A Research Program for a Taxonomy of Moods

Abstract

Introduction

Subjectively, we experience moods in seemingly thousands of different shades. Currently, we have no model for describing their variety. I will sketch a research program of our personal moods to identify, reproduce, contrast, transform, interpret and appreciate them so that we might understand and share them just as we do any language.

A first step is to model our most basic emotional responses. In 1994, I attempted to think through a cognitive structure that would make sense of six responses which are essentially those which psychologist Paul Ekman found can be observed in the faces of young infants, namely: happiness, sadness, excitement, surprise, fear and disgust. What is the simplest way that I might evoke these responses within myself?

I once read that we are struck by existential sadness when our deeply held assumptions turn out to be wrong. So I imagined myself as a child playing with alphabet blocks. I would pick up a block, guess what letter was on the other side, and see if I was right. I discovered that I could describe each of the six feeling in terms of the consequences of my expectations. I am surprised if my expectations prove wrong about the world, but I am devastated if my expectations prove wrong about my very self. The same boundary distinguishes excitement and contentment, fright and disgust, anger and hate, relief and depression. In this paper, we extend this model to give precise definitions to other emotional states known as peace, suspense, boredom, restlessness, anxiety, anger, hate, relief and depression.

A next step is to make sense of data, namely, poems, which evoke specific emotional states.

Literature

Presently, there are no techniques for identifying, describing or evoking specific moods. Existing psychological approaches do not promise any such techniques. Various ideas in phenomenology offer more hope and can perhaps make sense of recent work in neuroscience.

Psychology

In the literature of psychology, the word *mood* is so vague that it is not clear whether there are specific moods. In this paper, we seek to show that there are. However, there is a school of thought that moods are characterized by their lack of specificity to the extent that they may have no specific target and may not be associated with any specific behavioral impulses. [33] The idea that moods are indeterminate is understandable if one does not dwell on one's own internal, subjective, personal experience of moods, but simply considers moods in the context of studying other people's behavior. Indeed, radical behaviorists such as Skinner felt that moods and feelings were uninteresting and should and could be completely ignored by psychologists. [7] In our day, the theory of psychological construction explicitly rejects any real difference between cognition and emotion, specifically, any distinction between emotion and mood, and especially, any notion of basic emotions. [45]

The terms *mood* and *emotion* are typically defined with regard to each other. There is a lack of agreement as to whether moods and emotions are qualitatively distinct or simply refer to different segments of a quantitative continuum. [33] Moods have been distinguished as "low-intensity, diffuse and relatively enduring affective states without a salient antecedent cause and therefore little cognitive content (e.g. feeling good or feeling bad)," whereas emotions "are more intense, short-lived and usually have a definite cause and clear cognitive content" (e.g., anger or fear). [31] Researchers today often suppose moods and emotions to have, as an essential component, a more generic, ambient feeling, *core affect*, said to be the affective aspect of every conscious state, the most elementary consciously accessible affective feeling, variable but ever present, nonreflective, present in forms such as pleasure or displeasure, tension or relaxation, and energy or tiredness. [40] [12] This more general concept is useful in experiments which avoid making unnecessary distinctions between moods, emotions and affective states which may be neither. [12] However, this generality invites skepticism that core affect is a scientific term for an emotional ether, the life-force qi of traditional Chinese medicine, possibly "The Force" of Star Wars, or simply an unhelpful construct. [55]

There is a general consensus that emotions and moods are about appraisal. [12] They inform us about our general state of being, that is, they facilitate self-regulation, and they prime us for activity. [33] Moods may be unconscious or conscious. [33] They can serve as backdrops for events, frames of mind, or become themselves the focus of attention. [33] They may stir us to search for the circumstances which aroused them. [33]

A key idea of this paper is that emotions and moods arise in the context of past expectations. Sadness is often linked to disappointment. Anger has been observed in infants upon violating their expectations. [37] Within the theory of psychological construction, it has been argued that the brain is trying to reduce entropy, and so is engaged by events which are novel or which violate expectations, and attends to them further until it arrives at stable internal representations. [46] However, in the most widespread psychological theories, moods are appraisals of what the future might bring, although the exact point in the future need not be specified. [12] Moods are said to be anticipations of whether or not one will have adequate resources in striving for one's goals. [32] They express the expectation of future pleasure and pain. [34] A recent paper notes that experiences affect mood, which in turn affects experiences. It further cites recent research that mood reflects the cumulative impact of differences between reward outcomes and expectations, and ultimately argues that mood serves as an adjustable baseline for evaluating experiences. [14] Another recent paper explores the relationship between mood and time perspective. [15]

Recently, there is concern that decades of research into moods has entrenched simplistic models from the 1980s that are simply wrong. [12] [19] There is a lack of new models. [11] Moods are typically considered in the broadest sense, as good moods and bad moods; positive, neutral and negative moods; elevated moods, depressed moods and anxious moods. [1] [13] [2] Existing 2x2 models are hardly better. They reduce moods to points in an X-Y plane, which may be given by: [12]

- High-or-Low Positive vs. High-or-Low Negative
- Pleasantness-Unpleasantness vs. Activation-Arousal-Engagement
- High-or-Low Energy vs. High-or-Low Tension.

