2005.

([77]) See de Vignemont 2011.

([78]) See O’Callaghan 2014. Thanks to Adam Morton for drawing my attention to multimodal perception.

([79]) A similar strategy is used in Deonna 2006 with respect to the link between emotions and motivation.

([80]) As expressions such as “time perception” or indeed “extrasensory experience” show, the ordinary usage of the term is not restricted to sensory experience. The broader use of the term is also vindicated by its etymology: “to perceive” comes from the Latin *percipere*, which means to obtain, to gather, or, metaphorically, to grasp with the mind, to take entirely, from *per*, which means thoroughly and *capere*, which means to grasp, to take (see Harper 2001, consulted August 2015).

([81]) See McDowell 1994: 111. As Dokic and Lemaire explain, the conception of emotion that follows is one according to which “emotions give us *direct access* to evaluative properties, in the sense that they perceptually present these properties at the level of their contents” (2013: 228). Such an account contrasts with a reliabilist conception, according to which emotions are thought to reliably co-vary with evaluative properties (2013: 229–30). On these issues, see also Deonna and Teroni 2012: 66–74 and Brady 2013: 70–2.

([82]) Thanks to Julien Deonna, Fabrice Teroni, and Benjamin Wald for pressing this point.

([83]) See Kauppinen 2013.

([84]) See Helm 2001; also see Brady 2007: 275–6.

([85]) See Helm 2001: 45. It is tempting to think that for Helm, emotions, which he calls “evaluative feelings,” are a kind of perception, but this interpretation would not sit well with his argument.

([86]) Put differently, such a requirement has “wide scope”: the agent is required to either revise her emotion or revise her judgment (see Broome 1999).

([87]) Döring (2014) argues against Helm that there is no irrationality involved given that different cognitive modes are involved. According to her, only contradiction warrants the accusation of irrationality. This assumption is far from obvious, as is illustrated by conflicts between practical judgment and action, which are readily taken to involve irrationality.

([88]) For convincing arguments against Roberts’ 2003 suggestion that the irrationality comes from the fact that emotions are concern-based representations, see Helm 2001: 43 and Brady 2007: 277. As Brady notes, one problem with this suggestion is that we can assume that we have a deep concern that our sensory experiences be correct.

([89]) See also Brady 2013: 20–3. In this book, Brady argues that the value of the attentional focus involved in emotions comes from the fact that it allows us to discover reasons that bear on the accuracy of our initial appraisal (2013: 93, 2014: 54). I find this implausible. It would rather seem that given your fear, it appears to you that something is fearsome and that what you are attending to is how this threat unfolds.

([90]) See de Sousa 1987: 195; Damasio 1994; Ledoux 1996; Wells and Matthews 1994; Vuilleumier et al. 2003: 419. For a survey, see Faucher and Tappolet 2002.

([91]) See James 1890; Duncan 1999; Matthews and Wells 1999.

([92]) See also Fredrickson and Branigan 2005; and Derryberry and Tucker 1994.

([93]) Kenneth Hugdahl and Kjell Morten Stormark claim that there is cognitive avoidance of aversive stimuli: “We believe that this effect may have been caused by cognitive avoidance in the sense that, after initial perception and registration of the cue, the participant actively avoids further processing if the stimulus is perceived as aversive. Thus there seems to be a mechanism of rapid disengagement of attention from the cue when it is aversive, moving attention to a different spatial location” (2003: 289).

([94]) In fact, as is suggested in Bianchi et al. 2012, the recognition that one has been let down by one’s perceptual system produces a concern, a state that is naturally taken to involve attentional focus.

([95]) See Mineka et al. 1984, quoted by Prinz 2004: 104.

([96]) Note however that according to Prinz (2004: 324), who refers to Gregory's (1966) suggestion that the Müller-Lyer illusion occurs only in cultures whose members see many sharp corners, both emotions and sensory experiences would allow for slow and gradual cultural influences.

([97]) *Pace* Döring 2014: 126–7, the *ought* of rationality at stake here is *pro tanto*, for there might be reasons of a different type that militate against taking action.

([98]) Thanks to Hichem Naar and Michele Palmira for discussing this issue.

([99]) Natural properties can be defined as the ones corresponding to the concepts in which natural sciences, as well as—on a liberal conception of natural concepts—social and human sciences, including psychology, are couched (see Moore 1903: 92; Smith 1994: 17). I return to the question of the relation between the evaluative and the natural in section 3.9. See de Sousa 1987: 122; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 96–7.

([100]) See Deonna and Teroni 2012: chap. 8.

([101]) Brady is in fact very close to granting that emotions can confer *prima facie* justification when he claims that emotions can provide "*proxy* or *pro tempore* reasons" for evaluative beliefs (2013: 118, 129–30).

([102]) Also see Brady 2013: 70–3.

([103]) An important difference with the account I favor is that I take it that emotions can have non-relational evaluative properties as their formal objects. See Chapter 3, section 3.9.

([104]) See Dokic and Lemaire 2013: 228, who refer to McDowell 1994: 111.

([105]) The main proponents of this model are Wiggins 1987: 199; McDowell 1985, reprinted in 1998: 134; D'Arms and Jacobson 2005: 190.

([106]) Compare Goldie 2007 for a similar conception of the perception of evaluative facts, according to which evaluative facts can be perceived immediately, in the sense of being arrived at non-inferentially in the phenomenological sense, but are not perceptually manifest in the way that colors are.

([107]) This is the same picture as the one assumed by theories according to which emotions are caused by independent appraisals.

([108]) On the face of it, this sounds empirically implausible. Presumably the main things animals need to perceive are good-things-to-eat, bad-things-to-eat, good-things-to-try-to-mate-with, etc. Thanks to Barry Maguire for this point.

([109]) In fact, the assumption that colors are dispositional properties is not only controversial, it sits ill with the claim that we perceive colors, dispositions being properties that can manifest themselves, but need not do so.

([110]) In fairness, it has to be noted that Dokic and Lemaire (2013: 238–41) consider a close but distinct possibility, according to which what emotions present are response-independent properties on which evaluative properties supervene, such as danger (for fearsomeness) or incongruity (for amusingness). They argue, quite rightly, that such response-independent properties are not presented in our emotional experience.