

Emotion as a Mode of Engagement:
A Critical Defense of Ben-Ze'ev's Social Theory of Emotions

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Abstract

What is an emotion, and what does an emotional reaction signify? In this thesis I critically defend Aaron Ben-Ze'ev's theory of emotion as a mode of social engagement. Building on the idea that an emotional reaction is the opposite of indifference, emotions express one's concerns. They are most intense with regard to the shifting dynamics of personal relationships and social status. Thus, in order to think well about social and personal issues, attention to emotional views of the world is paramount. The social concern of emotion opens what may seem private about our reactions to an interpersonal reading. Emotions are contrasted with an intellectual form of engagement, the latter being characterized by deliberative thinking, which focuses on generalities and stable patterns. Emotions, on the other hand, are more closely aligned with action tendencies and tend to disrupt detached styles of thinking by narrowing one's focus to the emotion's target. Because emotions express one's concerns, Ben-Ze'ev argues that they tend to sincerely express our "profound values," a view which I argue against. Building on Diane Meyers's conception of the five-dimensional self, I argue that emotions are a source of deeply held convictions, but avoid conflating this with notions of sincerity. Instead, emotional concerns can be integrated into the cultivation of personal autonomy, in terms of self-definition and self-discovery. I apply this conception of emotion to the popular concept of emotional intelligence, and argue that emotional intelligence involves a capacity to handle with skill the emerging and chaotic urgency of emotional reactions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Although we speak about our emotions quite easily, a philosophically satisfying conception of emotional experience is very difficult to articulate. Emotion researchers also tend to disagree on which experiences exemplify the paradigms of emotion to build and test their concepts. For instance, Jesse Prinz (2004) often takes the fear of snakes as the basic experience of emotion. Such a fear response seems greatly attuned to the evolution of the biological body and requires little, if any, cognitive involvement. On the other hand, Martha Nussbaum (2001) considers experiences such as the grief over her mother's death as the essence of emotion. Grief seems to require a meaningful, personal history and, accordingly, to involve considerable cognitive resources. Both of these experiences intuitively count as emotions. Yet they are difficult to reconcile within a theory of emotion because fear of snakes suggests a theory of bodily responses, or affects, whereas grief suggests the need for a cognitive theory. This conflict may suggest that taking either experience as the paradigm of emotion is theoretically flawed, a suggestion which accords with the position of Aaron Ben-Ze'ev (2000), who suggests that we take the typical characteristics of emotional experience as basic. In his view, the four characteristics of emotions are instability, great intensity, a partial perspective, and relative brevity. Ben-Ze'ev thus takes the quality of experience as a basic definitive feature of emotion, a view which may be able to account for the intuition that fear of snakes and grief are both emotions.

One approach to grasping difficult phenomena, such as emotion, is through a contrast of oppositions. Traditionally, emotion is contrasted with reason, an opposition which is both useful and misleading. There are many such contrasts that are relevant to homing in on emotion,

including: passion and action, feminine and masculine, body and mind, and affection and cognition. Today these distinctions are often blurred and their margins provide sites of productive consideration. Ben-Ze'ev puts the contrast differently, claiming that being emotional "is the opposite of being indifferent" (ibid., p. 14). Emotion's most basic contrast, though, with reason or rationality, is useful because reasoning through a problem seems to be quite a different process than emotionally reacting to it. But this contrast is also misleading because emotions are not the opposite of reason; they are not as such irrational.

Though it would be important to the study of emotion to consider all of its relevant oppositions, the main contrast employed here is with rationality. This is because I build on Ben-Ze'ev's theory of emotion as a "mental mode," which I take to be a form of engagement with the world and the self. The conception of mental modes claims that there are different styles of cognition, two of the most significant being emotion and rationality, or intellect. Which is not to claim that emotion can be reduced to "cognition," but to consider emotion as a function of the whole cognitive system rather than an element of it. Mental elements might include sensation, perception, memory, and imagination. But emotion, I argue together with Ben-Ze'ev, is not another element among these, because emotion mobilizes such elements in its own terms. In this way, emotion operates at higher level of analysis and is comprised of various elements that are employed in terms of the emotion's specific engagement with the world. Emotion is not simply a cognitive phenomenon, but considering this aspect promises to illuminate subjective, first-personal experience. For example, in grief we may feel the tearing sensation of being physically wounded, lose interest in typical pleasures that now seem superficial, and find renewed comfort and meaning in close contact with friends and family.

The most significant feature of emotion, I believe, is the unshakable psychological atmosphere that permeates a bodily experience. Think positively as I might, as in line with the best advice available, the drag and weight of grief is the medium in which I strive. Though such striving may have beneficial or transformative results in the long run, in the throes of emotion—be it a joyous exuberance, a raging anger, or a wounded grief—that emotion characterizes the manner in which I am engaged with the world. Emotional experiences are focused and attached to a particular object or concern, and can be contrasted with other moments when our thinking seems less bound and more free to entertain different perspectives. For instance, we can intellectually approach various ethical views on a controversial topic, searching for meaningful ideas among various opposing positions. Consider abortion: though a hot topic that often entails emotional reactions, a calm and charitable study of conflicting views is both possible and desirable. But such a theoretical perspective seems entirely different from practical life, as when one's sister comes home pregnant in her early twenties. There was no doubt in my mind about how I felt then, in terms of my convictions.

This contrast between intellectual and emotional ways of relating to meaning, or meaningful events, is importantly not a claim within the traditional opposition of cognition and affection, where it is supposed that cognition is governed by reason while affect is an irrational motivating force. Indeed, a key merit of Ben-Ze'ev's construction of mental modes is that each mode can be considered to have its own logic or, perhaps more appropriately, its own "take" on how to process information, including what sorts of information are significant. In this light, emotion is considered to be especially pertinent and sensitive to people, relationships, and uniqueness, whereas intellect, strictly speaking, is more concerned with logical principles,

patterns, and a stable point of view. These mental modes are also described as having different mechanisms: emotion is spontaneous, habitual, and closely tied to action tendencies, while intellect takes time, requires effort, and is characterized by deliberative thinking—again, strictly speaking, because the construct of mental modes is based on prototypes and actual experience is expected to blur these distinctions.

Ben-Ze'ev argues that emotion follows a logic that differs from intellectual logic. He explores the basic idea that an object can have a significance that differs depending on the style of thinking that considers it. Emotions regard people and comparisons with significance, whereas what is of intellectual significance are general features and stable patterns. This promises to explain why remarking on the intellectual truth that there are plenty of fish in the sea remains unheard by someone experiencing emotional rejection. Or why, as Bernard Williams (1973) suggests, one needs a friend to offer a human gesture when one is ill, and not an act of duty. Ben-Ze'ev (2003) argues that “Emotional reality consists of immediate, unstable, personal events, which could have been otherwise, whereas intellectual reality is more detached, stable, and more deterministic in nature” (p. 157).

Emotions are schematic, quick reactions, and the intellect is deliberative, requiring time and effort. Surprisingly, Ben-Ze'ev takes this as a reason to consider emotion as an often “optimal” response. Because deliberation takes time, the intellectual style of thinking is not well suited to the instability of everyday events. With the irruption of a chaotic experience, emotion takes over the cognitive system, relying on past experience and habituation to deploy a schematic response, one that supposedly expresses our profound values. Emotion's potential optimality and connection to our profound values are interesting and controversial ideas. In this thesis, I

separate the descriptive and normative aspects of Ben-Ze'ev's view, and ultimately argue against some of his normative assumptions. In a qualified sense, I believe he is correct to uphold emotion as optimal mode of engagement, but I reject his formulation that emotion expresses "our profound values." I find that notion misleading, because it suggests that emotional attentiveness and spontaneity alone will reveal who we really are and what we really care about. I believe that such a project requires much more of us than this, even if great emotional attention and engagement is good advice as a component of living well. Accordingly, I argue along with Diane Meyers (2005) that a comprehensive view of emotional thriving, characterized by dispositional feelings of wholeness, can be considered a gauge of success for the much broader project of embodying profound values and flourishing.

Ben-Ze'ev's Argument

Ben-Ze'ev's theory of emotion is systematic, complex and illuminating. Key interests of his theory include the conception of emotions as essentially social and the development of the now standard notion of an "emotional brain" or "emotional cognition" in terms of a mental mode. An outline of Ben-Ze'ev's argument for the value of emotions is suggested below. A more in-depth discussion of each claim structures the outline of this thesis. Though I use normative language here, such as "good example" and "best understood as," the following first six claims are intended, by Ben-Ze'ev, to be descriptive; the last is a normative implication of them:

1. "Hot" emotions are a good example of the phenomenon we wish to study. Examples include anger, grief, happy-for, jealousy, romantic love, hope, fear, and embarrassment.
2. There are many levels of description for this phenomenon, e.g., material, psychological,

behavioral, social, moral.

3. Emotions are not the only “emotional” kind of experience; related phenomena include moods, dispositions, and affective traits.
4. Emotions are generated by the perception of significant changes to our personal situation, or to those we care about—in other words, to a broad view of our well-being.
5. Significant changes to our well-being typically involve a personal comparative concern.
6. Emotions are best understood as a mode of the cognitive system as a whole; they can be contrasted with other modes, such as intellectual and perceptual modes. The emotional mode is quick, spontaneous and non-deliberative—a schematic response based on past experience.
7. Though the intellectual mode is the most reliable for generating appropriate responses, it requires much time and effort. Therefore, emotions should often be relied upon in daily situations which require a response, but for which there is insufficient time and effort for deliberation.

I propose that the above argument is the basic structure of Ben-Ze’ev’s theory of emotion; it constitutes the focus of my analysis. Beyond these seven claims, I further explore his argument that emotion is often “the optimal response” (2000, p. 166) and that emotion expresses our “profound values” (ibid., p. 183). I outline some qualifications of emotional optimality, generally supporting his view, but find the notion of “profound values” extremely complex. The nature of the problem will be best addressed once a conception of emotion has been constructed, but an indication can be provided here. The suggestion that emotions express profound values seems to claim that they are a source or touchstone of authenticity, but emotions are fleeting and

can conflict, especially in relation to short- and long-term desires. So it is difficult to know what to make of such potentially authentic experiences. Also at issue is the cultural shaping of emotions: What does it mean to say that emotions express our profound values when they have been instilled in us from childhood and from within a specific cultural value system? In a certain sense, I think it is right to consider emotions as indicating profound values; that is, they express deeply held convictions. But these values are readily uncritical, “received convictions,” which puts them at odds with notions of authenticity. On the other hand, the conception of the self is a running theme throughout this work, and in a profound sense we do have a social self; that is, we are our culture. I do not pursue authenticity as a concept here, which seems to depend on a fleeting illusion of a true self. Rather, my interests are closer to Diane Meyers’ (2005) conception of autonomy, which emphasizes spontaneous forms of self-discovery and self-definition.

By way of a conclusion, the final chapter of this thesis applies the theory of emotion as a mode of engagement to the emerging and popular concept of emotional intelligence. Although my remarks are not greatly ambitious in scope, the robust theory of emotion that I strive for promises a focused view of what ought to count as emotional intelligence, as opposed to intellectual intelligence, along the lines of mental modes or forms of engagement. Here, again, I disagree with Ben-Ze’ev’s views on the matter, which describe emotional intelligence as expert intuition. While defending his descriptive framework of emotion, I apply it differently, suggesting with Klaus Scherer (2007) that emotional intelligence pertains to competency with the spontaneous mechanism of emotion, for the contextual appropriateness of emotional reactions and the skillful recognition of emotions in the self and others. I argue against the view

that emotional intelligence can solve “conflicts between the heart and the head,” as in Mayer and Ciarrochi (2006, p. xii), and suggest rather that the desirable integration of emotion and intellect is a broader and more elusive form of practical wisdom. In short, I argue together with Daniel Goleman (1995) that emotional intelligence is exemplified by “flow,” which is here rendered as an in-the-moment and spontaneous form of self-direction that is socially engaged with the world.