These types of models are insufficient for deciphering our moods as a language. If we are to make sense of our moods as signals, a language which has evolved over millions of years, then that language

needs to distinguish well-defined states, not vague continua. People are able to understand themselves and each other surprisingly well when they use words to refer to particular emotional states they experience. Such words would be undefinable if emotions were simply locations in a featureless plane. Instead, cross cultural studies have confirmed the distinctness and universality of the most basic emotions, those which can be interpreted in the facial expressions of babies. [36] [35]

Among many researchers, there is rather loose agreement as to a set of most basic emotions (joy, sadness, disgust, anger, surprise, fearfulness). New born infants express distress, pleasure and interest. 3 month old children show feelings of joy, sadness and disgust. Anger, surprise and fearfulness appear by the first 6-8 months, before a sense of self-consciousness. [35] These emotions involve facial expression, physiological responses, subjective feelings, and characteristic adaptive behavior. As basic emotions, they are included in systems by theorists such as Ekman and Friesen, Izard, Plutchik and Tomkins. [7] Dissenting views include Averill, Ortony and Turner, and Russell. [39] [7] Power and Dalgleigh accept the six basic emotions as distinctive universal signals, but argue that happiness and surprise do not have emotion-specific physiologies, and that surprise is simply a cognitive component which could be present with any emotion. [38] Plutchik, considering adaptive biological processes, adds acceptance and anticipation. Izard includes interest instead of surprise, and adds contempt, distress, guilt and shame. Tomkins, considering density of neural firing, adds interest, distress and shame. [39] [38] Others consider such states as fatigue, serenity, sleepiness and alertness. [12]

The dimensional and discrete approaches have been combined to create haphazard scales which have been enshrined through wide use. [12] [7] These scales expand upon the basic emotions.
- PANAS-X (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) consists of 11 scales: Fear, sadness, guilt, hostility; Joviality, self-assurance, attentiveness; Shyness, fatigue, serenity, surprise.
- DES (Differential Emotions Scale) lists: Fear, sadness, anger, contempt, disgust, hostility inward, guilt, shame, shyness, surprise, interest, enjoyment.
- POMS (Profile of Mood States) has 6 scales: Tension/Anxiety, Anger/Hostility, Vigor/Activity, Fatigue/Inertia, Depression/Dejection, Confusion/Bewilderment. POMS2 includes a seventh dimension, Friendliness.

A language of emotions and moods needs to leverage distinctions that are highly structured with regard to each other. Researchers in psychology are not exploring the distinctions they might observe through personal experience, how one feels in an emotion or mood and what one learns from it. [19] They are relying on lists of adjectives, which is to say, superficial knowledge, and are not revealing more precise states which those adjectives might refer to. [8] [10] Such states would be well defined if we could sense the distinct change in our feelings when a value along some underlying dimension changes distinctly, just as we hear such differences in phonology. We should rely on our emotional imagination as our investigatory tool to explore and map out our emotional geometry.

Phenomenology

The phenomenological literature on mood is even less definitive than the psychological literature, and its models are less structured. However, it offers several ideas that are relevant in formulating a new model for emotions and moods. Namely, it relates our emotional life to expectations, the boundary between self and world, and shifts in outlook. Phenomenologists note our capacity to feel an emotion while being in a mood, to empathize with another's mood, to ascribe a mood to a place, to interpret moods as a nonverbal language, and to evoke moods with poetry.

In Heidegger's *Being and Time*, one of the defining features of our existential circumstances is that we ever find ourselves in some particular mood. [41] [17] In general, we find ourselves thrust into this world, we know not why, and yet we can likewise project ourselves into some world of our own choosing. We are free and yet we find ourselves ever becoming absorbed with this particular world which we share with others. In this world, some mood ever imposes itself upon us, although we may yet try to establish our own mood. Consequently, we may apply ourselves, taking up concerns and matching them with our abilities. In summary, mood is that feature by which anything matters or not. [19]

Heidegger has been criticized for being sloppy, for confusing moods and emotions, and for singling out anxiety as the most fundamental, world-disclosive mood, whereas trauma might be such a fundamental mood for some trauma victims. [19] For Levinas, a key emotion is surprise, the confounding of expectations, as it is for Braver. [29]

