

The Logical Structure of Joy (and Many Other Emotions)

Mikko Salmela

University of Helsinki

There is a well-known tradition in the history of philosophy that has treated emotions as paradigmatic noncognitive states whose linguistic expressions are best rendered as expressives lacking the logical structure of assertoric utterances. In this article, I focus on York Gunther's recent formulation of the noncognitivist argument in terms of the Principle of Force Independence. I argue that Gunther's argument is founded on a false assumption of the priority of language over thought. Contrary to Gunther, I propose that joy as well as many other emotions have an assertoric deep structure that cannot be gleaned from their linguistic surface structure. Thus, emotions possess an assertoric content as purportedly warranted ascriptions of sui generis evaluative-cum-affective properties to their particular objects even if this content is not necessarily expressed in emotion-expressive utterances. I argue that the proposed account is also capable of overcoming Sabine Döring's arguments against the assertoric structure of emotions. Finally, I suggest that the proposed account allows the ascription of a truth predicate to emotions, thus providing a viable basis for a metaethical neosentimentalism that analyses moral judgments in terms of true emotions.

Introduction

There is a well-known tradition in the history of philosophy that has treated emotions as paradigmatic noncognitive states whose linguistic expressions are best rendered as expressives lacking the logical structure of assertoric utterances. Although the view of emotions as feelings or sensations that do not represent anything in the world goes back to David Hume's ambiguous writings about the passions, the linguistic argument for expressivism about emotions is of later origin. This argument constituted the core of ethical emotivism, which was introduced by Alfred Jules Ayer in his *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936), but it survived the demise of emotivism and retained its status as a central aspect of contemporary ethical expressivism,

Heli Tissari, Anne Birgitta Pessi & Mikko Salmela (eds.) 2008
Happiness: Cognition, Experience, Language

[COLLEGIUM](#)

Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences 4.
Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. 23–40.

as Simon Blackburn's analyses of the logical structure of moral judgments in terms of Ayer-style Boo!/Hooray! language testify.¹

Expressivism in ethics makes a sharp distinction between statements of facts and expressions of attitudes. The former purport to represent the world, whereas the latter express the speaker's inclinations, desires, emotions, or some other noncognitive attitudes in the same way as exclaiming 'Hooray!' or 'Boo!' in response to some actual or presumed fact expresses a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the relevant fact, such as the success of one's favourite football team, or the military presence of the United States in Iraq. Expressivists admit that normative judgments resemble statements of fact in their linguistic form. Both ascribe properties to their grammatical objects and preserve their content in conditional, disjunctive, and negative contexts, which allows both factual and normative sentences to enter into truth-conditional inferential relations. We can, for instance, constitute a valid *modus ponens* inference from factual and normative premises alike. Nevertheless, expressivists maintain that the assertoric *surface structure* of normative judgments is deceitful and hides an expressivist *deep structure*, which consists of noncognitive attitudes that people erroneously project onto the world. Therefore, it is essential for expressivists to show that emotions and other noncognitive attitudes indeed possess nonassertoric logical structure. Nevertheless, leading expressivists such as Blackburn and Allan Gibbard have not addressed this question, thinking as they may that the nonassertoric logical structure of emotions follows directly from their noncognitive character. However, the latter view has been challenged in contemporary philosophy of emotions, which again brings the question about the logical structure of emotions back to the fore.

In this article, I will discuss York Gunther's recent argument that purports to establish the nonassertoric logical structure of emotions. I will argue that Gunther's linguistic argument is founded on a false assumption of the priority of language over thought; an assumption that belongs to the central tenets of contemporary analytic philosophy (see Dummett 1993). It is beyond the scope of my article to discuss this tenet in general. Instead, I attempt to establish its implausibility by focusing on the particular case of emotions – joy as well as many other emotions. More precisely, I will argue that emotions have an assertoric deep structure that cannot be gleaned from their linguistic surface structure. I will focus on Gunther's sophisticated formulation of the expressivist argument in terms of the Principle of

1 Blackburn (1984) distinguishes between the assertoric surface structure and the expressive deep structure of moral judgments. He suggests that the expressive deep structure of moral judgments can be revealed by rewriting them with operators 'Boo!' and 'Hooray!'. Thus, the judgment "Murder is wrong", for instance, can be written as B!(murder), whereas the conditional "If murder is wrong, then getting little brother to murder is wrong" comes out as H![[B!(murder)]; [B!(getting little brother to murder)]]. Blackburn's 'quasi-realism' differs from Ayer's 'emotivism', however, in emphasizing the role of rational deliberation and reasoning in ethics. Blackburn also accepts the minimal truth-aptness of moral judgments, which is founded on their assertoric surface structure.

Force Independence.² Contrary to expressivists, I will argue that emotions exhibit logical features of assertoric states, if we understand emotions as purportedly warranted ascriptions of *sui generis* evaluative-cum-affective properties to their particular objects.

Gunther's Argument from Force Independence

In his article "Emotion and Force" (2003), York Gunther argues that emotions fail to meet the Principle of Force Independence, which shows that they cannot be reduced to beliefs, desires, judgments, and the like cognitive and/or conative states. Instead, emotions are both intentional and unique states whose uniqueness derives from their having a nonconceptual content.³ In the article, Gunther focuses on the critical part of his argument and only sketches his constructive view about emotions. However, in order to understand Gunther's argument, we must begin by clarifying what force independence is.