Kinds of Felt Evaluation vs. Pain and Pleasure

To help clarify the phenomenon of emotion that is the object of this study, I will briefly indicate some key points of classification that will be fleshed out in chapter 4. Our felt experiences are not all emotions, even though it is easy and tempting to call them “emotional.”

My argument takes “hot” emotions as its basis. This colloquial expression indicates experiences of exceptional intensity in one’s feelings. This is not to say that intense pain or pleasure are in themselves emotions, such as the pleasure of drinking a good cup of coffee, nor that all emotions need to be overwhelming. Intensity is a characteristic of emotion, and there is a conceptual division between the experience of sensation and any felt evaluation that may be attached to it. It is the joy or pride, for example, that is attached to the pleasure of a good cup of coffee that belongs to one’s emotional life.

I aim for a precise limit of what I refer to as emotions, and situate them within other experience that seem emotional, within what Ben-Ze’ev calls the broad “affective realm,” which also includes moods, sentiments and affective traits. Moods such as being cheerful or gloomy seem to be emotional; however, they lack the intensity of emotions as well as a specific focus. Moods are less likely to take over one's personality, and rather form the background of

engagement. On the other hand, sentiments are in some sense long-term emotions; however, aiming for greater precision, I distinguish them from emotions. The sentiments of enduring love or grief are indeed intensely felt aspects of emotional life. They are different from specific emotions, though, in that they are integrated into our lives over time and have a longer duration. If we are to think of grief as a sentiment, for example, we can recall that within the process of loss there are intense waves of grief as well as general changes in our priorities and outlook. The specific intense waves of grief are emotions; they are, for example, the short-lived tearing pains of loss, outbursts of intense and specific feeling. Between these waves, however, something else is going on that does not necessarily belong to an emotion, and it is this integration of felt meaning over time that justifies classifying sentiments as a separate phenomenon. Such between-wave experiences, I believe, are not “nothings” or pure potentiality, but active processes in their own right that constitute a “disposition to” react emotionally to a sentiment’s relevant stimuli in one’s life, such as a feeling of loss throughout a grieving process. Lastly, affective traits, such as shyness, are relatively stable features of one’s personality that colour one’s affective realm and are the context in which specific emotions emerge. The object of this study is emotions, specific intensely felt evaluations that have a particular focus or target of attention

Chapter 2: Prototypical Categories

Premise 1: “Hot” emotions are a good example of the phenomenon we wish to study.

Examples include anger, grief, happy-for, jealousy, romantic love, hope, fear, and embarrassment.

Ben-Ze’ev develops a framework for understanding emotions that differs from most contemporary philosophical approaches. For instance, he argues against the need for a precise definition of emotion, believing that the search for necessary and sufficient conditions misses the most significant aspects of the conversation. Instead of a precise analytical definition, Ben-Ze’ev characterizes emotion by prototypes. As a form of definition by example, or paradigm case, this approach may seem to beg the question, “What is an emotion?” However, the initial, plausible prototypes are further analyzed for generalizations and patterns that are illuminating; they are developed into a comprehensive theoretical account of emotion. This approach thus begins with relatable emotional experiences, looks at them from an isolated, ideal perspective, and develops this material into a complex and systematic theory of emotion that aims to illuminate personal experiences and theoretical considerations. Indeed, Ben-Ze’ev’s framework aims to clarify the vague but often crucial notion of “affect” and the various ways that feelings operate in human life.

The foundational use of prototypes is open to criticism. It relies on the common sense apprehension of paradigm cases, as opposed to a theoretically established application of necessary and sufficient conditions. Further, in an attempt to describe emotions, Ben-Ze’ev

isolates what he discerns to be “typical” of an emotion, such as love, grief, fear and hope, among others. The description therefore has an intrinsic normative dimension: a claim of what is normal to each emotion constitutes its prototype and thus its description. Actual cases are then compared to such prototypes, and actual distinctions are expected to be blurry. The closer an experience is to the prototype, the more confidence is placed in its categorization. Ambiguous cases are also expected, which do not clearly fit into proposed classifications. This approach to emotions is therefore quite complex and widely open to debate. There are many more angles to criticize than the sufficiency of a definition that aims for the binary result of an all-or-nothing category. But since there is little agreement on any conception of emotion, researchers need to discern the strongest argument. Ben-Ze’ev embraces prototypical categories as an especially useful tool in the philosophy of mind, where boundaries are not clear cut and yet categorizations often have explanatory value: “Many of our everyday categories are prototypical, for example, weapons, clothes, birds, and furniture. Prototypical categories are generally more appropriate to the psychological realm which is complex and has no clear-cut boundaries” (2000, p. 6).

The notion of the prototype is used both at the general level of what distinguishes emotion from non-emotion (other “mental modes,” such as intellectual deliberation), and at the particular level of distinguishing between different emotions.

2.1 Characteristics of hot emotions

As mentioned, the working model is the “hot” emotions, which are by definition intense experiences. Ben-Ze’ev isolates four characteristics that are typical of such experiences (ibid., pp. 36-39):

1. Instability
2. Great intensity
3. Partial perspective
4. Brevity

These characterizations will become clearer in the discussion that follows. It is worth noting that isolating instability and great intensity may be indicative of bias toward an individualistic experience of emotions. That is to say, cross-cultural studies of emotional experience have claimed that culturally specific conceptions of what it means to be a person underpin emotional experience, and that two broad categories of culture can be identified by independence and interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1994).

In such studies, European-American experiences of emotion are shown to be influenced by norms of autonomy, which intriguingly focus emotional phenomenology inward:

The emotion of anger, even when caused by the actions of another person, focuses one on the individual goal that has been blocked or on the individual right that has been abridged. Consequently, apparently negative emotions like anger or frustration are not entirely undesirable ... because such emotions highlight individual, private, internal attributes and signal that the imperative of the cultural framework—in this case independence—is being served. ...

From the perspective in which emotions are private and internal phenomena, some reasonable intensity and some variability in emotional state are positive and promote the felt independence of self. (ibid., p. 101)

On the other hand, interdependent cultures focus emotional reactions, by way of their conception

of the self, on relationships. This leads to an outward looking emotionality, because “the most important features of the self are external and public: status, roles, and relationships” (ibid., p. 102). Because relationship harmony and fitting-in are central cultural norms, such interdependent cultures are expected to promote “relatively low levels of intensity and a relative constancy in an emotional state” (ibid.). This does not suggest that intense emotional experiences are absent in interdependent cultures, but that they run counter to deep social norms, at least within the in-group, in a manner different from independent cultures, where the intensity of emotional experience validates the underlying norm of individuality.

Because Ben-Ze’ev is outlining a conception of emotions that is supposed to be objective, care needs to be applied to discern points of cultural specificity that should not be taken as universal description. He claims that,

the influence of culture is mainly in the perception and interpretation of the significance of events and not in shaping general appraisal regularities. Thus, cultural differences may determine differently the relevance to our well-being of a certain event, or the degree of accountability others have for their behavior, but these differences do not affect the general positive correlation between emotional intensity and the event’s relevance or between emotional intensity and accountability. (2000, pp. 150-51)

At such a general level, this cross-cultural claim is plausible; it is difficult, however, to avoid thinking in terms of one’s own emotional repertoire and thus to appreciate the degree of difference possible in the experiences of the self and of emotions. Noting cultural specificity, such as in the characterization of prototypes selected (anger, grief, happy-for, jealousy, romantic love, etc.), need not amount to criticism, but rather to qualification. Even the project of

illuminating emotional experience for a specific cultural outlook is extremely valuable. On the points of intensity and instability, however, Ben-Ze'ev's relationship with the notions of independent and interdependent cultures is complex. His theory promotes a conception of emotion that is more aligned with interdependence than independence; yet, as appears evident in his selection of emotion prototypes and characteristics, he conceives of emotions from an independence-based perspective. It remains to be seen whether intensity and instability remain appropriate grounding characterizations of emotional experience across cultures. Even if such characterizations indeed correspond to all emotional experiences across cultures, it remains possible that a theory built on an interdependent characterization of emotion would focus on different features. Ben-Ze'ev's characterization relates primarily to internal mental states; as such, it may be regarded as an appropriate basis of mutual assumption for independence-based cultures, and one that aims to build on these assumptions a view of how such internal experiences importantly locate us in a social web of interdependence.

Chapter 3: Levels of Description

Premise 2: There are many levels of description for this phenomenon, e.g., material, psychological, behavioral, moral, social.

Also at issue in contemporary discussions of emotion is the appropriate level(s) of description. Emotions allow for various levels of analysis, for example: the material changes occurring within the organism (physiological and especially neurological), the felt mental and bodily experience of being emotional (psychological), and the impacts of emotions between individuals (behavioral, sociological and ethical). Ben-Ze'ev picks up from Aristotle's idea that anger can be seen from the perspectives of the scientist and the philosopher: The scientist studies the boiling of the blood, whereas the philosopher studies the desire to retaliate. These levels have no obvious translation point in the sense that the boiling of the blood does not entail a desire to retaliate, and vice versa; nevertheless, they are both valid descriptions of the experience of anger. To negotiate these perspectives, emotion is treated as a higher-level phenomenon than the underlying physical supports. The higher level, importantly, cannot be reduced to the lower: "A change in the higher-level realm must be realized in a change in the lower-level realm, but a change at the lower level need not be expressed at the higher level. The relation between a higher and a lower level is one of correlation between a whole and its parts" (Ben-Ze'ev, 2008, p. 259). Therefore, the phenomenology of emotional experience is an irreducible element in the study of emotion. Empirical research into the material conditions of emotion needs to be grounded, then, on careful attention to the subjective aspects that constitute emotional experience. The

phenomenology of emotions is especially difficult, however, in part because reflective awareness is not always a part of intense emotional engagement (Goldie, 2000, pp. 62-67).

The desire for an objective description of emotion—one which eliminates all normative elements from the description—may need to focus on the physiological level. Indeed, this is one of the merits of such studies, which can be found in psychology (e.g., Ekman, 2007) and philosophy (e.g., Prinz, 2004). The hard data of measurable changes of the body help to build an objective level of description. Such evidence can be collected and experiments can be constructed to falsify and bolster theories; however, even those studies must often rely on subjective input at crucial stages, such as a subject's self-report regarding the presence or absence of emotion, its identification, and its intensity. So even an objective description of emotion must be carefully analyzed for its assumptions. The basic conception of emotion that is used to interpret the data, and accordingly a theory of emotion that is derived from data, needs to be carefully analyzed for its strengths and weaknesses. For example, neurological data have been used to suggest that emotions last only seconds, and that the sustained experience following such a fleeting moment is not essential to the emotion (Prinz, 2004). Such a theory can appear to be scientific and testable, but the conception of emotion that it supports is quite far from personal experience, and suggests that rumination is a superfluous addition. Though rumination is an appropriate psychological problem to be discussed, it is not obvious that it should be regarded as distinct from the emotion itself. Such a claim obtains against the difficult synthesis of mind-body dualism and a contemporary tendency to analyze the material level at the expense of all else. The physiological level of description is not very illuminating at the psychological and social levels which, furthermore, may constitute the most significant aspects of emotion. For instance,

Ekman's research on universal facial expression and emotional physiology has found an interesting anomaly. As Markus and Kitayama (1994) report,

Among Americans, [it was] observed that posing the face to mimic positive and negative emotional expression seems to cause systematic autonomic changes as well as the corresponding changes in subjective feelings. ... Among the Minangkabau respondents, the posed faces also caused similar autonomic changes ... [but] did not produce any corresponding change in subjective feeling. (p. 103)

This result suggests that Ben-Ze'ev is correct to identify emotion as an irreducibly higher-level phenomenon than autonomic changes. Markus and Kitayama, working with the distinction between independent and interdependent cultures, suggest that this anomaly can be understood as expressing fundamentally different forms of emotionality:

Emotions for the Minangkabau, as with the Japanese, are typically experienced in the presence of others—relationally, interpersonally. ... So, in contrast with the Americans, the activity of the autonomic nervous system stemming from the configuration of the facial musculature did not constitute an emotion. (ibid.)