Heidegger's ideas have been pursued to explain the sense of incarceration which features almost universally in first-hand-accounts of depression, where people find themselves in a world that lacks possibilities. [18] This suggests a wall that can arise between one's self and the world. It may be "intentional", walling us off from a particular matter, or "existential", walling us off from all of life. In contrast, Langeveld describes a child having their secret place, grounded in a mood of tranquility, peacefulness, where the distinctions between the outer and inner world melt into a single, unique, personal world, where they may come to self-understanding. [47] [20] In general, the boundary between self and world allows us to both distinguish and relate how we think and how we act, who we are and who we become. [20] Mentally, it gives sense to the spatial prepositions which Heidegger ever appeals to, but also van Manen: informing, reforming, transforming, performing and preforming. [20] Physically, we can intuit and ascribe a mood, an atmosphere, to an architectural or natural space. [20] Gaston Bachelard describes this sense in *The Poetics of Space*, concretely, in terms of attics, drawers, nests and shells, but also abstractly, with inside-outside as a dialectic of suffering by which we engage the Absolute. [49] Christopher Alexander appeals to the universal nature of this experiential sense in *The Timeless Way of Building*, where structure channels activity, recurring activity evokes structure, and the resulting patterns heighten the Quality Without a Name. [50] The mood of a place can serve as a baseline reference for our own mood. It also helps us understand other people's moods. Slojterdijk rethinks Heidegger's *Being and Time* and being-in-the-world as "Being and Space" and being-in-spheres, that is, living in a variety of different cultures and communities which have their own moods. [48]

The shifting boundary between self and world can make for a language of situations in which we can imagine ourselves and empathize with others. Such empathy is consequential in a geometry of meaningful boundaries which distinguish right or wrong understanding of what we are going through and how we feel. Just as we imagine objects like cups having a general utility, so we can suppose what we or others might typically feel like in specific circumstances. We can empathize with another's mood and yet return to our own. Van Manen writes of a pathic intelligibility by which we have a felt, nonverbal understanding of ourselves in situations, our own bodies and beyond, as explored by Heidegger, Lingis and Buytendijk. [20]

Many phenomenologists and cognitivist psychologists share a desire to express the complexity of an emotional language. Cognitivist accounts develop this complexity in terms of information or as propositions. [30] [28] Phenomenologists argue for a wider taxonomy of emotional targets. The target of regret may be a proposition, the target of love may be a person, and a mood may have no target at all. [28]

Phenomenology, as a reflective method and practical discipline, depends on the writing of experiential stories in order to document, evoke and reflect on all that we feel. [20] Curiously, poetry may be thought of as that practical discipline. A poem is, at its most minimal, the brief expression of a single simple mood. [26] In lyric poetry, the goal is to share real-life experiences in a way that others can feel them. [24] The resources of poetry offer hope to express abnormal experiences such as waking up into a different world, the nightmare of depression, or feeling excitement and anticipation upon being stimulated in the Medial forebrain bundle-lateral hypothalamic area (MFB-LH). [18] [51] [20] The master poet evokes a mood, precisely, definitively, convincingly, and obligingly, as if we had created the poem ourselves. [20]

Neuroscience

Neuroscientist Panksepp has amassed results and fashioned a truly novel theory which demands consideration. His method has been to triangulate between study of brain function (especially in animals), subjective mental states (as reported by humans), and an evolutionary perspective on instinctual behaviors of young mammals. Based on neurological, microbiological, physiological and behavioral evidence, he has documented seven emotional activity systems: SEEKING (expectancy), FEAR (anxiety), RAGE (anger), LUST (sexual excitement), CARE (nurturance), GRIEF/PANIC (sadness), and PLAY (social joy). [51] [43]

In doing so, he has distinguished between three levels of emotional processes:

1. Primary-processes are the seven activity systems. They are integrated in the Periaqueductal Gray. They are comparable to hunger, thirst, pleasure and disgust.
2. Secondary-processes are emotions such as empathy, trust, blame, pride, shame and guilt, which are inbuilt emotional learning mechanisms that incorporate relationships to objects and intersubjectivity. They take place in the amygdala and elsewhere in the basal ganglia. They may be considered habits, and as learning systems are comparable to classical conditioning (imprinting associations) through FEAR and instrumental and operant conditioning (reward and punishment) through SEEKING.
3. Tertiary-processes are emotional thoughts, deliberations and strategies, such as naming feelings, being mindful of them, mentalizing, distancing, and containing them. These take place in the neocortex. They are comparable to thinking, planning and the sense of free will.

Are SEEKING and FEAR primary-processes or secondary-processes? Panksepp and Biven's Figures 1.4 and 1.7 differ on this question. SEEKING and FEAR are the best understood and the most important of the seven processes. The issue is key to what Panksepp calls the most important question in neuroscience: How are raw affective experiences created in the brain? He seems to think that consciousness is rooted in primary-processes, distinct types of affective consciousness, one for each system. Such raw, visceral origins would explain, for example, why depression feels so bad. Moreover, it would establish a shared emotional outlook amongst humans and a wide variety of fellow creatures.

This paper offers a different or simply additional interpretation of Panksepp and his colleagues' research as to what it means to feel emotion. The key idea is that we have "a heart", which is to say, we live an emotional life, we experience a cohesive emotional world, as if made of one cloth. We feel one emotion at any one time, however "mixed" it may be, and all of our emotions feel comparable even though our body lives them out in such drastically different ways. When asked, "How do you feel?" we

don't say or feel, "My heart is racing, and my palms are sweaty." Instead, we say and feel that we're upset, or thrilled, or depressed. In doing so, we don't feel like we're comparing apples with oranges, that is, comparing across categories, even though our body surely would, if it could.