The basic idea of force independence is very simple: it refers to the distinction between *what* a sentence or an utterance says and *the way* it is said. The former is the *content* of an utterance, whereas the latter is its illocutionary *force*. The principle of Force Independence, which Gunther traces back to Gottlob Frege, states, literally, that the content of an utterance can be individuated independently of its force. This means that "the same content might be expressed by sentences with different moods, for example, indicative, optative, imperative, or interrogative, or by utterances with different uses: to make an assertion or wish, to issue an order, or to ask a question" (Gunther 2003, 280). The force/content distinction explains how utterances with different illocutionary force connect to each other in a principled way: they have the same content. For instance, the content of the assertion "Gertrude studied psychology" figures also in the question, "Did Gertrude study psychology?" as well as in a conditional, "If Gertrude studied psychology, William was her teacher", where the content is not asserted but merely entertained. Likewise, when someone asks William, "Has Gertrude skipped class again?" and William responds, "No, she hasn't (skipped the class again)", the interlocutors

2 Gunther discusses emotions within the context of nonconceptual content. For this reason, his theoretical background is significantly different from the metaethical debate on the logical structure of moral judgments. In fact, insofar as Gunther maintains that the logical structure of language reliably reflects the logical structure of thought, he cannot support expressivism about moral judgments because these come out as garden variety assertoric utterances in his view. Nevertheless, Gunther's argument is relevant to ethical expressivists who argue for the expressive character of moral judgments by analysing them in terms of noncognitive attitudes.

3 Sabine Döring defends a similar view about the nonconceptual content of emotion. She derives the nonconceptual content of emotions from their noninferential structure, which, in turn, follows from their violation of the Fregean principles of Compositionality, Cognitive Significance, Reference Determinacy, and Force Independence as defined by York Gunther in his preface to *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*. The arguments of Gunther and Döring are thus related. However, I will discuss them in consecutive order: Gunther's in this section, and Döring's below.

are able to understand each other because the question and response share the same content. In this way, the force/content distinction constitutes a fundamental precondition of linguistic communication.

Gunther argues that emotions violate the Principle of Force Independence. The argument is based on the assumption that the logical structure of emotions is identical with the logical structure of sincere emotion-expressive sentences. Gunther assumes that the relationship between expressives and emotions parallels the relationship between assertions and beliefs. In the same way as a sincere assertion of a belief that p presupposes that one has the corresponding belief that p , a sincere expressive utterance presupposes that the relevant emotion is experienced by the individual at the moment when he or she utters the expression. Gunther presumes that the content of an emotion and its sincere utterance coincide in the same way as the content of a belief and what it asserts. The content of William's exclamation "Damn you, Gertrude, for skipping the class again!" is thus an adequate rendering of William's anger at Gertrude. If expressive utterances fail to exhibit full logical complexity, the same conclusion applies to the emotional content.

What does it mean that expressive utterances resist full logical complexity? Gunther points out that unlike the assertoric content of beliefs, utterances with emotional content cannot be made disjunctive or conditional. "One cannot thank someone for letting you take their class *or* giving you a passing grade [or] I cannot apologize that *if* I come late, I will make a quiet entrance" (*ibid.*, 283). These kinds of expressions are simply grammatically unsound. Gunther observes that we may attempt to escape the problem by reformulating these utterances. However, even if such logically complex utterances as "I will not take your course or thank you for letting me enrol" or "If I am late, I will apologize" are grammatically sound, Gunther maintains that the latter utterances are not expressives but utterances *about* emotions. He argues that the same problem bedevils such logically complex sentences as "Gertrude is happy that if she works hard, she will impress William", or "William is sorry that Gertrude either failed or withdrew from the course". These utterances are not expressions of an existing emotional state but ascriptions of *dispositions* to experience emotions of happiness and regret, respectively. The first sentence does not presume that Gertrude is feeling happy at the time of the ascription but only that if Gertrude works hard, she will be happy that she impresses William. Therefore, Gunther rejects such utterances as reliable indicators of the logical structure of emotion.

Gunther admits that there are grammatically sound utterances that express emotion and exhibit an apparent conditional structure. One might say, for example, that "If Gertrude has skipped class again, damn her, she'll fail the course". When used sincerely, this utterance requires that the speaker experiences the requisite emotion. However, Gunther remarks that the conditional structure of this utterance

is not genuine. The problem is that the content of an expressive utterance cannot be entertained in the same way as the content of a belief that is merely entertained in conditional form. There is no such thing as entertaining an emotional content without experiencing it. Rather, the utterance “If Gertrude has skipped class again, damn her, she’ll fail the course” requires that the speaker is already irritated about Gertrude’s possible misbehaviour. A similar problem concerns negation. If someone asks William, “Has Gertrude skipped class again, damn her!?”, and William replies, “No, she has not skipped class again, damn her!”, the reply does not constitute a plausible answer to the question even if the utterance is a sincere expression of William’s irritation, because he may be irritated at something else than Gertrude’s skipping the class, such as repeatedly being asked the same question. Therefore, Gunther concludes, “If indeed there are no instances of expressive utterances that exhibit conditional, disjunctive, or genuine negative structure, then I believe there is good reason to suppose that emotions violate Force Independence” (*ibid.*, 285).