Though some claim that phenomenology can be dismissed for its dependence on subjective reports, a healthy balance needs to be cultivated between material and mental levels of emotion research. These levels of emotion are not intrinsically in conflict and can be put to complementary use, since there are many valid levels of description.

Chapter 4: Classification of Emotion

Premise 3: Emotions are not the only “emotional” kind of experience; there are related phenomena, such as moods, dispositions, and affective traits.

Given the diverse approaches to understanding emotions, it should not be assumed that all researchers are studying the same phenomenon. Clarity must be attained regarding the object of any particular study of emotion. The “hot” emotions are a clear starting point; given some qualification about their independence-based prioritization of internal experience, they ground the conversation on the assumption that they are exemplars of what is interesting about emotions. Such emotions include intense experiences of love, grief, jealousy, hope and fear, among others. It is an important further point to note that these examples refer to English words and, as such, should not be assumed to translate easily across cultures, if at all (Wierzbicka, 1994, p. 137). Further, we should assume that such terms are coded with certain culturally specific assumptions. Thus, “there is no reason to assume that some English words (e.g., *happy*, *angry*, *sad*, or *disgusted*) have a privileged status and offer access to psychological states of universal significance” (ibid.). However, the focus of this discussion is not these particular examples of intense emotions, which indeed may obtain only along with certain culturally specific features. Rather, the focus here is on the quality of the psychological experience, in particular its intensity, to which these examples can draw our attention.

Though a simple formulation, a significant degree of psychological intensity built into the definition of emotion already excludes some ideas, such as the notion that emotions are

ubiquitous (as in Stocker, 1996, p. 5). But this does not mean to exclude an “emotional” or affective dimension that can be assumed to pervade experience; that would only obtain if emotions exhausted the affective realm. Thus, “hot” emotions are usefully classified in relation to other affective states, such as moods, sentiments and affective traits, which I will describe below. Such a classification is useful for focusing the discussion of emotions and promises to sharpen perception with regard to comprehending psychological experiences.

“Affect” is a vague but often crucial term in the discussion of emotion. Ben-Ze’ev characterizes affect as having two essential elements: 1) an inherent evaluation, and 2) a significant feeling component (2000, p. 79). This definition of affect excludes verbal praise, which lacks intrinsic significant feeling, as well as toothache and tickle, which lack intrinsic evaluation. Though verbal praise is an excellent example of evaluation without necessary feeling, toothache and tickle may be disputed as poor examples on the grounds that pain and pleasure are inherently evaluative sensations. Thus, it may be argued that more neutral examples are needed to isolate “mere feeling,” such as the sensation of my foot’s location relative to my hand. Ben-Ze’ev, however, argues that the pleasure and pain of mere feelings do not involve inherent evaluations. For instance, the feeling of being tickled cannot be said to have an inherent evaluation because it is the context that determines whether the situation is pleasurable or painful. Though this makes sense, toothache certainly appears to involve an inherently negative evaluation. Ben-Ze’ev argues that we need to distinguish different levels of such an experience, mere feeling and an attitude towards such feeling:

Feelings are often described as having an evaluative component, with pain involving a negative evaluation and pleasure, a positive evaluation. We should distinguish between

the complex pain or pleasure experienced and a felt quality which is one component of this experience. Experiences of pain, for instance, incorporate affective attitudes, such as fear, anxiety, and hostility, which are intentional as they involve a certain evaluation. Feelings themselves are not intentional: they do not have cognitive content describing a certain state; they are merely an initial expression of our current state. Pain or pleasure is an inherent property of feeling. However, the painful sensation of toothache does not mean that toothache is an intentional state evaluating the condition of the tooth. It is rather our self-perception of the condition of the tooth which includes a negative evaluation of the situation. (2000, pp. 65-66)

Pain and pleasure are regarded, then, both at the level of pure feeling and as more complex emotional states that have an intentional component. This is a conceptual distinction which aims to limit the notion of an affective realm by excluding mere feeling. However, it is acknowledged that “human mental states with a single basic dimension, that is, states of pure feeling or pure intentionality, occur rarely, if at all. Actual mental states are complex experiences which typically entail both feeling and intentionality” (ibid., p. 64). We can note that this conception of mere feeling allows less complex organisms, without intentional capacities, to have sensations of pleasure and pain.

The affective realm, then, is one of felt evaluations. Bodily feelings and verbal evaluations are extremes that limit this conception of affect. The affective dimension of experience is categorized into the four distinct but related elements of emotions, moods, sentiments, and affective traits. These elements are differentiated by distinct temporal structures and a differing specificity of intentional object. It is important to note that values are not

intended in this classification. Though there are connotations that follow terms such as mood (being *moody*) and sentiment (being *sentimental*), these terms are used as technical place-holders to distinguish significant features of the affective realm, while remaining agnostic to their potential comparative values. Table 1 indicates these relations and provides examples.

Table 1

The affective realm: intentional object and temporal structure (cf. Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, based on pp. 80-81)

	Occurrent (specific event)	Dispositional (general process)
Specific object	Emotions , e.g., “envy, anger, guilt, and sexual desire”. Lasting seconds to days.	Sentiments , e.g., “enduring love or grief”. Lasting weeks, months, years.
General object	Moods , e.g., “cheerful, satisfied, ‘blue’, and gloomy”. Lasting hours, weeks, months.	Affective traits , e.g., “shyness and enviousness”. Lasting up to a lifetime.

Emotions and sentiments are identified with specific objects, and differ with regard to their duration. Whereas emotions are supposed to last from seconds to days, sentiments last from weeks to years. This distinction helps one to grasp the difference between the emotion of love, which obtains during a specific event, as compared to enduring love, which is a disposition that obtains beyond such events. Sentiments are particularly difficult, so I will return to them shortly.

Moods and affective traits are identified with general objects, and differ in their duration. Generally, moods are supposed to last longer than emotions but less than sentiments and affective traits. Moods are also occurrent experiences that relate to specific events, as do emotions, but moods are diffuse with regard to their object: they appear closer to states of the organism than emotional reactions to an event. Affective traits are like moods in their lack of intentional object, but obtain at the level of character and can last a lifetime.

4.1 Sentiments

Moods and affective traits are, I believe, the most readily acceptable distinctions, but sentiments are tricky. Let us consider them more carefully. A sentiment is sometimes described as a tendency to have a particular emotion, as in the sentiment of enduring love being a tendency to have relatively frequent loving emotions toward some specific person; however, such a description does not grasp the significance of sentiments. They are not merely a tendency to have emotions, but a significant element of our felt evaluations on their own terms. Being dispositional, it is important to emphasize the ways in which sentiments structure our lives. Enduring love is not merely frequent emotions, but goes beyond them by influencing how we orient our lives and regulate our social interactions. Because sentiments reach into our daily practice and become habitual, there is also a point at which they become part of our personal baseline. As such, the felt evaluation that constitutes them may become less obvious, since emotional intensity decreases the more the sentiment becomes habituated. Consider the case of a once young and passionate environmentalist who has become an environmentally resigned middle-aged man. He may wonder, “Do I care about the environment anymore?” Although he

cannot sincerely claim to feel passionate, presently and within recent memory, he also recognizes that he avoids driving his car, rides his bike to work—even in unfavorable weather—and has generally integrated many environmental principles into his lifestyle. Can such a person be accurately described as having an environmental sentiment? Perhaps a test case could help answer the question. For instance, does this person feel guilty when he drives his car? Can he detect some sense of pride in his cycling or his environmental choice of lifestyle? If such relevant feelings are there, then I believe he is still an environmentalist, though a resigned one. On the other hand, if there are no felt evaluations relevant to an environmental sentiment, then his lifestyle is probably no longer motivated by environmental values. The practice would have detached itself from the motivational source of his youthful passion and been maintained on other grounds. It would be interesting to interview such a person, to ask if he believes he was ever sincerely an environmentalist, or if perhaps his passions were always elsewhere but were for a time understood in environmental terms.

The classification of emotions, moods, sentiments and affective traits—and its explicit indication that emotions do not exhaust the affective realm, nor are to be identified with bodily feeling alone—is very helpful for assessing various arguments in philosophical discussions about emotions. For instance, in her search for the necessary and sufficient conditions of grief, Martha Nussbaum (2001) asks, “How do we decide which of the many things that are going on contemporaneously with the grief are or are not parts of the grief?” (p. 57). She answers, “Since we are talking about living sentient beings, and since having some feelings of some type is probably a necessary condition of waking mental life for any sentient being, we could assert that any instance of emotion, given that it is a part of the waking life of a sentient being, has as its

necessary condition the presence of some feeling or other” (ibid.). On the face of it, her answer sounds plausible. But with a more complex conception of the affective realm, her claim can be more subtly analyzed. In other words, Nussbaum’s conception of feeling appears to be incredibly blunt, and it is this blunt conception that enables her to dismiss the feeling dimension of an emotion’s identity in favor of its “evaluative thought.” She supposes that feelings, since ubiquitous, are irrelevant. However, there is good reason to believe that the feeling dimension of experience is more complex than Nussbaum supposes, as indicated by the above classification, which locates grief as a dispositional, felt evaluation. Outbursts of sadness about the loss are emotions related to the dispositional sentiment of grief, which takes a considerable amount of time to feel, process and integrate into one’s life.

4.2 Complex Classifications: Affective Disorders and Emotion Episodes

Ben-Ze’ev acknowledges that there are cases which complicate his classifications, including “affective disorders” and “emotion episodes.” Affective disorders such as depression and anxiety are excluded from the above classification for normative reasons. They are considered by Ben-Ze’ev as extreme or atypical cases of affective experience (2000, p. 81). It can be noted that such normative claims imply a larger cultural framework of psychopathology (cf. Jenkins, 1994), but the focus here is to limit the conception of the affective realm. On the other hand, the notion of an “emotion episode” indicates the complex relation between the various elements of the affective realm. In an emotional episode, days of different affective experiences can be identified with a single emotion. They are constituted, for example, by “sequences in which one emotion followed another ... annoyance followed by anger, followed

by disgust, followed by upset and indignation” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 82). These diverse experiences are understood as describing and articulating a single emotion, which can be identified by a core evaluative concern. This notion of an emotional episode is useful for analyzing complex experiences that blur lines of classification, and shows how a framework grounded on ideal prototypes can obtain living explanatory value.

However, this notion should not be understood to imply that only one emotion can be experienced at a time or that all elements of an emotion episode should neatly cohere. Indeed, a single episode can have conflicting aspects. For example, John James and Russell Friedman (2009) claim that,

Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behavior. ... [For example,] When someone you love dies after suffering a long illness, you may feel a sense of relief that your loved one’s suffering is over. That is a positive feeling, even though it is associated with a death. At the same time, you may realize that you can no longer see or touch that person. This may be very painful for you. These conflicting feelings, relief and pain, are totally normal in response to death. (p. 3)

To be clear, the cause of an emotion and the emotion’s evaluative concern are distinct notions. For example, in the above citation, James and Friedman identify conflicting feelings with the ongoing experience of grief and claim that a significant change in one’s pattern of behavior is the cause generating such experiences. They do not speak directly, in this citation, about an evaluative concern of grief, which would need to include a conception of loss. Indeed, since loss is a crucial aspect of grief, and since not all changes are regarded as losses, “change” itself is an insufficient cause of grief. For grief to occur rather than, say, surprise or joy, there requires some

specific evaluation of the change *as a loss*. At any rate, for Ben-Ze'ev, that causal claim has little explanatory value, regarding grief in particular, because he considers all emotions to be generated by the perception of significant change, which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Generation of Emotion, Perception of Significant Change

Premise 4: Emotions are generated by the perception of significant changes to our personal situation, or to those we care about—in other words, to a broad view of our well-being.