Similarly, by default, we live our sensory life as an integrated whole. When we play guitar, it takes effort to isolate the plucking and the strumming, the sound we make and the reaction of the audience we see and hear. Similarly, it takes effort to mindfully experience the distinct physiology of LUST or RAGE or CARE or PLAY or GRIEF as such. In this view, these circuits stand independently in that they serve different needs, as do our ears and eyes and fingers. However, we "live" them, we experience them mindfully, by way of a single emotional manifold which we intuit as it folds and unfolds. True, the vividness of these inputs may originate in raw physiology. But we only "feel" them, we are only emotionally aware of them, inasmuch as they shine their lights and cast their shadows on our emotional canvas.

Panksepp and Biven note that our brains include a neurological body-map which serves as a "proto-self". [51] [53] We can feel such a body-map at work when we extend our hand with a fork and feel our sense of touch extend along with it, or when we drive too close to another car, as if we're about to brush by them, or when we feel our private space invaded, or when we feel our stock price plummet. The body-map can be a neurological explanation for that phenomenological boundary between self and world, the distinctions that Heidegger made between the hammer which extends us, ready-at-hand, and the hammer which lies broken, present-at-hand. The distinction between self and world is thus not physiological, fixed and material, but neurological, flexible and semiotic. Similarly, we can think of our mind as a model of our body, and along with Graziano, we can think of awareness as operating on a model of our attention. [52] Is it then so radical to suppose that, if we only look, we will find a neurological explanation for an emotional schema by which we "feel" all that we feel. Such an emotional schema would function as the template for all emotional secondary-processes.

SEEKING is engaged in all of the other activity systems. A longer name for it is SEEKING-EXPECTANCY. In this paper, expectations are the basis for the sought for template. Until our expectations are resolved, we experience them as suspense. Panksepp variously imagines SEEKING to generate a feeling of interest, a feeling of excitement and anticipation, which he interprets to be euphoria, apparently because mice who self-stimulate their MFB-LH will push levers to exhaustion. But humans, captivated by the low-level suspense of a movie or video game, will likewise tap on screens indefinitely. It is the feeling of a smoker on the prowl for a cigarette. This shows the substantial leeway for interpretation of how we and our fellow animals feel these activity systems.

In this paper, closely related to suspense is anxiety, which Panksepp identifies with the FEAR system. If expectations are indeed the basis for a universal emotional template, so that SEEKING-EXPECTANCY and FEAR-ANXIETY are secondary-processes which unify emotional experience, then we may have an understanding of the "embodied self", of the ancient subcortical midline systems which create an internally felt unified presence in the world, an explanation for the complexity (or simplicity) of whole emotional experiences, and the foundations for a unified theory of affect, which Panksepp and Biven claim not yet to have.

Panksepp reports his personal success with the controversial EMDR technique (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), which may allow one to access, recontextualize, reintegrate and reconsolidate affects associated with traumatic memories. In this paper, we do suggest more generally the circumstances for such reorientation. [51]

James took physiology to be the basis for emotion, so that first we feel and then we think what we feel. [54] But the body-map is neurological, not physiological. In this paper, we argue that first we think, and then we feel what we think.

The Alphabet Block Model of Basic Emotional Responses

Let us consider the simplest thought experiment - in the first person - by which we might apply our imagination to evoke emotional responses. I imagine myself a child, or better yet, I remember my childhood experiences. I am playing with alphabet blocks. I pick up a block, guess what letter is on the other side, and see if I am right.

Suppose I don't know the block very well. If I guess wrong, then I am surprised, but if I guess right, then I am excited. However, if I know the block with absolute certainty, if I can't imagine I could be wrong, if my self and my world depend on that, and yet indeed I am wrong, then I feel devastated, but if I am right, I feel content and assured.

Such introspection provides evidence that our feelings arise from our thoughts. By imagining the simplest expectations, void of context, we evoke the purest of emotional responses, those which are most reproducible, and thus, most elemental. At least, this is the fact which this paper depends upon. If it is false, then I suppose it means that we can't share our understanding of what we feel. If it is true, then we have a scientifically precise way, much better than any words, to define and consistently evoke certain emotional responses. We can appeal to these emotional responses as pure forms, and we can rely on our emotional sense to recognize them as some of the responses that we have when our expectations are resolved in every day life, when we succeed or fail at work or school, and when we discover how things actually are in our personal relationships.

A crucial distinction in this Alphabet Block Model is between that knowledge which we personally identify with, by which we define ourselves, and that knowledge which is more distant, exploratory, theoretical, out in the world. When I experience the unexpected, perhaps something too sudden, too strange, or too unpleasant for me to expect, then if it comes from beyond, I am frightened, and if it comes from within, I feel disgusted.