Problems with Gunther’s Argument

As I have already emphasized, the plausibility of Gunther’s argument depends on whether the logical structure of mental states reliably corresponds to the logical structure of their linguistic expressions. Gunther adopts this basic assumption of the priority of language over thought from the mainstream of analytic philosophy without defending it. However, this thesis is more controversial than Gunther realizes. No doubt, the thesis is plausible insofar as beliefs are concerned: the content of a belief is identical with the content that it asserts. In short, to believe that p is to assert that p as true. If I believe, for instance, that Earth is a globe, in believing and stating this propositional content, I assert the content as true. However, the picture changes significantly when we turn to emotions. Not only is it difficult to see what is the content of emotion, but the idea of asserting some content as true or otherwise semantically successful by having an emotion seems even more problematic.⁴ Therefore, it is tempting to simplify matters and identify emotional content with expressive utterances associated with emotional states.

However, this solution is not as innocuous as it may seem. Behaviour, facial expressions and other gestures, tone and pitch of voice, and so on, are often more reliable expressions of a subject’s present emotion than what he or she explicitly, even sincerely, says. A happy person may express her happiness by exclaiming “I

4 Ronald de Sousa claims that different types of intentional mental states possess distinct conditions of semantic success. A successful belief is true, whereas desires are successful if the state of affairs that they represent in their content is desirable. De Sousa argues that emotions do not have a common standard of success. Instead, each emotion has its own conditions of success, the formal object of the relevant emotion type. Thus, for instance, fear is successful if its object is actually frightening, whereas joy is successful when it is felt about a truly joyful situation or state of affairs.

feel good!", but she may do the same by humming her favourite tune, by smiling in a relaxed way, by jumping for joy, by exclaiming "Life is wonderful!", and in several other ways that we are all more or less familiar with. Both verbal and nonverbal expressions count as evidence about the presence and the nature of an emotion, but in the same way as clinical psychologists do not trust people's verbal expressions alone in studying their actual emotions, philosophers cannot rely on mere verbal expressions of a certain kind in analysing the logical structure of emotions.

In fact, there are even types of emotion-expressive utterances that exhibit the logical complexity and force independence of assertoric utterances. These utterances are first-person reports of one's current emotion such as "I rejoice at my wife's success" or "I resent Gertrude always being late". Provided that these sentences are descriptions of my present emotion and not ascriptions of dispositions to experience emotions, Gunther cannot deny that these indicative sentences are genuine expressions of emotion even though they *also* function as descriptions of my actual emotional state. After all, why shouldn't I express my joy or resentment by sincerely telling how I feel. Furthermore, it makes perfect grammatical sense to say, for instance, that "If I rejoice at my wife's success, I am also proud of her" or "Either Gertrude is in time today, or I resent her always being late". Here we have linguistic expressions of emotions that enter into conditional and disjunctive contexts without any quandaries. It seems then that, contrary to Gunther, there are emotion-expressive utterances that are nevertheless logically complex as well.

Therefore, it is a curious assumption that only such sentences as "Thank you for letting me enrol in your class" or "I apologize for coming late" would reliably capture the logical structure of gratefulness and regret, respectively. These kinds of sentences that are often uttered without any emotion at all constitute only one way of expressing emotions. Indeed, there is *no* linguistic utterance whatsoever whose meaning *alone* would guarantee that a person issuing the utterance is experiencing the emotion implicated by the utterance. Even such exclamations as "Boo!" and "Hooray!" can be pronounced with a manipulative rather than expressive purpose, as emotivists have already pointed out. The same point was rediscovered in the 1990's among cognitive theorists of emotion who for a long time searched for an intrinsically affective evaluative content for distinct emotions.⁵

5 Thus, David Pugmire points out in his *Rediscovering Emotions* (1998) that "a theory of emotive thoughts that could fill the role of feeling or affect has been something of a Grail in recent philosophy of emotion."

Outline for an Alternative Account of the Logical Structure of Emotions

The previous examples of my joy at my wife's success and William's anger at Gertrude's always being late reveal that objects of emotion are either existing or fictitious particulars, such as people, animals, artefacts, personified spirits, and so on, or states of affairs, actual or potential, such as my wife's success, Gertrude being late, and so on. Emotions differ from other affective states, such as moods and bodily feelings, by having intentional objects to which they are directed. Moreover, each emotion ascribes a particular evaluative property, characteristic of that emotion-type, to its object. Thus, objects of fear are experienced as frightening, objects of shame shameful, objects of joy joyful, and so on. For instance, my joy at my wife's success represents this state of affairs as joyful, whereas William's anger at Gertrude represents her always being late as outrageous.

Linguistic expressions of emotion sometimes contain concepts of their specific properties, and often verbal expressions can be rewritten without a considerable change of meaning in a way that brings the relevant evaluative property forth. For instance, the sentence "I apologize for coming late" provided that it expresses some emotion instead of being mere lip service can be rewritten as "I regret coming late", which indicates that the emotion evaluates my coming late as *regrettable*, which is the formal object of regret. However, it is not necessary to rewrite all linguistic expressions of emotions in a way that reveals the relevant formal property. This would be impossible, considering that people express their emotions, both verbally and nonverbally, in a wide variety of ways, as I have pointed out. Instead, the argument from emotion-specific evaluative properties is a *constitutive* claim about the nature of emotions. It is a claim that we make in order to distinguish distinct emotion-types from one another and to render token emotions of those types intelligible. Thus, when we feel afraid of something, our fear ascribes to its particular object the property of being frightening, whereas objects of joy are perceived as joyful, and particular fears and joys make sense only if we assume that these emotions ascribe the relevant properties to their objects. Philosophers have called such emotion-specific evaluative properties *formal objects* (e.g. Kenny 1963, de Sousa 1987) or, somewhat tautologically, *emotion-proper properties* (Goldie 2004) of emotion. However, the basic idea is the same: those properties are needed for individuating emotions from one another; for rendering emotions intelligible; and for evaluating the appropriateness of emotions.