In Ben-Ze'ev view, “Emotions typically occur when *we perceive positive or negative significant changes in our personal situation*—or in that of those related to us. A positive or negative significant change is that which significantly interrupts or improves a smoothly flowing situation relevant to our concerns” (2000, p. 13). In this chapter, I will clarify some of the ambiguities in this formulation, highlight its background conceptions of stability and healthy functioning, and defend the role of change in the generation of emotions from a criticism by Nussbaum. I give detailed attention to the role of change, which may appear minor, due to the central role this claim has on Ben-Ze'ev's overall conception of emotions: “Emotions indicate a transition in which the preceding context has changed, but no new context has yet stabilized” (ibid., p. 33). This notion of instability is intriguing, and I will return to it in my discussion of mental modes in Chapter 7.

In the above formulation, the term “perception” is ambiguous. Ben-Ze'ev does not propose that emotions are a kind of perceptual organ (as in Prinz, 2004, Ch. 10), but rather emphasizes that the significance of a change is determined subjectively. Indeed, he notes the difference between the objective and subjective magnitude of an event: “We construct a psychological reality in which despite the apparent great ‘objective’ weight of some changes,

they may not be emotionally significant and hence are perceived as smaller” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 16). An example in this regard is indifference toward widespread famine and poverty in a faraway land. Of course, the reverse is also true, as when great significance is found in objectively trivial matters, such as minor skin blemishes and unintended insults. Perception, then, here means “recognize.” Another clarification should be made regarding the subjective determination of significance. It is not as though one chooses how to weigh an emotional event, but rather that the factors influencing its perceived significance are subjective, such as personal background circumstances and occurrent mood. “A change is not any event; it is an event which is measured against a complex personal and dynamic framework” (ibid., p. 18). It may be noted that the subjective determination of significance gives room for the “perceived change” to be either actual or imaginary.

5.1 Stable and Unstable Contexts

A key notion underlying this conception of emotions is stability. Ben-Ze’ev relies on a model of the mental system that, by adapting to a changing environment, maintains a homeostatic or neutral state. It is against such a “personal baseline” that changes are registered. The neutral state is supposed to be open to development and is thus regarded as somewhat dynamic. Change is important to other mental processes including, for example, sensory sensitivity (ibid., p. 15), but it plays a unique—personal—role in emotions. Thus, “An important difference between the changes associated with consciousness in general and those associated with emotions is that emotional changes are of *highly personal significance*” (ibid.). Another distinguishing feature of emotion, which will be addressed later, is that it is not regarded as an

element of the mental system, but as a “mode or style” of thinking as a whole. Emotional reactions are therefore regarded with particular significance and as having unique psychological implications. Thus, “An emotional event may be compared to a large rock being thrown into a pool of still water: for a short time, emotional chaos reigns before calm gradually returns” (ibid., p. 40).

This way of understanding emotions, though, is not obviously correct. For instance, why shouldn't the image be reversed? Why not consider a certain chaotic emotionality to be basic to the human mental system and, accordingly, stability as brief and intermittent experiences or achievements? This would seem to accord with the general irrationality and lack of control in human life, especially in early development. It is not obvious that stability must ground change, in terms of logical priorities. It may be the case that each presupposes the other, in which case one can validly assert either notion as the base of comparison. Ben-Ze'ev supports his conception of change as grounded on a personal baseline by appealing to an evolutionary account of an organism–environment relationship. At various degrees of complexity—the cognitive system being the most complex—an organism needs to be alert to environmental changes. In particular,

for survival purposes it is crucial that the organism pay special attention to significant changes which may increase or decrease the chance of survival. Being emotional, which is the opposite of being indifferent, forces the organism to pay such special attention. ... Changes indicate that our situation is unstable, and awareness of this is important for survival. When we are accustomed to the change, mental activity decreases, as there is no sense in wasting time and energy on something to which we have already adapted. (ibid.,

p. 14)

Though persuasive evolutionary stories are relatively easy to construct even in the absence of evidence, the idea that emotions are concerned with well-being is not controversial. Nor is the claim that emotions have a genetic, evolutionary basis. For instance, from a quite different research program, Ekman (2007) also offers an evolutionary rationale for basic emotions and suggests that cultural learning explains local variation and elaboration (pp. 26-27). If emotions were not in part genetic, they would be social constructs; however, the general consensus is that social constructionism is inadequate to explain basic and general features of human emotions. My discussion focuses on such general features, and supports the view that culture significantly shapes emotional experience, self-conception, and norms regulating emotions. However, I do not address the distinction between basic and complex emotions.

The claims that emotions pertain to survival concerns and that they pertain to well-being are not identical, and will be addressed in the next chapter regarding Ben-Ze'ev's conception of emotions as essentially social. The claim being addressed here is whether change is a crucial aspect in the generation of emotions. In Ben-Ze'ev's view, the function of emotions is to alert the organism to important changes; as such, the mental system needs to remain open or at least return to a state of openness as soon as possible. This assumes that emotions consume our attention, and that while in such experiences one is less able to notice further significant changes. In other words, "Emotions indicate a transition in which the preceding context has changed, but no new context has yet stabilized" (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p. 33). Emotions are a tool that can engage with a chaotic and unknown situation. For example, riding my bicycle home late one night, I found myself stopped at a red light, lost in thought. On the spur of the moment, I impulsively

began turning right. A pedestrian at the corner became suddenly alarmed, shouting, “Whoa! Whoa! Watch out!” There was a car beside me at the red light, which, assuming I was waiting for the green light, also began to make a right turn. I presume that the pedestrian sensed that a crash was possible, but in the emergency at hand didn’t quite know what was going on—he didn’t even seem able to articulate words at first, but blurted out sounds of alarm. His shouts captured my attention, and I was pulled out of my wandering mind, now focused on the stability of my bike and turning tight to the curb out of harm’s way. I knew that I was safe and that the car behind me was also turning, but in my fatigue I had failed to signal this awareness to those around me. Yet, as soon as the pedestrian began shouting, I experienced an irruptive experience of on-going danger, for which I was as alert as possible to my surroundings, including the perspectives of the pedestrian and the driver. Such an experience of significant change is not a settled context, but an engaged moment, the meaning of which is dynamic and emerging.

The emotional system is initiated by a significant change and ends with the adaptation of a new stable state. If the cognitive system were absorbed in a specific change for too long, it would not be able to operate as an alarm for other changes, as it would already be occupied. On the other hand, if an emotion has not occurred, then a significant change has not been registered or perceived. This conception thus places emotional reactions at the center of the psychological adaptation to a changing world. This has implications, which I will not explore, for conceptions of personal growth. The assumption that emotions consume our attention will be addressed in my discussion of mental modes, in Chapter 7, and is well expressed by Nussbaum: Emotions have a “tendency to take over the personality” (2001, p. 22).

The proposed evolutionary rationale also helps to flesh out Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of a

“normal” emotion. It is one that is concerned with instability, specifically unstable situations pertaining to well-being. What has been said so far indicates that the atypicality of affective disorders, indicated above, can be identified with maladaptation. Such maladaptation seems open to two directions, either with regard to the misapprehension of stable and unstable situations, or with a dysfunctional apprehension of survival concerns and well-being. I will return to the issue of healthy functioning in Section 5.3.

5.2 Nussbaum’s Challenge to the Role of Change

There is a further issue raised in this regard which complicates Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of change, namely, “a more profound type of change connected with our contingent existence. This type of change express *our profound vulnerability* and dependence on external factors which we do not control” (2000, p. 16). Though Nussbaum is a proponent of understanding emotions as expressing personal vulnerability and lack of control, she contends that change is not essential to the generation of emotions and argues that Ben-Ze’ev’s discussion of this point is incoherent (2001, p. 42, *n.* 39). In Nussbaum’s view, since the possibility of death is ever present, fear of death cannot be understood in terms of change, but rather at the level of “background emotions” (*ibid.*, p. 110). I will not get into the details of Nussbaum’s theory, but simply respond to her objection. In her view, a theory of emotion that is “hooked onto a situation of change” precludes “enduring love and attachment ... background fear of death ... [and] compassion for people who are starving the world over just provided that they go on starving without change” (*ibid.*, p. 111). Again, as with her dismissal of feelings, this view seems to take a blunt instrument to a subtle problem. Unfortunately, in her criticism of Ben-Ze’ev’s conception

of significant change, Nussbaum does not take into account the distinctions he makes between various levels of the affective realm. Though the idea of persisting emotions is indeed precluded by Ben-Ze'ev's view (at least in terms of healthy functioning), there is room for related, healthy experiences in terms of sentiments and affective traits—in other words, dispositional, felt evaluations. His theory predicts that these will have less immediate intensity than emotions, which are responses to specific events, but they can persist up to a lifetime. Further, the classification of sentiments is grounded on the occasional outburst of persistent, profound concerns as specific emotional events. In other words, the background vulnerability of one's death can come to the foreground as an intense and brief emotion. In this sense, intermittent realizations of one's mortality, and that of loved ones, is a perceived change against a background of normalcy in which mortality is hardly recognized, if at all. This conception has the strength of claiming that long-term sentiments can only genuinely obtain on the condition of related, occurrent emotions. Thus the idea of enduring love is given the specific content that one should feel intense love as an occurrent emotion from time to time: enduring love cannot be enduringly temperate. A lack of occasional intense feeling, or emotional episodes, indicates a lack of the related sentiment. Though the specific frequency of emotions required to ground a genuine sentiment is not outlined (and remains a problem), a limit is indeed suggested, which for example can rule out a self-deceptive rationalization of enduring love that might be better understood as a feeling of care combined with a sense of duty.

5.3 The Role of Self-Deception

Ben-Ze'ev's conception of normal or healthy functioning is perhaps unusual, and it often

directs his discussion without being addressed explicitly. His discussion of “profound vulnerability” is one example in which such basic assumptions come to the surface. Returning to the indication that the notion of change brings to his conception of affective disorders, Ben-Ze’ev suggests that anxiety and depression are often maladaptive responses to such vulnerability or “existential issues.” The healthy person, on the other hand, experiences emotions “as a way to cope” with such vulnerability. This is an odd and interesting way of putting the issue. He claims that, “By attaching significance to specific, local changes in our current situation, we ignore, in a way, the more profound type of change underlying our vulnerability; this is a type of self-deception” (2000, p. 17). Self-deception is not often regarded in a positive light. A certain degree of this kind of self-deception is claimed to be advantageous, though, “as it enables us to protect our positive self-image and mobilize the required resources for facing daily changes” (*ibid.*). In other words, from an objective point of view, our daily changes are insignificant since they can be measured against our death and the deaths of those we love. Relatedly, the comedian Louis C.K. tells a joke about why divorced people have trouble dating, namely, because they have experienced the profound loss that all relationships must end in, sooner or later. It is as if such a loss shatters their belief in a truthfully enduring love. Exasperated, Louis’ punchline consists in his realization that even the best-case scenario—an ideal, lifelong and loving partner—must eventually end in death and loss. Much of the humor he manages to bring to such a morbid discussion derives from the degree of truth in his claims—juxtaposed with a pointed tension regarding the implausibility of drawing their conclusion, that relationships are a fraud and a letdown. The joke highlights an inherent tension with intellectual truths and personal well-being: focusing on the truthful inevitability of loss appears utterly cynical and inhuman in light of the

value of positive emotions and relationships. Emotions give us an experience of significance at the daily level, precluding the indifference that Louis' "objective" view seems to propose.

Though self-deception can certainly support self-esteem, the connection is complex and problematic. I am not concerned with pursuing the issue of an appropriate limit of self-deception, but I do wish to highlight that Ben-Ze'ev's promotion of such self-deception is an issue of special significance for a certain notion of the self; that is, one which believes it has or ought to have more control over events than it actually does. There is some indication that this is a special concern for independence-based cultures (see Ellsworth, 1994, pp. 32-34). Gaining a perspective on how our culture influences our emotional life is among the most valuable insights that research on emotion yields. I believe that it is perfectly plausible—indeed, highly desirable—to develop realistic cultural norms for which self-deception is inappropriate and yet emotional life is motivating and fulfilling. There is no contradiction here. Rather, it is cultural assumptions that conflict with the recognition of impermanence and the little control we have over events. Accordingly, our notion of self-esteem many need to be modified if our aim is to promote truthful relations between the self and the world.