This model thus defines a variant of the six basic emotions: excited, surprised, content, sad, frightened and disgusted. It replaces anger, which has a moral tinge, with excitement. As in Lithuanian and perhaps other languages, it draws a sharp distinction between two kinds of happiness: excitement ("linksmas" = happy-fun) and contentment ("laimingas" = happy-fortunate). Of course, this is not simply a verbal distinction, but rather, these are two different feelings which we can apply our imagination to evoke, and which we then refer to with words. This model thus offers subjective meanings which we interpret in facial expressions that we make and observe.

The Alphabet Block Model also makes sense of two emotional responses which we can introspect but which we do not and cannot observe, namely peace and suspense. We feel suspense after we have made an expectation and before we know whether it has been met, and we feel peace when we make no expectations. These are responses of not knowing, whereas the other six are for knowing. We see from this model that seeking peace (which has us be sensitive to all emotions) and seeking happiness (by avoiding sadness) are two very different approaches to living.

Having defined these basic emotional responses, we can define other states in terms of them. Boredom is the lack of suspense. Restlessness is a lack of peace.

We can apply this model and test its predictions. Suppose I am afraid of a doctor injecting me with a needle. If I expect the injection, then I will no longer be afraid, even if it should hurt. If I do not allow myself to expect it, then my fear will persist. Although the emotional responses that our imaginations evoke are fleeting, lasting just a few seconds, we could explore what in our lives prolongs surprise, sadness, contentment and excitement. Psychological experiments could relate the duration and intensity of these feelings to the significance of the expectation and the duration and intensity of suspense. We often experience these feelings without knowing what causes them. Our model allows us to deduce unconscious expectations. This suggests that the purpose of an emotional language is to allow us to know ourselves. It seems to be a healthy practice to take our feelings seriously and listen to what they are trying to tell us.

Moral tones

A moral dimension arises when we make expectations about our expectations, which is to say, when we game our emotional system. We may judge that our expectations will likely not be met. We may fear that we will be sad. We may then switch our expectations and, for the sake of a false happiness, expect that which we do not wish. This turns out to be a moral error.

Negative moral tones arise when we expect that which we do not wish. Reflecting on this discord, our suspense becomes anxiety. If our suspicions are confirmed, then we feel a false happiness: hate (rather than sadness) and anger (rather than surprise). If our suspicions are refuted, then we feel relief (rather than excitement) and depression (rather than happiness). We thus find that depression occurs precisely when we could have been happy (because what we wanted to expect actually happened) but instead we feel incapacitated (because we wrongly expected what we did not want).

We feel positive moral tones as the impossibility of negative moral tones. For example, if we only expect what we truly wish for, then we feel love as the impossibility of hate. If we perceive that everything is outside of us, then disgust is impossible, and so we feel beauty. If we perceive that everything is within us, then fright is impossible, and so we feel intimacy. Thus we feel love, beauty and intimacy not as our own emotional responses, but rather as emanating from our environment - loving, beautiful, intimate.

The Purpose of Emotions

As part of this research program for making sense of moods, it is very useful at this point to consider the purpose of emotions.

Evolutionary science is very alluring in that it provides a context for inferring purposes. We can look at how structures develop and conjecture what purposes they serve. However, it's very easy to be a false prophet when there may be several purposes but we only explain the ones that what we think to see. For example, it's easy to say that the purpose is happiness. But what is the purpose of happiness? A physiologist, neurologist, psychologist or even a phenomenologist can't draw conclusions from the contingent processes which they study.

To illustrate this point, let us consider the personal remarks which Panksepp, the founder of affective neuroscience, shared in an hourlong video interview about happiness and our purpose in life.

What is our purpose? Happiness is the goal of every life. Alternatively, to try to avoid too much

sadness, too much grief. We have a responsibility to search for things that will make us happy. It is important to have happiness, more important than material things.

What is this feeling of happiness? Happiness is the feeling of SEEKING - curiosity, interest, euphoria. The main source of JOY is the play system. Some happiness also comes from the LUST system. We feel loved when others care for us through their CARE system. We then lack the psychological pain of the PANIC/GRIEF system.

What is the source of happiness? We don't have a HAPPINESS system. We have things that make us feel good. The world makes us happy by way of our brain. Happiness is a world that gives us many opportunities to do many interesting things, with many interesting people, with which to share wonderful meals and wonderful music. Happiness comes from the work that you want to do. Happiness is solidarity with others, a sense of family, friendship. Governments should work to make people happy.

Why are we not happy? Some people are sanguine, naturally cheerful, but others have dispositions that favor other systems: phlegmatic, melancholic or choleric. Psychiatric disorders are from imbalances of these systems. They can be genetic.

Is happiness genuine? We can be excessively, unrealistically happy. We can suffer mania, which makes us do stupid things. Opioids make us feel content by masking our loneliness. However, the thing we are escaping from is becoming stronger. We must find pills that facilitate the positive method without building up the background negative.