It is important to emphasize that the view outlined here does not reduce emotions to evaluative judgments. The fact that emotions ascribe evaluative properties to their particular objects does not mean that emotions are mere evaluations, as strong cognitivists Martha Nussbaum (2001), Ronald Alan Nash (1989) and the early Robert Solomon (1976) suggested. Indeed, emotions involve evaluations as

their constitutive components, along with patterned physiological changes, desires, action tendencies, expressions, instrumental behaviours, and subjective feelings, none of which, however, is a necessary feature of an occurrent emotional episode. However, the evaluative content of emotion is essentially broader than strong cognitivists assumed. Afferent feedback from the physiological, expressive, and behavioural changes involved in the emotional response enters into the evaluative content of emotion, rendering this content both cognitive and affective at the same time. Thus, when we rejoice at some event, we do not merely evaluate the event as joyful. Instead, we experience the situation as being joyful, where the concept of ‘being joyful’ refers to an inherently affective evaluation of the situation (see Salmela 2005; Lambie & Marcel 2002). The example illustrates the point that the formal objects of emotion are *response-dependent* properties that are both constituted by and figure in our multimodal emotional experiences.⁶ Obviously, the phenomenal character of emotional evaluations cannot be condensed into their linguistic expressions as “being joyful”, “being frightening”, “being resentful”, and so on. Nevertheless, the truth conditions of these concepts refer to situations where the relevant emotional responses are fitting or warranted (see e.g. Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen 2004).

Gunther maintains that emotions violate the Principle of Force Independence because of the grammatical structure of emotion-expressive sentences. However, it has turned out that the primary reason for this violation is not the logical structure of some privileged emotion-expressive utterances, but instead, the intrinsically affective quality of emotional evaluations that does not carry over from emotional responses to the linguistic renderings of this content in conjunctive and disjunctive contexts. We can use concepts of formal properties in nonassertoric contexts as well, but mere sense without the reference, the word “joyful” without an actual, remembered, or imagined joyful event, does not suffice to affect us. And without the phenomenal quality inherent in the concept, the content does not remain identical in assertoric, conditional and disjunctive contexts. However, it is not obvious what this tells about the logical structure of emotions, for the same point applies to some other response-dependent concepts as well.

⁶ Some philosophers have objected that formal objects of emotion cannot be response-dependent properties because this would entail that all emotional responses are warranted, which is absurd (see e.g. Prinz 2004, 62–63). However, the anxiety is premature, because we need not accept, for instance, that everything which makes us rejoice is actually joyful. We can suggest, following Richard Lazarus (1991), that only those events that are relevant, congruent, and conducive to the subject’s goals or concerns are actually joyful for him or her. A person’s concerns, in turn, may include anything from one’s own personal success to the well-being of other people, the protection of the environment, and so on. The descriptive properties of goal-relevance, goal-congruence and, most importantly, goal-conduciveness are thus underlying properties that appropriate objects of joy must possess. However, these properties constitute only a necessary condition of appropriate joy, for it seems that we must qualify the kind of goals and concerns whose achievement or progress merits joy. For instance, it is questionable, whether the misfortunes of other people, even if they are conducive to one’s own goals, merit joy.

The sense of such concepts as “red”, “soft”, and “sour” is fixed with reference to responses of certain kinds, which are normally present when we assert online perceptual judgments involving these concepts. When I say, “This red apple tastes sour”, referring to a particular apple in my hand, I see a red apple and have a sour gustatory sensation. However, the reference to the relevant visual, tactile, and gustatory properties remains even when these concepts are applied in conditional and disjunctive contexts, where no actual response is present. I need not enjoy a red visual sensation in order to say, “If that tomato is red, then it is ripe”. In a like manner, we can refer with concepts of formal properties to the emotional content in disjunctive and conditional contexts where this content is not experienced but merely entertained. For instance, I need not feel amused in order to I say, “Either Monty Python’s *The Life of Brian* is funny, or I have no sense of humour”, even though something is actually funny only if it merits, and in normal conditions also elicits, an amused emotional response. However, if possessing or lacking a phenomenal quality does not prevent the concept of “red” or “sour” from having the same sense in assertoric and nonassertoric contexts, why should we claim the contrary when concepts of formal objects are concerned?

A possible reply may try to invoke a distinction between perceptual and projective concepts. According to this argument, for instance, the concept of “being joyful” is merely a projection of an independently identifiable emotion of joy onto whatever causes that emotion, such as attending a party, receiving a grant, getting married, and so on. In contrast, there is no self-contained experience of redness that is then projected onto all objects that cause this experience, such as tomatoes, strawberries, and apples, perceived in bright daylight. Instead, we form the concept of “red” on the basis of these qualitatively similar visual sensations that present their particular objects as red. True enough, emotions sometimes involve affective perceptions of their particular objects as joyful, shameful, frightening, and so on (e.g. Goldie 2004; Döring 2004; Lambie & Marcel 2002). However, these affective perceptions emerge only when we are already in an emotional state. This indicates that the concepts of formal objects refer to properties that are mere projections of emotional experiences onto their particular objects.