There is a further problem with Ben-Ze'ev's discussion of self-deception, because emotional daily significance can only be seen as deceptive from a certain point of view; that is, from the broad and stable perspective of our mortality and the inevitability of loss. When Ben-Ze'ev claims, again, that through everyday emotional reactions "we ignore, in a way, the more profound type of change underlying our vulnerability" (2000, p. 17), it appears that he gives the truth of our death the ultimate significance. Although death is certain, his discussion risks marginalizing the corresponding truth that, for a time, we live. The significance of living is not

less real because our lives are limited. So the idea that the significance of daily challenges are deceptive, with regard to our ultimate insignificance in the grand scheme of things, seems misleading. Indeed, it is the existentialists' claim that daily living is all the more significant, the more one realizes one's own inevitable death. The tension between these perspectives, which we can call subjective and objective points of view, appears to involve competing claims with regard to what is significant: daily life or ultimate death. Rather than trying to arbitrate which view is more correct in order to determine which is deceptive, the salience of events is actually posited by Ben-Ze'ev's framework as being determined differently by various mental modes. For instance, the intellectual mode measures stability or the objective perspective, whereas the emotional mode measures the subjective significance of daily challenges, the dynamics of a subjective point of view. The conception of mental modes will be explained further in Chapter 7. At this point I only wish to point out that the kind of self-deception under consideration, by Ben-Ze'ev, is only coherent if the intellectual viewpoint deserves ultimate priority. And that would seem to claim that it is truer that we die than that we live, a claim which is tangled in a false dilemma.

5.4 Emotion and the Significance of Events

A final ambiguity needs to be explained with regard to Ben-Ze'ev's conception of change. Though he claims that emotions are generated by a perceived significant change, he also claims that emotions "give the event its significance" (2000, p. 18). Therefore we must ask how it is that a change is regarded as significant, since such significance is identified with the later emotional experience that supposedly results from the perception. Vicious circularity needs to be

avoided if this claim is to have explanatory value.

There is a related apparent circularity in Richard Wollheim's (2003) discussion of the relationship between emotions and attitudes. He claims, on the one hand, that experiences such as satisfaction and frustration "give rise to an attitude" and that a persisting attitude gives rise to an emotion (p. 30). On the other hand, he also claims that emotions "generate attitudes" (p. 29). Though this back-and-forth relationship may indeed obtain, the discussion is very confusing as it apparently tries to explain the cause of emotions. There nevertheless seems to be something right in this idea, and an important part of avoiding a viciously circular argument is carefully defining the affective processes involved in the discussion. I find Ben-Ze'ev most helpful in this regard, with definite, though loose, boundaries between emotions, moods, sentiments, and affective traits. This classification reminds us that emotions are not the only affective phenomena, and that we may refer to other aspects of the affective realm in an attempt to understand the generation of emotions. Thus, though emotions are supposed to "give the event its significance," this does not mean that nonemotional experiences cannot have significance. Indeed, there are many kinds of significance—intellectual logic and the significance of an objective perspective has just been indicated with regard to self-deception. So we may understand Ben-Ze'ev as meaning that emotions capture our attention in a personal manner, thus giving rise to its subjective and felt significance. For example, with the perception of an insult, we may become angry and feel that we have been treated unjustly, whereas if we did not perceive the insult—and, indeed, suppose that there was no malicious intent—the event would lose its significance.

Do we need to explain in great detail the nonemotional, though not necessarily nonaffective, factors that enable one to perceive such significance? Though such discussion may

be illuminating, I do not believe it is necessary here. I have tried to show the potential circularity of Ben-Ze'ev's argument and demonstrate that it is not necessarily vicious. I have argued that emotions engage with unstable or emerging contexts, by which I mean an engagement that is direct and in-the-moment, alert to events "from within." This is why emotion operates with the element of change, whereas intellect, by contrast, dwells on the significance of stable features. I have argued against Ben-Ze'ev's claim that daily emotional significance is a kind of self-deception, in the face of the supposed greater "reality" of existential concerns, in order to promote realism in emotional life. I believe that social norms about emotion need to embrace, rather than shy away from, vulnerability and impermanence.

Chapter 6: Emotional Significance of Personal Comparative Concerns

Premise 5: Significant changes to our well-being typically involve a personal comparative concern.

The notion of an emotional comparative concern further develops Ben-Ze'ev's conception of significant change. The comparative concern of emotion is supposed to be complex and highly imaginative, involving a dynamic assessment of personal situations and alternate outcomes. Although social aspects of emotions can be analyzed from various perspectives, the comparative concern claims that emotions are essentially interpersonal phenomena. "Concern," however, is a somewhat vague term. Frijda and Mesquita (1994) helpfully explain the notion of emotional concern in terms of preference satisfaction: "Emotional evaluations derive from an individual's concerns, that is, from his or her goals, motives, values, and sensitivities. *Concerns* is a convenient general term to denote an individual's (short- or long-term) dispositions to prefer particular states of the world or of the self" (p. 54). In this chapter, I argue that emotions are typically engaged with social concerns. Even though they may seem to be private phenomena, emotions locate socially embedded and interpersonal aspects of the self.

6.1 Availability of Alternatives

The comparative concern is essentially imaginative. Ben-Ze'ev gives room for the emotional experience to involve significant cognitive assessment: "The emotional environment contains not only what is, and what will be, experienced but also all that could be, or that one

desires to be, experienced; for the emotional system, all such possibilities are posited as simultaneously there and are compared with each other” (2000, p. 19). For instance, another’s improved situation may be taken as a depreciation of our own. Further, emotions are not merely concerned with objective situations, “but also to our own previous, ideal, or ‘ought’ states” (ibid.). Thus, another’s promotion may invoke an emotional response if we believe that the promotion ought to have been ours.

The notion of the “availability of an alternative” is employed to better understand the varying intensities of emotional response. The closer we believe we were to gaining the promotion, the closer that alternative scenario is to our sense of reality. Therefore the alternative is perceived as more available and the emotional reaction is expected to be more intense.

6.2 Social Concern

Ben-Ze’ev claims that humans are immensely dependent on a social network for survival, thus grounding the social nature of emotions on a concern for personal well-being. Such dependence, though, may be indirect in European-American cultures where, with a significant degree of social isolation or individualism, one’s survival mainly depends on impersonal infrastructures for housing, transportation, food, and entertainment. However, social dependence is both direct and crucial during childhood, and that personal history is significant for emotional reactions, which are able to respond rapidly and without deliberation to urgent situations precisely because they rely on past experience. Thus, Daniel Goleman (1995), relying on the work of Joseph LeDeux, calls attention to the fact that emotions are “sometimes, if not often, out-of-date—especially in the fluid social world we humans inhabit. ... [An emotion] acts before

there is full confirmation” (p. 21). Further, with his greater emphasis on the mechanisms underlying emotional phenomena, Goleman calls attention to the long evolutionary history in which emotional circuitry has developed. Thus he acknowledges that the novelties and social isolation of contemporary society do not necessarily match deeply embedded emotional concerns: “while our emotions have been wise guides in the evolutionary long run, the new realities civilization presents have arisen with such rapidity that the slow march of evolution cannot keep up” (ibid., p. 5). So even if humans are becoming less dependent on others for survival, our emotional circuitry doesn’t necessarily know it.

In this sense, Ben-Ze’ev’s claim that emotions are involved in survival concerns, grounded on an evolutionary rationale, here slides into a broader and more complex claim about flourishing. For instance, he claims that, “Among humans, the social world is a principle theater of emotions since other people are most important for our well-being” (2000, p. 23). And, “People are more interesting to people than anything else” (ibid.). First there is a claim to human dependence on others; second, a claim of interest in them. These claims can be construed, however, as presupposing each other. That is, if I have an inherent interest in others, then I depend upon them for my fulfillment. If I also depend on others for my survival, then I am highly motivated to take interest in them. In this way it appears that neither claim can be used to explain the other, since my interest presupposes my dependence, and my dependence presupposes my interest. But these claims can be harmonized if we acknowledge the ambiguous role that the notion of well-being plays in them. That is, well-being emerges as a concern not merely for survival but also for flourishing. Thus, if I depend on people for my survival, I will be very concerned with my relations with them. This concern is emotional, as has been explained on

evolutionary grounds. But the further claim about flourishing emerges from it, in the sense that emotional fulfillment is supposed to depend on personal relationships with others. These claims hang well together, illustrating a personally necessary and meaningful bond with others. This view both asserts and gives content to a strong descriptive claim of humans as fundamentally social creatures.

This conception of the social concern prevalent in human emotions, though, does not claim that emotions are a sure guide to survival or flourishing. Rather, the claim is that emotions are typically a practical engagement with such concerns. The accuracy of one's conception of well-being, at the level of spontaneous emotional engagements, remains a question because, among other reasons, our emotions are shaped by cultural influences and social norms which do not inherently promote personal well-being. Such accuracy pertains to questions of emotional intelligence, which will be addressed briefly in Chapter 10.

6.3 Comparative concern

To develop the notion of comparative concern, Ben-Ze'ev distinguishes an emotional object and an emotional concern. Whereas the emotional object is the focus of attention, the emotional concern is not always obvious; it expresses the basic evaluation at play in an emotion. The objects of focus and of concern can come apart. For instance, embarrassment is self-focused and concerned with others: "The agent who feels the emotion is the emotional object of embarrassment, but the focus of concern of this emotion is the way others evaluate this person" (ibid., p. 31). The typical object of all emotions, Ben-Ze'ev claims, is a person, either oneself or another. The emotional concern is relational—for instance, expressing "undeserved inferiority"

in envy and, in anger, “a specific demeaning offense against us” (ibid.).

Emotional concern registers deviation from our personal baseline and is essentially interested in personal situations. Even when emotions are self-directed, that is, when “we are both the subject and the object [of an emotion], our concern is focused on the manner in which others evaluate and treat us” (ibid., pp. 96-97). Such self-directed emotions include happiness, sadness, hope, and fear (ibid., p. 449). Ben-Ze’ev situates these apparently individual emotions in an interpersonal context: I am not just happy as a thriving organism; rather, I am happy due to some kind of social approval or engagement with others. Thus, an emotion’s “focus of concern usually refers to our personal situation in a certain group” (ibid., p. 31). This focus of concern constitutes what is often referred to, following Lazarus, as a “core relational theme.” Such themes—the loss of grief, the danger of fear, and the undeserved offense of anger, for example—are the essence of emotions, in the sense that they can be used to distinguish one emotion from others.

6.4 The Challenge of Non-Comparative Emotions

There are, though, cases of typically interpersonal emotions that challenge this view, as well as emotions that do not appear to be essentially interpersonal. Examples of the latter that Ben-Ze’ev acknowledges are hope and fear. “The crucial role of social comparison is evident in many emotions; for example, in envy, jealousy, pleasure-in-others’-misfortune, pity, gratitude, hate, anger, embarrassment, pride, and shame. In other emotions, such as fear and hope, which are concerned with more existential issues, the importance of social comparison is less obvious” (ibid., p. 24). To maintain a strict claim to the relational nature of the comparative concern, fear

and hope, when concerned with existential issues, need to be considered self-relational in the sense that they “are directed at our own fortune” (ibid., p. 473). This may seem implausible. The notion of self-relation, though, is premised on hope and fear being directed toward the future, our “future fortune.” In this way, the idea of self-relation makes sense: I hope for my future state to improve. This seems appropriate for hope, but the case of fear is more complicated.