How can we be happy? A happiness pill will not exist. Instead, we need to look for chemistry that softens the psychological pain of the PANIC/GRIEF system, especially in the longer term. However, psychiatric problems become problems in thinking. Pills will not treat thinking. They will not solve the background problems. Pills create more problems than they solve. We need to reframe problems.

What is the purpose of emotions? Emotions are key to understanding psychological disorders. Moods and emotions ride on the seven systems.

Is he happy? His family fled their home as refugees from Soviet-occupied Estonia, his daughter died at the age of sixteen, and he and his wife both suffered through cancer and chemotherapy. His ending thoughts: "I am a person with enough pain and enough happiness to respect both sides of the spectrum."

Let us consider Panksepp, a representative of our species, as our laboratory rat. Certainly, he has devoted his life as a scientist to understanding what we feel and why we feel it. But his conclusions don't seem scientific because he doesn't appear to consider alternatives. His personal preference is to be happy rather than sad. He takes this to be the purpose of life. Let us imagine alternatives. Why should evolution have, need or offer any purpose? But if it did have a purpose for itself or for us, why should that be our happiness, which is simply a symptom, a momentary signal, and sometimes a misleading one at that? Couldn't it rather be an unfolding wisdom and a growing sensitivity which evolve upon knowing both pain and pleasure, sadness and happiness? Isn't that the lesson of Panksepp's life? What other purpose could evolution have, or have for us? What else are we, if not its laboratory rats, as Job was to God and Satan? And isn't it wisdom to suspend our own preferences and contemplate a higher point of view, say, evolution's? But what tools do we have to explore that higher point of view?

In contrast to other models, the Alphabet Block Model allows us to evoke basic emotional responses in pristine forms. It contrasts them definitively, and so defines them absolutely. The structural oppositions give the model a potential completeness. It may correctly describe the limits of our imagination. The model thereby aspires to a metaphysical status by which it is meaningful to contemplate its structure's relevance to whatever Absolute we might imagine, or simply God.

Why then do we have feelings and moods? If our emotions form a well-structured unified system, then we can look for meaning in their unity and diversity. The Alphabet Block Model establishes several distinctions. The most distinct of the eight basic emotional responses is peace, which we feel when we are free of any expectations. The next most distinct is suspense, which we feel as we're waiting for the outcome of our expectations. These two are states of not knowing, which contrast with six states of knowing.

What we want and what we expect
* Our moral sense points to the distinction between what we want and what we expect.

We don't truly know what we want, what we should want. The truth of the world is that we are here and now in these circumstances, but the truth of the heart is that we don't know why. Yet even so we can formulate expectations that represent our best answer. Our feelings then serve to guide us, do we feel alive or dead? If our expectation is from the depths of our heart, from our spirit of unknowing, then we are sensitive, and otherwise insensitive. When we do the right thing, then we feel good, otherwise bad. And when we reflect, when we are thinking correctly, then we are calm and otherwise riled.

Our expectation Being one with
* Gospel of Mark - Jesus's expectation - working backwards
* What do we truly want? I think that we wish to live one with God and all. We are sad to be one with nobody, surprised to be one with somebody, excited to be one with anybody and happy to be one with everybody.

Response: Getting things done
* Our emotional responses invite us to get things done with others: when happy - delegate, excited - initiate, surprised - articulate, sad - renew, frightened - confront, disgusted - make ourselves heard, in suspense - exercise sheer will, and at peace - respond. However, our feelings are generally much more complicated and so are our expectations as to who we truly are.

Stepping in and stepping out
* If we listen to our feelings, then we can grow aware of ourselves and learn that our expectations are not exactly what we want and we can adjust them accordingly. I think that we grow aware of this by stepping into ourselves and stepping out of ourselves.

Internalization
* In doing so, we discover our selves to consist of complicated expectations which we have constructed over our lives. They include what we think we know of justice, loyalty and duty. It is vital that we take our principles to heart, internalize them, in which case we sense our own will but also a greater will, beyond our circumstances, I say God's will, with which we align, for we obey not knowing why, we believe not knowing how, we care not knowing what. Upon thus stepping into ourselves, we may sense ourselves surrounded by positive moral tones of love, beauty and intimacy, which are like moods in that they engulf us, and indeed, like canvases for moods because they may last for hours or days, long enough for us to step out of our old expectations. We define ourselves on those canvases in terms of

new expectations thanks to the virtues of hope, which looks forward, courage, which holds firm, and honesty, which looks back.

A Geometry of Moods

Let us now investigate how our expectations can give rise to thousands of moods. We might study music, dreams, activities, but especially, poetry. Are two people able to interpret a poem in the same way so that it evokes the same mood?

Quiet Night Thoughts, by Chinese poet Li Bai of the Tang Dynasty, is a classic poem about his travels far from home.

Beyond the bed - bright moon shines -
I think on the ground is frost.
I raise my head - see bright moon,
I lower my head - think of home.