The main problem with this argument is that it takes for granted what it purports to prove, namely that emotions are identifiable without evaluations. It may be possible to identify distinct emotions in physiological and neurochemical terms, as neuroscientists and empirically minded psychologists maintain (e.g. Damasio 2003; Ekman 2003; Panksepp 1998; LeDoux 1995), but this does not show that emotions do not involve evaluations as their constitutive elements. In fact, philosophers and psychologists widely agree that emotions are not caused by external or internal events without internal processes that generate meaning for these events. This meaning generation may occur in different ways, ranging from conscious and deliberate evaluation of semantic information to fast, automatic and uncontrollable

recognition of salient perceptual information, but from a *functional* perspective, both forms of meaning generation count as cognitive because they involve semantic categorization of either semantically or perceptually submitted informational content (Salmela 2006; see also Power & Dalgleish 2007; Clore & Ortony 2000). Thus, it is not attending a party, receiving a grant, or getting married *as such* that elicits the emotional response of joy, but only an appraisal or a recognition of these events *as joyful* or *goal-conducive*, which is an underlying descriptive property of joyfulness. I see and hear the happy faces and laughter of other guests and spontaneously catch their joyous feeling about the party, or I appraise the grant as a boost to my professional career and rejoice at receiving it. Further evidence for the view that emotions involve evaluative representations of their actual objects in terms of the relevant formal property comes from empirically informed research of emotion experience. John Lambie and Anthony Marcel (2002) suggest that affective perceptions of particular objects in terms of formal objects are records of the appraisal that elicited the emotion even if these perceptions emerge only in the world- and evaluation-focused, second-order emotion experience. These considerations indicate that concepts of formal objects are not projective but figure centrally in the content of emotion.

Therefore, I conclude that Gunther fails to establish the nonassertoric logical structure of emotions. His argument is based on privileging certain kinds of emotion-expressive utterances over others and contrasting the former with utterances of beliefs, judgments, and desires. The wide variety of both linguistic and nonlinguistic emotional expressions shows the arbitrariness of focusing on one type of expressions as the reliable mirror of the logical structure of emotions. When we look behind linguistic surface structure into the logical deep structure of emotions, we can see that emotions involve evaluations of their particular objects in terms of emotion-specific formal objects. The intrinsically affective nature of these evaluations explains why emotions appear to violate the principle of Force Independence: the evaluative content is felt only when it is experienced in an emotion, not when it is merely entertained in conditional and disjunctive contexts. However, this merely shows that emotions are similar to online perceptual judgments whose content need not involve perceptual experiences when the content is not asserted but merely entertained.

Still, mere evaluative content is not a sufficient condition for an assertoric logical structure, because one may entertain a content, such as a thought, without asserting the content as true. In a like manner, emotions may not have an assertoric logical structure if it is possible to entertain an emotional content as an appearance without putting the content forward as successful. The question is, then, whether experiencing an emotion amounts to asserting the evaluative content of emotion, or whether it amounts to merely entertaining the relevant content. The Stoics famously distinguished between first movements, such as tickles and pangs, that

follow from attending to an evaluative appearance of some present or future event as good or evil, and an emotion proper that involves assent to such an appearance. In a like manner, contemporary philosophers have pointed out that recalcitrant emotions, such as fear of flying and phobic fears, affect their subject even though the subject withholds his or her assent from the constitutive appraisal of those emotions. Both examples suggest that it is possible to experience an emotion without assenting to its constitutive appraisal, which indicates that emotions are more analogous to thoughts than beliefs.

We can try to respond to this argument by distinguishing between two kinds of assent: the subject's assent and the assent intrinsic to particular mental states, such as beliefs and emotions (Roberts, 2003). To believe that p is to assert the content that p as true. In a like manner, to feel an emotion is to experience the emotion as warranted or correct, as Robert Roberts (1988; 2003), Bennett Helm (2001), Peter Goldie (2004), David Pugmire (2005); and Sabine Döring (2007; 2004) have pointed out. To quote Goldie, "in the typical case, the emotional response, combined in phenomenology with the perception of the object as having the emotion-proper property, will involve the experience of the emotion as being *reasonable* or *justified*" (Goldie 2004, 97). Of course, the claim of warrant that is intrinsic to emotional experience may be overridden by the subject's deliberate judgment, as the Stoics emphasized. When an emotional evaluation contradicts with the subject's assent, it is not "the whole person but a dissociated part" that assents to the evaluative content (Roberts 2003, 92). The fact that the two assents may contradict each other speaks against the assertoric logical structure of emotions, for it is logically impossible to assert both that p and that $\sim p$. The main question is, then, whether or not a contradiction between an emotion's assent and the subject's assent constitutes a rational failure. If not, emotions may not possess an assertoric logical structure after all.