Fear appears to have an unwarranted priority in the analysis of emotional experiences. For instance, consider Paul Ekman’s (2007) reasoning: “Why do we become emotional when we do? The most common way in which emotions occur is when we sense, rightly or wrongly, that something that seriously affects our welfare, for better or worse, is happening or about to happen” (p. 19). The connection of emotion with welfare lends itself to the extreme concern of well-being as survival, that is, death. Indeed, Ekman follows his reasoning by imagining the experience of fear during a near-miss car crash. Though Ekman’s view is supportive of the idea that emotions are primarily interpersonal, focusing on fear can lend itself to an opposing view that emotions are self-centered concerns of an individual organism. For instance, fear of snakes (considered by some to be a paradigm case of emotional experience) can occur with the mere impression of a coiled object on the retina, that is, without cognitive mediation (Prinz, 2003, pp. 76-81). This undermines the relational role in such an experience because relations are not concrete objects that can be observed in such a mechanistic manner. Indeed, such research presents a problem for cognitive-evaluative theories of emotions in general. As Laura Sizer criticizes, “The ‘quick n’ dirty’ route proceeds from the thalamus directly to the amygdala, triggering emotion responses prior to that information reaching higher cognitive processing centers. This research seems to present a direct challenge to emotion theorists—like Ben-

Ze'ev—who argue that cognition and evaluation are defining components of *all* emotions” (2002, p. 364).

This is an interesting challenge. I believe that fear of snakes is far from paradigmatic of emotional experience. It is not experienced on a day-to-day level, even if it can be readily studied in controlled settings. Further, this empirical research seems to suggest that fear of snakes has unique neural circuitry that gives such a fear almost instantaneous control over the limbic system. This suggests that the reaction in the face of snakes is reflex-like in a way not typical of other emotions; although, on the other hand, it is similar to emotions in its complex nature-nurture dynamic—that is, to account for variation among people, such fear has been explained in terms of a genetic predisposition to learn it (Ekman, 2007, p. 153; Prinz, 2004). Ben-Ze'ev's framework makes some effort to distinguish reflexes and emotions in terms of flexibility: “Emotions are more flexible [than reflexes and drives]; they lack stimulus-specificity since they need to be responsive to a wide variety of circumstance associated with an agent-environment relationship” (2000, p. 174). Thus, a rigid “emotional” pairing of stimulus-response, such as fear of snakes, or the sudden appearance of a coiled object, lies somewhat outside of the object of this study. In terms of the framework and phenomena proposed here, it is a case of blurred classification. As such, there is reason to reject its role as a paradigmatic emotion, and theories which employ such rigidity in their paradigm cases of emotion should be pushed to explain flexibility. In particular, a rigid stimulus-response mechanism, I propose, will have special difficulty with explaining degrees of psychological intensity. I will not develop the argument here, but I believe that this is a problem for Prinz's (2004) account. A rigid stimulus-response mechanism, even if adaptable in terms of associations, seems to articulate a rigid degree of

intensity; that is, when emotions are set-off, they are theoretically bound to a maximum degree of intensity. A switch is flipped, and the emotion is “on,” full-blast. This might be appropriate for fear of snakes, but emotions are often subtle in shades and degrees. The same problem is articulated in terms of intentionality by Deigh (2009), who argues that neo-Jamesians (by which he means Damasio, Prinz and Robinson) do not have the concept of intentionality that they claim (pp. 36-37). For instance, danger is represented by such thinkers, he claims, as an “alarm,” but is not directed towards its object. It is this unresponsiveness to the object that a rigid mechanism is bound to, and which problematizes emotional flexibility.

Acknowledging the atypicality of the fear of snakes, we can fall back from the claim of interpersonal concern, and understand the emotional intensity of such fear as registering an urgent deviation from one’s personal baseline. After all, the claim is that the most frequent emotions for human beings are social, not that every emotion is social (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 114). However, even if fear in the face of a snake turns out to be more like an instinct than a typical emotion, fear during a car crash certainly appears to constitute a typical emotional experience. Thus, if these fears can be distinguished on the grounds of neural pathways and activity, the comparative concern may remain a valid lens for the analysis of emotions in general. Those “emotions” which can be identified as having special neural circuitry bypassing cognition (here meaning “neocortex,” see Prinz, 2003, p. 76) may operate outside of the personal comparative concern, which is intentional. If so, they may also deserve special categorization and an analysis of their own. A related approach to distinguishing among fears is suggested by Ekman. He notes that the severity of threat, its immediacy, and the agent’s ability to do something to cope with it are crucial factors that distinguish different kinds of fear, and claims that “there is some evidence

to suggest that an immediate threat and an impending threat each involve different areas of brain activity” (2007, p. 156).

6.5 The Challenge of the Inanimate Object

On the other hand, there appears to be another challenge to the comparative personal concern of emotions, because typically interpersonal emotions such as anger can be directed at nonhuman, even inanimate, objects. This challenges the idea that the typical emotional object is a person. Anger at a computer or phone that suddenly lets you down, for example, is a frequent occurrence. Ben-Ze’ev even cites the extreme case of a man in Washington that “apparently became frustrated with his personal computer, pulled out a gun, and shot it; the computer located in the man’s home office, had four bullet holes in its hard drive and one in the monitor” (2000, p. 30). In less extreme form, such cases of emotions directed at inanimate objects are widespread and a deep threat to the claim that emotions are typically about people. Thus, this central claim of Ben-Ze’ev’s theory is controversial. A broader claim is made by Goldie (2000), namely that the usual case of emotion “is feelings towards the world” (p. 58). Though controversial, Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of the personal concern of typical human emotions offers an intriguing angle of investigation. And, if correct, daily emotions may appear more sensible when considered in an interpersonal, comparative context.

One way to consider Ben-Ze’ev’s point of view is to recognize that an emotional object, though possibly inanimate, cannot be considered impersonal: objects of emotion are personally significant. Thus, “Only if we ascribe some life or feeling to the inanimate thing, as does a little girl to her doll, can we have emotions toward it” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 30). I take this conception

to claim that the man's computer, for example, was perceived as "letting him down." Though it is far from clear what emotional reaction explains the shooting, it presumably involves a raging or terrified need to control the situation or eliminate a threat. At any rate, a computer never lets anyone down. It merely functions or doesn't function. Accordingly, emotions construe the personal connection—taking a machine's dysfunction personally. This suggests that emotional reactions to inanimate objects involve a certain anthropomorphism. And it further predicts, for example, that emotional reactions to a robot will be more frequent or intense than to a laptop. On the other hand, an anthropomorphic conception of reality may have more validity than is granted in scientific cultures. I will not develop the argument, but such world-views may express a valid emotional relationship with the world. The more an object is construed as having personality, the more it can be expected to generate emotional reactions. And though the perception of personality is highly flexible, in the face of actual humans it is vividly real. Thus it still makes sense to claim that "The things people do and say, including the things that we ourselves do and say, are the things that affect us most" (ibid., p. 29).

That claim, though, remains highly speculative. Further empirical research is needed to test the typical and most intense objects of emotions. The claim suggests, however, that empirical studies founded on imaginative thought experiments, comic books, and, to a lesser extent, watching films of people, are not necessarily capturing data that is of central emotional significance. Rather, Ben-Ze'ev's theory suggests a need for devices that monitor individuals in their daily settings and interactions. These are part of the individual's personal baseline, and data needs to be gathered to see if emotional deviations from the baseline are typically oriented around interpersonal situations.

Within the discourse of the philosophy of mind and specifically of the cognitive aspects of emotions, there is a lack of attention given to the body, at least in terms of subjective embodiment rather than, for instance, bodily movement in facial expressions. I suspect that the physical presence of the human body is an especially intense emotional object. Though we may have emotional reactions while reflecting on our experiences, reading a book, watching a movie, and communicating online, I suspect that social interactions involving physical presence offer a degree of reality and a resistance to our imagination that is uniquely intense. Though degree of imagination is indeed a factor of emotional intensity, so too is familiarity (or novelty), and we can become all too familiar with our own imagination. Physical interaction offers the potential for maximum emotional intensity due to the degree of reality afforded by the broad set of communication cues. Although tone of voice and gestures may be expressed through video chats, the physical interaction also involves, for example, smells and dynamics of physical proximity. Less determinate, but perhaps equally relevant, are non-conscious cues that “leak” personal characteristics. As Eva Illouz (2007) says, discussing involuntary bodily communication in contrast to the verbal and controlled nature of online dating, “it is precisely that which we are not aware of which is most likely to make a significant impression on the person we meet”:

it is the information people give off rather than that they freely give ... The information they give off, despite their best self so to speak, is very much dependent on the ways in which they use their body (voice, eyes, body posture, etc.), thus suggesting that much of our interactions are a sort of negotiation between what we consciously monitor and what we have no control over. (p. 97)

These factors are relevant to many emotions and are not restricted to the romantic sphere. Actual

interaction increases the sense of reality. Perhaps this is in part by resisting, warts and all, an imaginary sense of immorality. In other words, actual interactions bring embodiment and personal vulnerability into plain view. An increase in the degree of communication dynamics limits our imagination by providing more details about others' individualities. And by providing greater resistance to our imagination, such interactions may also challenge our sense of reality and be perceived as involving a greater degree of change. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the perception of significant change typically instigates an intellectual crisis that takes the form of an emotional mode of engagement.

6.6 Emotion as Interpersonal

Emotions can be considered social from many angles. Perhaps the most accepted angle is the cultural shaping of emotions, which is especially prevalent during early childhood development. This angle is well expressed by Ronald de Sousa's notion of "paradigm scenarios," in which primordial patterns of emotional energies become identified (unconsciously) with sets of objects and socially expected behaviors (1980, pp. 142-43). Along with cultural shaping, emotions are also widely regarded as socially infectious and socially communicative (Ekman, 2007). These social aspects of emotions, however, appear to be amenable to the view of emotions as fundamentally individual responses. Though emotions are informed by others, affected by others, and communicate to others, the emotion itself can still be seen as fundamentally obtaining within the individual organism. However, Ben-Ze'ev's claim of the essentially social nature of emotions goes deeper and challenges such a view.

The point about "comparative personal concern" is that emotion is a site of

interpersonality; that is, emotions connect an individual identity with others. “Emotions are a very important glue that links us to others, and the links to others are important determinants for the generation of emotions” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 23). From an individual perspective, emotions are a site of vulnerability to external influence: one cannot help being affected by others. From a more collective or social perspective, emotions enable personal relations between individuals, and are intense when such relations are in flux. We might want to say, extending Geoffrey White’s (1994) analysis, that emotions express “the state of the *relation* between two persons ... not the individual and not two individuals” (p. 234). It should be noted, however, that this state of relation is subjectively determined at the level of the individuals involved, which is an important focus for the consideration of emotional integrity.

If emotions are essentially interpersonal phenomena, it is important to address how it is that emotions are conceived and likely experienced as internal responses of the individual, at least in cultures emphasizing personal autonomy or independence. Frijda and Mesquita (1994) offer the following analysis:

The social functions of emotions are not added onto the emotions as a secondary consequence of primarily intraindividual events. We may say that emotions have become intraindividual events only secondarily, after having been turned into states of experienced readiness rather than being states of readiness ready to translate into action.
(p. 84)

They argue, then, that the interpersonal nature of emotions is primary, and that a conception of them as internal responses emerges from a self-reflective attitude, “experienced readiness,” towards a more fundamentally spontaneous process. Relatedly, Robert Solomon (2008) claims

that expression is the norm of emotion, and that “The controlled, unexpressed, hidden emotion therefore requires special explanation, not the connection between emotions and their expression” (p. 196). With the distinction between mental modes, which will be addressed in the next chapter, such an “experienced readiness” can be extended to the notion of an intellectual mode of awareness. Since the distrust of emotions accompanies an all too primary trust in the intellectual mode of deliberative thinking, or more basically a trust in reason over passion, we can conjecture that “experienced readiness” is the psychological distance that a habit of deliberation lends to the emotional experience.