Note how this poem organizes the spaces for our expectations. The bed is a boundary beyond which we feel the moon is beautiful and the frost is surprising. The poet's neck, which raises and lowers his head, is yet another boundary. The poet thinks of home, which is dear to him, and of itself that surely makes him happy. Yet when he contemplates that his home is so distant, it is sad to think that he is here and not there. Overall, we can specify a mood of conditional sadness, which depends on his reflection on his great distance from his happiness, as measured by the beauty of the moon and the surprise of the frost.

This example suggests that we can specify moods in terms of geometry. In this case, the geometry is simple, like a vector pointing from his head. It could be more sophisticated if he looked back and forth upon himself, as if on a line, extending in two directions. We can add other people with their expectations, which may be parallel or perpendicular, at angles to each other. We might imagine them sweeping out areas or volumes with their changing expectations. Consider the Beatles' song, *She Loves You*:

You think you've lost your love.
Well, I saw her yesterday.
It's you she's thinking of,
And she told me what to say,
She says she loves you...

The very first line lets us imagine that the young man was happy to be in love, and sad to have lost his love. The singer establishes an intimacy from which he further layers expectations and increases suspense with an intermingling of fright or even disgust: Where did he see her? What does she think of me? What did she tell him to say? The singer frames the boy as depressed, makes him reflect upon himself, and from there reorients him through a dizzy crescendo of feelings: relief, then surprise, then excitement and happiness. If we stop here, then the overall mood is an acceleration into exhilaration. But this could be extended by a sadness that they are not together, or as the song later suggests, complicated by an anger and hatred inasmuch as he came to expect her to leave him, confounded by a depression that he had lost hope, and then perhaps a second anger at her and a third anger at himself that he must now let go of his bad expectations.

The Purpose of Moods

By listening to our moods we can tease apart our expectations and transform negative ones into positive ones so that in every way we expect what we truly wish. We grow more sensitive and also our principles prove more sound. Whereas those who escape their moods, for example, by turning to cigarettes, alcohol or drugs, are evidently stunting themselves.

We often don't know why we feel the way we do. It's often not clear if we are responsible for our mood or if it is simply random. Yet it seems healthy to listen to our moods and try to learn from them, to groom our feelings, to tune ourselves like musical instruments. It seems that our unconscious mind challenges our conscious mind by showing what its principles look like under the light of a variety of different moods. This way we don't have to learn everything from experience. This seems to be the purpose of our moods. A Chinese poet's principles may lead him to journey to some distant province and yet his moods may have him question himself.

I invite us to work together to analyze hundreds of poems and discover a geometry of moods.

Discussion

Some psychologists have an account of emotion that is physiological and behavioral. That emotion is rooted in physiology. Thus they focus on the various physiological systems. "Even after a century of effort, scientific research has not revealed a consistent, physical fingerprint for even a single emotion." Theory of constructed emotion: "I learned long ago that "sadness" is something that may occur when certain bodily feelings coincide with terrible loss. Using bits and pieces of past experience, such as my knowledge of shootings and my previous sadness about them, my brain rapidly predicted what my body should do to cope with such tragedy. Its predictions ... directed me to cry, an action that would calm my nervous system."

This paper offers a third view of emotional response as a language. A language is that which does not have to be learned from past experience. Rather, linguistic ability is able to process completely novel circumstances. It is not about shootings. It is about expectations - we wish for children to live and we expect it. We can pile on expectations - we wish for children to live free of fear, free of harm, free of pain - and we expect it. And our expectations color our emotions - if we stop expecting children to live, we feel hate - if we don't expect politicians to lose their composure, we can feel surprise - or if we suspect deceit on their part, we can feel angry - if we don't like our own emotions, we can feel disgust. None of these shades can be learned from experience. Rather, they must be assembled by a linguistic capability.

"My sadness felt like an instantly recognizable wave of bodily changes and feelings that overwhelmed me as a reaction to tragedy and loss." It is a rather strange account, like saying that we hear words as sounds. But I don't hear words as sound - I hear them as words - I don't distinguish between accents.

Phenomenology - when we explore, what are we feeling, what are we experiencing - say we have fallen in love - does it matter that we experience A) "butterflies" in our chest - isn't it more important that B) we can't go 15 minutes without thinking of the one we love - and even more important, that C) we dedicate ourselves that they be pleased with us, should they ever come to know us. Which of these is relevant? Which is the purpose of evolution? How does it seem to Romeo? But the phenomenologist may prohibit C as the answer, because it smacks of an abstract value, which cannot be "experienced". Rather the answer should be B, or even better, A. That is the "lived experience" of falling in love.

I can't prove to the psychologist that they can evoke emotions with their imaginations. However, it is enough to find at least other people whether they can. And then we can look for regularities and see if we agree.

Is it the purpose of our emotions to have us listen to our body?