Döring on the Noninferential Structure of Emotion

Sabine Döring believes that the argument about the assertoric logical structure of emotions outlined above assumes too much. Even if she thinks that emotions have an evaluative content, she maintains that they nevertheless violate full logical structure in several ways. Döring claims that instead of having an assertoric content, the emotional content "resembles the content of sense-perception in that both kinds of representational content need not be revised in the light of belief and better knowledge" (Döring 2003, 223). She compares emotions to the visual Müller-Lyer illusion and argues that emotions may persist in the face of better knowledge in the same way as our perception that two lines are dissimilar in length survives our belief that the lines are the same length. Hence, a subject can have a sense perception or experience an emotion of the content that p , while consciously believing that

$\sim p$, whereas this is impossible in the case of explicitly contradictory beliefs. This suggests that “like a sense perception, an emotion is not an attitude of regarding something as true and is not inferentially related to other states” (Döring 2007, 19). Finally, Döring points out that we can have explicitly contradictory sense perceptions and emotions, whereas this possibility is excluded for beliefs. All these arguments are directed against the idea that emotions have an assertoric logical structure.

Like Gunther, Döring cogently shows that emotions cannot be identified with beliefs. However, I am not convinced that the aforementioned differences between beliefs and emotions preclude the latter’s assertoric nature and establish the nonconceptual character of emotional content. Döring’s argument on the noninferential structure of emotions is drawn from Tim Crane (1992) who presents the same argument on perceptions. Crane argues that beliefs are logically, semantically, and evidentially related to one another, whereas perceptions lack all these inferential relations. Döring correctly points out that we cannot deductively infer a perception or an emotion from the content of another perception or emotion. However, this hardly entails that the evaluative content of an emotion cannot be negated and embedded in a conditional context or that emotions are not semantically or evidentially related to one another or to other states.

The fact that one cannot infer an emotion with a conjunctive content from the contents of two emotions is a curious example because it hardly settles the question about the inferential structure of emotions. For we can give counterexamples of inferring the contents of other states from the content of an emotion. The most basic inference is from the truth of an assertion to the falsity of its significant negation. If my belief that p is true, then it has a negation $\sim p$ which is false. The inference can be made also when the asserted content is emotional. Like other truth-apt states, emotions can be negated in two ways that yield both contrary and contradictory opposites, as Ronald de Sousa (2002) points out.⁷ For instance, the content of fear of flying can be expressed in terms of an evaluation that flying is frightening, even if this content is felt as affective only in the emotional experience. The contradictory of this content is the evaluation that flying is not frightening, whereas its contrary is the evaluation that flying is safe. If flying actually is frightening, that is, fear is a fitting response to flying, then we may infer that both the evaluations that flying is not frightening and that flying is safe are false. The fact that we can make these inferences shows that the content of emotion is inferentially related to the contents of other states.

⁷ De Sousa’s brief discussion is obscured by his focusing on distinct emotion types instead of the contents of emotions. Thus, he suggests that such pairs as love and hate or hope and despair are contraries while equanimity is their common contradictory. However, I do not believe that the negation of the content of emotion must necessarily be an emotional content itself.

Donald Davidson famously argued that rationality is the constitutive ideal of the mental. A person's individual beliefs, desires, intentions, and actions as well as many emotions are intelligible only insofar as they fit into a coherent pattern that determines their rationality as well. In his *Emotional Reason* (2001), Bennett Helm presents an elaborate theory of the rationality of emotions on the basis of this idea. Helm proposes that emotions both display and constitute the import of the focus of emotion. Moreover, emotions with a common focus impose rational constraints on each other and on other states, including desires and evaluative judgments. This means that one is *prima facie* committed both actually and counterfactually to experiencing rationally required emotions if the focus of one's emotion is or would be affected favourably or adversely.⁸ For instance, if one fears that one's prize Ming vase is about to be destroyed, one is *prima facie* committed to hoping that the vase will remain intact, feeling relieved if the vase escapes unscathed, and becoming sad or angry if the fear of its breaking is borne out.

Helm's account shows that, unlike perceptions, emotions are semantically related to each other and to other states. Crane points out that "to perceive that *p*, there are no other *perceptions* that you *ought to have*... You simply perceive what the world and your perceptual systems let you perceive." (Crane 1992, 154). For instance, a visual perception of any physical object gives rise to a series of anticipations of how the object would look from different angles. But this does not entail that one ought to perceive the object from another angle in the anticipated way. The object may be a barn façade instead of real barn. However, emotions are different. One's emotion that *p* becomes unintelligible as an emotion with the content that *p* if one does not experience other emotions about the focus of the emotion in the proper circumstances. If the person whose Ming vase is in danger does not feel relieved when he sees that it escapes undamaged or shocked when he witnesses its breaking into pieces, and so on, we do not believe that the person was afraid of its breaking in the first place, because he *ought to have felt* in one of those ways.

The constitutive ideal of rationality also elucidates the way and the degree in which emotions are evidentially related to other states. Döring is correct in claiming that emotions do not necessarily or immediately vanish in the face of better knowledge.

⁸ I add the *prima facie* condition to Helm's account because its idea of rational commitment seems too strong. For even if coherence between a person's emotions, desires, and evaluative judgments is the default mode that determines the rationality of these states, we occasionally surprise ourselves by feeling contrary to what we rationally expected to feel. Yet the response need not be irrational for it may teach us something about ourselves or the world. For instance, I may fear for my Ming vase before I see it breaking into pieces but feel relieved afterwards as I realize that it was after all only a vase and not my wife. The response is irrational from a narrow perspective of my evaluative attitudes whose focus is the vase but it shows the relative value of the vase and other material possessions in my hierarchy of values. Thus, the response may qualify as rational from a wider perspective that encompasses all my evaluative attitudes. I am grateful to Jonathan Dancy for raising this problem in discussion.