No doubt, there are many factors involved, including the value of autonomy, critical thinking, and the desire for wisdom more generally. However, undue privatization of emotion too easily puts an unreasonable demand on the individual to take sole responsibility for their reactions. For instance, Easton and Hardy (2009) claim that “No one ‘makes’ you feel jealous or insecure—the person who makes you feel that way is you. No matter what the other person is doing, what you feel in response is determined inside you” (p. 69). Although this claim is made in an effort to construct an admirable conception of emotional integrity, it relies on a conception of emotion at the level of the individual organism. As such, it would appear that one has, in principle, the power to manage those emotions, whereas if emotions are interpersonal then we can never expect to gain complete control over them, since we cannot control others.

Interpersonal emotions leave us vulnerably connected to those around us, precluding a tight seal around the self that would enable a great deal of familiarity and mastery. This is not to say that emotional management is impossible, but that the different conceptions of the ontological location of emotions suggests different avenues for their management. The individual

perspective suggests that emotionality is one's own problem to get to know well; that is, "to manage one's reactions." The interpersonal perspective, on the other hand, suggests becoming familiar with the strange and uncomfortable; since mastery is not an option, to manage by way of embracing and embodying the inevitability of emotional challenges. The distinction is difficult, because even an interpersonal conception of emotions, as is the one put forward here, regards the individual as the site of an emotion's realization. What makes the difference is the emotional concern: emotions are not simply internal reactions based on one's past, but rather intelligent, habituated responses to what is happening here and now in a social context. Granted that understanding, ideas about management and responsibility for one's reactions become more subtle. For instance, part of emotion management may include the settings and people we frequently contact and avoid. The individual view of emotions seems to suggest that one can, and often ought to, overcome a negative emotion in order to frequent a setting or improve a relationship—in short, to pursue one's goals. Though we do not want to hide from the world and avoid growth, an interpersonal view of emotions claims that part of the problem is outside of oneself and one's control, and that personal efforts alone can be like swimming upstream. Therefore, the interpersonal conception of emotions puts more emphasis, as the situational social psychologist does, on how structures affect individuals and, thus, suggests indirect forms of management. Lastly, if emotions are not private, their interpersonal nature suggests that self-discovery need not be a process of introspection, but can be a social enterprise. I will return to self-discovery in Chapter 9. Next, I turn to explaining Ben-Ze'ev's conception of mental modes.

Chapter 7: Emotion as a Mental Mode

Premise 6: Emotions are best understood as a mode of the mental system as a whole; they can be contrasted with other modes, such as intellectual and perceptual modes. The emotional mode is quick, spontaneous and non-deliberative—a schematic response based on past experience.

The notion of a mental mode is obscure and its terminology is archaic. The conception of emotions as a mental mode, however, is intriguing and promises a new perspective on understanding emotional experience, especially with regard to the suspicion that emotions distort reality and are an obstruction to clear reasoning. It is a key notion for understanding Ben-Ze'ev's further claim that emotions are often "optimal" responses, which will be discussed in the next chapter. In his words, Ben-Ze'ev claims that "Considering emotion to be a mode of the whole mental system, rather than a mere mental element—such as a disposition, capacity, feeling, or type of intentional reference—is a novel suggestion that provides a more comprehensive and precise description of emotions" (2004, p. 267). The notion of mental modes fleshes out the conception of change put forward earlier, because emotionality is regarded as a qualitative change in the operation of psychological experience.

What is a mental mode? Consider a study by Lutz, Brefczynski-Lewis, Johnstone, and Davidson (2008), which examined the neural circuitry of emotion during compassion meditation. To capture brain data of such an experience, the subjects were instructed to enter an all-encompassing mental state: "The meditative practice studied here involves the generation of a

state in which an ‘unconditional feeling of loving-kindness and compassion pervades the whole mind as a way of being, with no other consideration, or discursive thoughts’” (p. 1). Such an experience appears to correspond to Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of emotion as a mental mode. However, we may note an important difference: emotions are essentially spontaneous reactions for Ben-Ze’ev, and our deliberate ability to enter such a state is questionable. The point, though, is that an emotion takes over one’s mental resources. As a response to significant change, the mind becomes emotional.

The notion of mental modes involves an ontological level of analysis. As a function of the whole mental system, various mental elements are employed in terms of a certain style of thinking. Sensation, perception, memory, imagination and thought are often considered as mental capacities. Emotions should not be considered as another capacity among these, though, because emotions mobilize such capacities in their own terms. Thus, “emotion should be conceptualized as a higher-level construct than any of these capacities” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2004, p. 252). This level of analysis is rarely studied directly. It is important to note also that there are various potential ontological levels in the analysis of emotions including, for example, biological and interpersonal levels. Though this level of analysis is abstract, the phenomenological experience that it aims to illuminate is concrete: it is the experience of an emotion taking over one’s personality, one’s way of thinking. Further, it aims to explain why one cannot simply employ discursive reasoning practices to navigate an emotional experience.

A mode thus refers to a basic functioning style of the mind. Ben-Ze’ev considers three main mental modes. In addition to the emotional mode, he also speaks of perceptual and intellectual modes. At times, he also considers a fourth, imaginative, mode (2009). The main

focus of his discussions, however, is to distinguish between emotional and intellectual modes. This is clearly related to the traditional view which opposes emotion and reason. Much contemporary research, going beyond mind-body dualism, has debated in terms of emotions as affects or cognitions—with both sides of the debate trying to unite mind and body in their conception of emotions. The framework of mental modes may be a more constructive avenue for understanding the intriguing differences and connections between emotion and reason. Such a framework, though, is highly theoretical, and it remains unclear how it can be established empirically. However, if the theory is consistent and plausible, such research should be possible. If mental modes are fundamentally distinct styles of thinking, then we can expect some empirical evidence that will mark differences. The object of the study, however, cannot simply be a felt response to an image or a memory, but should be the actual outburst of an emotion that one cannot shake off.

7.1 Distinguishing Emotional and Intellectual Engagement

Because a mental mode is a basic ontological level of mobilizing mental resources, this conception can develop the discussion about the “rationality” of emotions. A mental mode, underlying various mental capacities, can be identified with its own principles of logic—the logic in terms of which capacities are mobilized. Three aspects are employed to distinguish between mental modes (Ben-Ze’ev, 2003, p. 148):

1. Basic psychological features;
2. Types of information-processing mechanisms; and
3. Logical principles of information processing.

The basic psychological features refer to the typical characteristics and components of mental modes. Characteristics refer to a description of the experience as a whole, whereas components refer to a conceptual division of the experience. For example, emotions are characterized as urgent experiences that demand our attention, whereas the intellectual mode is relatively calm, focused and deliberate. This is not to suggest that all thinking or reasoning is calm and deliberate as such; rather, that we can enter a mode of awareness and engagement that is detached and logical. Like the prototype of emotion, the intellect as described is also an ideal. Though we can expect mixed cases, I believe there is much explanatory value in taking these two paradigms of engagement seriously.

The emotion mode can be characterized as highly complex, greatly unstable, highly intense, using a partial perspective, and lasting for a relatively brief period. In contrast, the intellectual mode is typically somewhat less complex, more stable, not so intense, having a broader perspective and longer duration. (Ben-Ze'ev, 2004, p. 256)

By focusing on emotion, there is a risk of oversimplifying reason that is to be avoided. I am sympathetic to the notion that intellectual thinking involves a degree of spontaneous creativity and is somewhat passive in the sense of not being wholly within our control. However, most will also know what it is like to relate with someone that remains intellectual in a personal setting; and conversely, where emotional reactions seem to undermine an intellectual discussion. Thus, rather than distinguishing between emoting and thinking, what is of interest here are different forms of engagement.

Goldie (2000) suggests a similar conception of engagement. In his terms, emotions involve “feeling towards” an object, which he contrasts with a nonemotional “thinking of” an

object. But his point regards a change in perspective that changes the content of the object, and not merely the attitude of the perceiver. The difference “will not just comprise a different attitude toward the *same* content—a thinking which earlier was without feeling and now is with feeling. The difference also lies *in* the content, although it might be that this difference cannot be captured in words” (pp. 59-60). Goldie and Ben-Ze’ev may have different conceptions of emotion, with Ben-Ze’ev’s being the more limited notion of intense, brief experiences. Goldie may be right to suggest that the difference in content between an emotional and a nonemotional perception may not always be describable with words. For instance, he raises an example of someone thinking of ice as dangerous—for the reason that one may slip on it—as compared to someone who has actually slipped on the ice. The latter’s perception of the ice, in Goldie’s view, will involve a greater degree of “feeling towards,” which will also alter their perception of ice. It will be seen as more dangerous, seen in terms of a felt evaluation. Exactly how one is to describe that change in perceptual content is somewhat mysterious, but the idea is plain enough. As Stocker (1996) suggests, attempting to describe the difference in terms of beliefs and desires is insufficient because we can speak of the same ones, apparently, either emotionally or not:

Before I slipped on the ice, I believed it was dangerous to walk on ice and I wanted to avoid these dangers. But I had only an intellectual appreciation of those dangers and a pro forma desire to avoid them. Having slipped, and without any change of beliefs or desires or values, I am afraid. ... To be sure I did not take it *seriously*, in the sense of taking it with fear. But this is just my point. This shift from not being afraid to being afraid is not given by a change in beliefs, but by a change in the emotional ways the beliefs are taken.
(p. 47)

Goldie's conception of feeling towards expresses the idea that what is at issue here is an individual's orientation to phenomena. Because this element is not intrinsically verbal or linguistic, but on the level of body language, gesture, or attitude, its expression may always remain poetic and suggestive. It should be noted, however, that the temporal structure involved in Goldie's example is different from the framework of Ben-Ze'ev's that I am working with. The emotion is only there for someone, in my view, during the intensely felt awareness of the dangerous ice. The more long-term feeling towards the ice may well obtain for an individual, but I would describe it in dispositional terms, such as a sentiment of fear toward the ice. This may describe different degrees of feeling toward: an occurrent emotion involving intense feeling towards the emotional object, with sentiments and affective traits also involving feeling toward but to a lesser degree. It is not clear that Goldie's and Ben-Ze'ev's views are exactly compatible, but they are both attempting to describe the different perspectives of emotional and intellectual engagement. It may be noted that when Ben-Ze'ev claims that "The feeling component [of emotions] has no logical connection with the intentional components, but is associated with them in typical emotions" (2000, p. 67), he is not articulating a view contrary to Goldie's, but is describing bodily feelings and remaining silent about the intentional conception of "feeling towards."

By limiting the conception of emotion to an intense and brief experience, Ben-Ze'ev is able to be quite specific about the differences in the perspectives of emotion and intellect as distinct modes of engagement. He claims that the intellect is not bound in its general and abstract considerations, whereas emotions, by contrast, are partial in two senses: they are focused on a particular object and they apprehend that object with a certain evaluative attitude. The

components involved in the emotion mode are cognition, motivation, evaluation, and feeling, whereas the intellectual mode is distinguished by the dominance of the cognitive component, which is characterized as abstract or deliberate thinking.

By analyzing emotions in terms of mental modes, the various modes can be regarded as operating from within distinct fundamental values or logics. Each mode, then, as a function of the whole cognitive system, can be conceived in terms of its own “information-processing mechanisms.” The emotional mode employs a schematic mechanism, which is quick, based on past experience, and spontaneous, whereas the intellectual mode is slow, deliberative, and requires effort. The operative logic of the emotion mode, that is, what is recognized as most significant, is change, as was argued in Chapter 5. The intellectual mode, by contrast, is concerned with generality and recurring patterns among diverse phenomena, that is, stability.