But this is like studying natural language as a physiological phenomenon. Whispering in our ear or yelling to us on our way out would then be considered at opposite ends of a volume spectrum, serving different evolutionary purposes. But if the message is "buy some diapers for the baby" then the upshot is the same as regards our mental life. It is the same message whether it comes from our vocal chords, through our fingers on a keyboard. It is the same whether it enters our retina or our ear drum. Our mental life thus takes place as if on a mental manifold which is remarkably detached from our physiology.

Similarly, we live our emotional life as if on an emotional manifold which is detached from our physiology. This is essential for us to empathize with each other. We can feel terribly frightened as we are chased by dogs - we can relive those feelings in our own minds and in telling our story to others - they can imagine our feelings by listening to us - or by reading our account, as they sit, curled up in a sofa, drinking hot chocolate. The physiology is completely different but the feelings can be taken as the same. And we can manipulate our feelings by changing the story ever so slightly. Maybe these are dogs we know - maybe they mean no harm - maybe this is a game we play, which is going well, or going badly - maybe they have bitten us before - maybe we are old and frail and concerned that they will knock us down. These manipulations show that we experience navigation of a single, all-purpose emotional manifold.

It is unclear if laboratory rats experience a unified emotional manifold or not. If they do have such an emotional manifold, then it may be quite distinct from ours. But knowledge of this manifold would tell us a great deal about what it feels like to be a laboratory rat. Indeed, among humans we may have fundamentally the same manifold. And yet in our interactions with small children or with teenagers or with the very elderly we can sense that they experience that manifold rather differently, maybe with less self-knowledge, maybe more brightly. In different cultures, and among different individuals, we may find different relationships with our manifolds. Certainly, we can be more or less attentive or sensitive to minute emotional edistinctions, just as we can be with mental or moral distinctions.

So the strategy is to evoke the feelings using the imagination - by the most simple and abstract circumstances - so that they are as simple and pure as possible. And to focus on pure but ordinary emotions rather than extreme emotions. Focus on quiet, subtle emotions, that can be conveyed by poetry.

My account is non-intentionalist. Boundary allows for intentionalist accounts, as well as mixed emotions: can feel one general mood, and yet live a particular emotion with regard to a particular object placed within that context.

Need to explain humor (funny) - is it related to relief? Pain ? Fatigue and energy. Physiological?

Need to explain social emotions: shame, regret, pride, guilt...

Need to consider whether emotional responses can be evoked without expectations - for example, by

stimulating parts of the brain - but still the mind may have that as a built-in assumption. For example, we might be able to stimulate the brain to see a red dot - but it would take that red dot to be something seen - just as it takes a movie literally.

Lacking in interest in subtlety - listening to moods.

Emotional granularity
"each emotion is supposed to have a distinct pattern of physical changes"

Search for a PEACE system or explain

The Semiotics of Passions

Defining emotions
* We found a way to identify emotions without referring to words (adjectives).
* Communicating states to others (subjects) in terms of words (adjectives) assumes that those words are scientifically valid - whereas internally a single person can explore without words but rather by manipulating states and their relations, dimensions with their imagination
* defining states independently and not with regard to each other.
The nature of emotions
* there can be less conscious and more conscious moods - this suggests that there are emotions which we understand more or less the nature of and the reasons for - and this understanding can diminish the mood or perhaps in some sense heighten it
* Moral overtones
* there can be a general longstanding background mood (sadness) and a foreground emotional response (laughter)
* It is a sign of a good model that it finds what is not there - namely the boundary - there are no emotions at the boundary of the self and the world. This means that emotions communicate to us the distinction between our self and our world.
* Methodology should be expansive, intensive, referential - we start with a population of "depressed" people or a notion of "depression" - we clarify it conceptually - and then we redefine our population or instances accordingly - ever refining, ever clarifying

People feel depressed when they fail to live up to their own ideas, but they feel anxious when they fail to live up to other people's.

Emotion is a language in that it is navigated - can be manipulated - and new emotions can be learned - understood or imagined or evoked - without having been experienced before. Part of the role of humor. Emotional incongruity. Or can recognize and make sense of emotions after the fact.

Purposes
* the purpose of moods

Jonathan Haidt - moral emotions - moral foundations

The model is metaphysical - perfectly precise - it defines our emotional responses.

Hiccup, belch, yawn or laugh together. We can feel something is humorous without necessarily laughing. And we can laugh along with other even when something is not funny.   We can cry, sigh,

scream, but those aren't very reliable indicators of how we actually feel.

We can thus speak of bad-suspense (anxiety), bad-surprise (anger), bad-sadness (hate), bad-excitement (relief) and bad-happiness (depression). All of these find physiological and neurological expression. However, the cure which suggests itself for all of these is moral: to embrace good-sadness. That is the test of whether we are true to what we really want.

Conclusion

Blindspot - psychology has not been interested in phenomenology - has focused on external mechanisms - and so has not realized the inner aspects of feeling that can be purified and evoked consistently. Phenomenology has focused on the "real world" and has not reduced itself to simple, laboratory minimalism of the Alphabet Block model.

Poetry - the medium most successful for evoking moods - has not been considered as exact

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