No wonder, considering that emotions often involve strong physiological arousal and behavioural changes that, once activated, keep the emotion going, both mentally and physically, at least for a while. Moreover, evolutionarily hard-wired emotions, such as fear of snakes and heights, as well as pathological emotions, are resistant to rational moderation. However, Döring points out that recalcitrance applies to many garden-variety emotions as well. Love for an unfit partner can linger on in spite of the partner's abusive behaviour, or one may feel guilty about an accident, even if one knows that the accident could not have been prevented. All this is quite true. Yet the fact that we regard these recalcitrant emotions as well as pathological emotions as *irrational* and try to get rid of them implies that the problem with many recalcitrant emotions is not whether they *need* to be revised in the light of better knowledge, but whether they *can* be so revised.

Sense perceptions are not evidentially related to other states because of their modularity. We cannot revise our perception of the two lines in the Müller-Lyer illusion because the perceptual content is computed in an informationally encapsulated system that cannot be rationally influenced by beliefs or other central cognitive states (see e.g. Fodor 1983). Accordingly, there is no such thing as a 'rational ought' to perceive the lines as being the same length. Evolutionarily hard-wired emotions share the modularity of perceptions and their exemption from considerations of rationality. It cannot be a rational failure to feel an emotion that one cannot avoid feeling in a given situation. However, this is not the case with most human emotions, including pathological emotions that can be alleviated or eliminated with the help of diverse psychotherapies, including cognitive therapies that emphasize the role of rational arguments and reasoning in treatment (e.g. Leahy 2004; Beck 1979). This indicates that human emotions are dissimilar to highly modular and cognitively impenetrable sense perceptions. Therefore, emotions need to be revised in the light of better knowledge insofar as they can be so revised.

Döring's last objection to the assertoric logical structure of emotions is the possibility of experiencing two explicitly contradictory emotions at the same time. This is an important question, because one cannot assert both p and $\sim p$ at the same time. Accordingly, if one can simultaneously feel contrary emotions about the same object, emotions may not have an assertoric content after all. Indeed, this appears to be possible: one can feel both afraid and thrilled about the same situation, or hate and love the same person. However, if we take a closer look at these cases, they turn out to be more complicated.

In colloquial speech, we often say that a person is both afraid of and delighted about the same object or situation. However, this is a somewhat misleading expression, because it conceals the fact that those emotions can be about distinct *aspects* of the object or situation. Thus, I may feel both thrilled and afraid about my forthcoming bungee jump. I am thrilled about the experiential kick that I expect to

get from the jump, and afraid of hurting myself or even dying should the rope snap or come loose. The former emotion is about the intrinsic phenomenal quality of the jump, whereas the latter focuses on its potentially disastrous consequences. The fact that these emotions have different *objects* within the same general situation dispels the problem with their being simultaneously truth-apt.

Unfortunately, this solution is not applicable to all cases. Contrary emotions that may have been evoked by different aspects of an object can devolve onto the entire object, as David Pugmire observes. Emotions about *persons*, such as love, devotion, hate, shame, and forgiveness typically behave in this way. The reasons for these emotions focus on some attributes of the person, but the emotion is still felt toward the person as such. However, it is notoriously difficult to entertain intense and persistent contrary emotions toward the same person. Pugmire explains why this is so, for he suggests that “it may be a condition of ambivalent emotions that they remain inchoate, unconsolidated. That is, they can’t arise massively out of the rest of one’s relevant mental life (the full body of one’s beliefs, imaginings, and related emotions and desires) and survive intact.” (Pugmire 2005, 181). The only condition under which emotional contrareity can be sustained is ‘attenuated engagement’ in imagination, remembrance, anticipation, or aesthetic experience. However, emotions that arise in these contexts are not full-bodied, because they do not share the desires, actions, physiological arousal, and general intensity of engaged emotions. This suggests that emotions are analogous to beliefs in their resistance to strict ambivalence. Therefore, I conclude that Döring’s objections are not fatal to the assertoric deep structure of emotions.

Conclusions

To conclude, emotions have an assertoric logical deep structure as purportedly warranted ascriptions of emotion-specific, evaluative-cum-affective properties to their particular objects. Accordingly, emotional content involves response-dependent evaluative concepts whose phenomenal quality cannot be reproduced in nonassertoric, conditional, and disjunctive contexts. These concepts are constitutive elements of emotion that distinguish different emotions from one another and render, along with other constitutive components of emotion, individual instances of the same emotion type intelligible as the emotions they are. Understood in this way, emotional content exhibits many features of logical complexity that are characteristic of assertoric contents. Emotions are semantically and evidentially related to other states, including other emotions. They are responsive to disconfirming evidence insofar as they are not biologically pre-wired, and they evade strict contradiction. Moreover, the evaluative content of an emotion can be negated and embedded in conditional and disjunctive contexts even if the content is felt as affective only when it is asserted in an emotional experience. Therefore, the logical deep structure

of joy and many other emotions is assertoric rather than expressive even if their verbal expressions are often expressive utterances.

