

The Cognitive Role Immanent in Emotions: The Embodiment of Emotional Sensation

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Cognitive Role in Emotions

This is an interdisciplinary study of cognition and emotions. Philosophy of mind and cognitive science, on the one hand, generally discuss the nature of cognition by discussing that of its various faculties, such as language and perception; however, it is as yet unclear as to the nature of the cognitive role immanent in emotions. In particular, it remains unclear whether the fundamental notions of the mind frequently discussed—such as representation and embodiment—can also be employed to explain that cognitive role, or should such notions be somehow altered in order to fit the nature of emotions? On the other hand, the cognitive role in emotions turns up as a central issue in philosophy of emotions, specifically in the cognitive theory (or cognitivism) of emotions (de Sousa, 2002; Solomon, 2004b), as opposed to the somatic theory of emotions (Damasio, 1994, 1999; Prinz, 2004). In that theory, it is recognized that immanent in emotions is there *judgment*, which is sometimes propositional but may well be non-propositional, non-articulated, non-conscious, and even be kinesthetic, as evident in animal judgments; besides, emotional judgment is taken as less episodic than procedural; furthermore, emotions are seen as bearing the essence of *active* engagement in the world (Solomon, 2004). The question is how such an eclectic composite of judgment is possible, an important question as yet rarely discussed in philosophy of emotions. The present research aims to solve the above questions, by proposing that the above-mentioned cognitive role is indeed played by a novel kind of sensation, consisting of *emotional senses*.

Cognitivism of Emotions

The cognitivism of emotions, so far, describes what emotions are like without *explaining* 1. *why* the emotional judgment takes so diverse forms, 2. *how it is possible* to simultaneously hold affects and judgment in a single emotional sense. Despite its name, this cognitivism of emotions, while insisting that emotions consist in judgment, does not constrain how emotional judgment consists of. This opens up a possibility of taking embodiment into cognitivism of emotions. This would look contradictory for the cognitivism in the general understanding of *cognition*, but surprisingly not for the cognitivism of *emotions*.

The present paper will answer the aforementioned two explanatory questions, by raising a theory of *active emotions*. The emotional agent keeps confronting various situations. The emotional sense is constantly active because

it evaluates how her own self's well-being would become when she confronts her surroundings. It is active also because the emotional subject keeps changing the background/context of her emotional judgment, and because she is an agent who is keen to enhance her well-being.

Emotional Senses and Embodiment

As this research proposes, the relationship between judgment and sensation is like an across-level spiral. At the lowest level, when an emotional subject encounters life-affecting situations, certain specific emotional senses (such as fear or cheer) arise. Affects, turning up in fixed association with sensory perception, are epiphenomena of neurophysiological structures activated in those situations. Emotional affects are themselves judgments, because they are mutually distinct; accordingly, such affects can be named to be *emotional senses*. In addition, those senses could further serve as bases of higher-level emotional judgment, such as thinking and imagination, and thus the spiral goes upward. The spiral, besides, can also go downward, as results of higher-level thinking (e.g. inference) can incur a lower-level emotion (e.g. fear). Thus, the spinal structure of emotional sensation and judgment may allocate emotions at various levels. The emotional judgment generally refers to complex background understandings of well-being. As emotional judgment arises, the emotional subjects constantly interact with the complex environment. Such complexities and the above-mentioned affects as epiphenomena, pinpoint a novel form of embodiment, for understanding cognition and emotions.

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