The philosophical implications of this result are significant. It is bad news for Blackburn-style expressivism that prefers to speak loosely about emotions and other noncognitive attitudes that moral judgments mistakenly project onto the world. Moral judgments may express emotions, but insofar as emotions are not mere inchoate feelings, they assert something about the world themselves. Therefore, it is not enough to refer to emotions as the foundation of moral judgments on an abstract level; we must explain how moral evaluations emerge from emotional evaluations and how the content of moral judgments is related to the emotional content. These questions have been more prominent in Gibbard's norm-expressivism. For Gibbard (1990, 129), "moral judgments consist in the acceptance of norms to govern moral emotions", guilt and resentment, in particular. Indeed, Gibbard's view of emotions as adaptive syndromes with typical causes, typical expressions, and typical action tendencies is more sophisticated than Blackburn's and consistent with my functionalist cognitive account of emotions.⁹ For this kind of expressivism, the assertoric logical structure of emotions opens the possibility of ascribing a truth predicate to moral emotions. If moral norms are norms for the rationality of guilt and resentment, as Gibbard suggests, standards of true guilt and resentment are capable of providing such norms. I have elsewhere presented a general account of emotional truth, which is modelled on nonmoral emotions (Salmela 2006). How this account is to be applied to moral emotions remains to be discussed in another context. However, the first step in this direction is taken by showing that emotions are truth-apt mental states that possess an assertoric logical deep structure.

⁹ Gibbard speaks about 'emotional mechanisms' that operate when emotional responses to typical eliciting situations with characteristic expressions and action tendencies unfold. However, such a mechanism must include an internal representation of the eliciting situation, which proves to be cognitive because this representation functions in a cognitive role by virtue of triggering a specific whole-organism response. Indeed, Gibbard applies concepts of formal objects, such as threatening or dangerous, in describing emotion-eliciting situations without realizing that semantic representations of this kind belong to the emotional mechanism.

References

- Ayer, Alfred J. 1936. *Language, Truth, and Logic*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- Beck, A. T. 1979. *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders*. New York: Meridian.
- Blackburn, Simon 1984. *Spreading the Word*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clore, Gerald & Andrew Ortony 2000. Cognition in Emotions: Always, Sometimes, or Never? In Richard D. Lane & Lynn Nadel (eds.) *Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotion*. NY/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crane, Tim 1992. The Nonconceptual Content of Experience. In Tim Crane (ed.) *Contents of Experience: Essays on Perception*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 136–157.
- Damasio, Antonio 2003. *Looking for Spinoza. Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*. New York: Harcourt Inc.
- D'Arms, Justin & Daniel Jacobson 2006. Sensibility Theory and Projectivism. In D. Copp (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 186–218.
- Döring, Sabine A. 2003. Explaining Action by Emotion. *Philosophical Quarterly* 53, 214–230.
- 2004. *Gründe und Gefühle. Rationale Motivation durch emotionale Vernunft*. Habilitationsschrift. Universität Essen.
- 2007. Seeing What to Do: Affective Perception and Rational Motivation. *dialectica* 61, 363–393.
- Dummett, Michael 1993. *The Origins of Analytic Philosophy*. London: Duckworth.
- Ekman, Paul 2003. *Emotions Revealed*. New York City: Henry Holt & Company
- Fodor, Jerry 1983. *Modularity of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Gibbard, Allan 1990. *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Goldie, Peter 2004. Emotion, Feeling, and Knowledge of the World. In Robert C. Solomon (ed.) *Thinking about Feeling*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press. 91–106.
- Gunther, York. H. 2003. Emotion and Force. In York Gunther (ed.) *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*. London & Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 279–288.
- Helm, Bennett 2001. *Emotional Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kenny, Anthony 1963. *Action, Emotion, and Will*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Lambie, John A. & Anthony. J. Marcel 2002. Consciousness and emotion experience: A theoretical framework. *Psychological Review* 109, 219–259.
- Lazarus, Richard. 1991. *Emotion & Adaptation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leahy, R.L. (ed.) 2004. *Contemporary Cognitive Therapy. Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York & London: The Guilford Press.
- LeDoux, Joseph 1995. *The Emotional Brain*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Nash, Ronald Alan 1989. Cognitive Theories of Emotion. *Noûs* 23, 481–504.
- Nussbaum, Martha 2001. *Upheavals of Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Panksepp, Jaak 1998. *Affective Neuroscience*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Power, Mick & Tim Dalgleish 2007. *Cognition and Emotion. From Order to Disorder*. 2nd revised edition. Hove: The Psychology Press.
- Pugmire, David 2005. *Sound Sentiments*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pugmire, David 1998. *Rediscovering Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Rabinowicz, Wlodek & Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen 2004. The Strike of the Demon: On the Fitting Pro-Attitudes and Value. *Ethics* 114, 391–423.
- Roberts, Robert C. 1988. What an Emotion is: a Sketch. *Philosophical Review* 97. 183–209.
- 2003. *Emotions*. An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Salmela, Mikko 2006. True Emotions. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 56, 382–405.
- 2005. Emotional Feelings as Twofold Representations. In Åsa Carlson (ed.) *Philosophical Aspects on Emotions*. Stockholm: Thales, 263–281.
- Solomon, Robert C. 1976. *The Passions*. Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press.
- de Sousa, Ronald 2002. Emotional Truth. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary volume 76, 247–263.
- 1987. *The Rationality of Emotion*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.