The intellect is concerned with the general and the stable, whereas emotions are engaged with the personal and the volatile ... Change and instability are often taken to be the surface phenomena that are governed by stable regularities; the intellectual search is often a search for such regularities. Emotions prevail as long as a specific event can be seen as mutable and unique. Accordingly, the intellect has difficulty in understanding change and movement, whereas emotions have difficulty in prevailing under stable and universal conditions. (Ben-Ze’ev, 2003, pp. 155-56)

Mental modes are conceived as prototypes. As such, actual experience is expected to be ambiguous in its classification. “Mental modes are not isolated entities, but prototypes of various mental phenomena: one prototype [that is, perception] is typical of our usual everyday situation, the second is typical of abstract thinking associated with scientific, detached calculations, and the

third is typical of intense, stormy emotions” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2004, p. 254). It is unfortunate that Ben-Ze’ev does not develop the perceptual mode more thoroughly, in relation to emotions, because it is the mode that is supposed to be typical of everyday experience. The intellectual and emotional modes are deviations from the normal mode of perception.

7.2 Role of Perception, Intellect, and Emotion as Modes

To analyze the soundness of this conception of mental modes, an idea of what they are and how they operate needs to be constructed. The main function of the perceptual mode is supposed to be supplying the subject with a meaningful grasp of the physical environment:

A major function of the perceptual system is to bestow upon the physical world initial *cognitive* meanings which are useful for survival. Thus, instead of finding our ways in a physical world populated by atoms moving in the void, we live in a perceptual environment populated by different types of objects and events which can be easily discerned by their shape, size, colors, smells, and other perceptual qualities. (ibid., p. 169)

Emotions, by contrast, “bestow upon the perceptual environment initial *evaluative* meanings expressing our personal values and attitudes” (ibid.). I will pick up on this idea of emotions expressing personal values in Chapter 9, but here I focus on mental modes. By articulating perceptual and emotional modes in this manner, it may appear that they refer to a distinction between fact and value, or objective and subjective points of view—that perception captures the objective and factual information of the environment and emotion creates or expresses its significance for the subject. However, the perceptual mode is articulated in terms of “affordances,” drawing on James Gibson, which offers an embodied meaning to perceptions:

“the presence of a supporting surface at approximately the height of an individual’s knees affords being sat upon. Perceptual affordances are then crucial for guiding our activities” (ibid.). The perception of “sit-able” is not an obvious objective fact of the world in any traditional sense. Thus the perceptual mode is not conceived as revealing impersonal factual information about the world but, rather, is a subject-dependent mode of orientation or engagement. This is an important point. As Francisco Varela (1999) puts it,

in contradistinction to the received view that perception is fundamentally the truthful reconstruction of a portion of the physical world through a registering of existing environmental information..., [the embodied approach claims that] reality is not a given: it is perceiver-dependent, not because the perceiver ‘constructs’ it as he or she pleases, but because what *counts* as a relevant world is inseparable from the structure of the perceiver.
(p. 13)

Though Ben-Ze’ev does not speak in terms of embodiment, and has a sophisticated theory of perception which goes beyond the scope of this thesis, he is committed to a similar idea. For instance, he claims that, “Within the perceptual environment, perception is direct, as it involves direct awareness of events in the environment, but in light of the relational nature of this environment, perceptual awareness merely provides partial information about the world—that part which is influenced by the subject’s characteristics” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2008, p. 263).

The perceptual mode is also difficult to understand because perception is treated both as a mode and as an element of the mental system. Thus it is considered an important element of the emotion mode and an often not significant element of the intellectual mode. Perception, then—as a mode—should be considered as an ideal extreme. Although it is considered our everyday

mode, how can we imagine its prototypes? In the extreme, I believe a basic element of mindfulness meditation, namely, the notion of a “silent watcher” may help. In such meditation, one is encouraged to observe occurring and fleeting sensations, thoughts, feelings, sounds and smells while maintaining an attitude of complete neutrality. This is a practice in non-attachment and in developing an observant yet non-conceptual state of mind. As such, this practice seems to exemplify an alternative extreme from those of intellect and emotion. Although the silent watcher is an acquired skill, this image may help us conceptualize the perceptual mode in its more everyday manner.

What is most significant for the idea of mental modes is that each grasps the world differently:

the nature of the world is different for the perceptual, emotional, and intellectual agents. Emotional reality consists of immediate, unstable, personal events, which could have been otherwise, whereas intellectual reality is more detached, stable, and more deterministic in nature. Perceptual reality is more stable and less personal than emotional reality, but it is more limited in its scope than the scope of the other two types of reality. (Ben-Ze’ev, 2003, p. 157)

7.3 Applying Mental Modes

Though it is unclear how to apply this framework of mental modes to real, ambiguous experience, those which are closer to the prototypes relate more obviously. Because conceptualizing emotions remains obscure, the notion of mental modes promises some explanatory value. For instance, they indicate what kind of mental states ought to be objects of

the scientific study of emotion. And, most significantly, mental modes enable us to locate intellectual and emotional concerns as separable aspects or values of experience. This is perhaps important for all theorizing, but is especially so for intellectual disciplines such as philosophy where intellectual, logical principles can dominate discussions of humanistic concern. Relying on rationality too heavily can lead theory away from personal considerations, which are especially relevant to ethical and political theory. By squeezing out emotional concerns, intellectual disciplines risk losing sight of the personal salience of their studies. We see this, for example, when strict utilitarianism as a numbers game holds sway in ethical discussions: The intellect dominates at the expense of personal considerations. Yet it is difficult to integrate emotions into theory precisely because the considerations emotions reveal often fly in the face of persuasive intellectual considerations. For instance, though we value impartiality in many areas of life, we also value friendships and intimate relationships that, by definition, we cannot have equally with everyone. Thus conceptual tools are required to help us distinguish these types of considerations, which is the first step toward integrating them. All too easily, emotions are disregarded in theory altogether, yet they cannot be avoided in everyday life.

By treating intellect and emotion as mental modes, each appears to obtain equal footing in terms of the values and considerations it reveals in actual experience. Because emotions suggest partiality—that is, a narrow and personal focus of concern—whereas intellect suggests impartiality—that is, general and repeatable features of events—ethical and political theory grounded on actual experience can build on either, or (it would seem ideally) both, perspectives. In other words, both modes of engagement are sources of different perspectives and values, and each on their own appears insufficient. Thus the description of these modes also reveals some of

their limits. For instance, the intellectual mode is concerned with logic, generality and impartiality, which appear altogether insufficient for personal considerations. As Ben-Ze'ev claims,

Intellectual reasoning is a detached state: it looks at all implications of a current state; it takes us far beyond the current situation. Intellectual reasoning is committed to formal logical rules of valid arguments, but it has no commitment to values; it is value-free. In intellectual reasoning we are supposed to consider all available alternatives and then choose the best one. Unlike the case in emotions, the present situation has no privileged status in intellectual reasoning; on the contrary, we are required not to be influenced by that situation, but to consider all other possible situations in an objective manner. (2000, p. 39)

We do not want to live in a world that is without value, or that values only rational logic. So, insofar as this conception of mental modes is correct, theory construction should seek to incorporate emotional concerns in order to avoid the extreme of its intellectual focus. Indeed, emotional information will need to be centrally integrated into any social theory. But how, and to what extent? The approach to that question depends upon the value we place on emotions. Ben-Ze'ev goes so far as to claim that emotions are often optimal responses, which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Emotion as an Optimal Response

Ben-Ze'ev's conclusion: Though the intellectual mode is the most reliable for generating appropriate responses, it requires much time and effort. Therefore, emotions should often be relied upon in daily situations which require a response, but for which there is insufficient time and effort for deliberation.

The claim that emotions are often optimal responses is intriguing and frequent in Ben-Ze'ev's work. It also intrinsically involves the claim, not directly argued for, that emotional reactions express "our profound values." Because that conception remains in the background, Ben-Ze'ev's argument for the optimality of emotions appears to be a normative implication of his description of them. I have structured this thesis in part to evaluate the claim of emotional optimality as well as possible. Directing attention to it indeed reveals a certain qualified sense of "optimality," as I will discuss below, but in the end it appears as a rhetorical device which, at best, expresses an Aristotelean belief in finding balance by pushing to an opposing extreme—that is, pushing for an extreme for the sake of reaching the mean. There may be valid reasons for such a device, considering that structural norms, which affect our sense of self, encourage us to reason our way through emotions, given that they are, as supposedly irrational, fundamentally suspect. After analyzing Ben-Ze'ev's argument for emotional optimality, I will return, in the next chapter, to the question of whether emotions express our profound values, a claim which I simply presuppose here.

A network of ideas come together in the notion of emotional optimality. Its focus

revolves around spontaneity, appropriateness, and communication. Spontaneity is important to emotional reactions from at least two angles. On the one hand, the spontaneous reaction is sincere, at least to the extent that there is no room for it to be deliberately misleading. (Some problems with regard to its potential authenticity will be addressed in the next chapter.) On the other hand, the spontaneous reaction is immediate or directly geared to its environment.

Although emotions are indeed mediated by past experience, their rapid onset and direct engagement with a focus of concern minimizes the psychological distance between subject and environment. Taking these two angles of spontaneity together, we have a picture of the emotional reaction as a sincere, direct engagement with a personally urgent situation. This sort of engagement will be ideal for emergencies, whereas the intellectual mode will be far from optimal for such situations because it will demand time and effort, which create a psychological distance that turns away from the emergency at hand.

The appropriateness of emotions pertains to this niche that the intellectual mode poorly handles, “the local present situation” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 167). Because the intellectual system deals in stable generalities, its results can be taken to have “broad validity,” whereas the emotional system obtains “local validity” (ibid., p. 175). In the local situation, which is personal, present and dynamic, emotions are regarded as an appropriate level or mode of significance to rely on. This sense of reliance is related to questions put forward, in *The Places that Scare You*, by the Buddhist nun Pema Chödrön: “What do I do when I feel I can’t handle what’s going on? Where do I look for strength and in what do I place my trust?” (2002, p. 13). Though I cannot engage with the complex views that certain Buddhists have on emotions, I will suggest that the frequent summation of them as being anti-emotional is usually far too crude. Pema’s questions

locate a situation of personal vulnerability, through which there is a felt inability to think one's way. Yet, dominant social norms encourage us to rely on reason to solve our problems; perhaps, as Ekman (2007) would have it, to wait out and work to minimize the "refractory period" of emotions, so as to gain reflective control. But the notion of emotional optimality suggests otherwise: that we might be well advised to place trust in our emotions—in an emotional way of being and relating.

This mode is practical in the sense that emotions are associated with action tendencies that engage with their environment without deliberation. Ben-Ze'ev identifies three ways in which emotion can be the most appropriate response, namely, from cognitive/informational, moral, and functional points of view:

In many cases, emotions, rather than deliberative, intellectual calculations, offer the best means to achieve our optimal response. This may be true from a cognitive point of view—emotions may supply the most reliable information in the given circumstances; from a moral point of view—the emotional response is the best moral response in the given circumstances; or from a functional point of view—emotions constitute the most efficient response in the given circumstances. (2003, p. 151)

The cognitive/informational perspective of emotions reveals personal factors which, on the framework of mental modes, are not necessarily relevant to the intellectual mode of apprehending reality. This conception is, then, implicitly significant for ethics because it locates emotions as constitutive of a personal point of view, and as the ground of an intellectual understanding of personal situations. The emotional mode of engagement can also help us explain the ethical space described in Williams' (1981) famous example of "one thought too

many,” in which the spontaneous urge to save one’s family from a burning house appears more ethical than a reflective stance. The ability to make a reflective decision—to consider the option of saving one’s neighbors instead of one’s family—seems to indicate that the urgency of the situation has not been apprehended and, accordingly, that the personal value of one’s family is suspect. The personal perspective is indeed relevant for many ethical discussions such as character, virtue, and friendship.

The functional appropriateness of emotions points to their superior ability to mobilize one’s resources quickly and, at times, to even strengthen normal abilities, such as the increased strength and speed obtained with intense fear (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 167). On the model of significant change, emotions disrupt normal functioning and tune our attention and resources to the immediate situation. This function is clearly optimal from the perspective of survival and well-being, and it is plausible to suppose that it takes the flexible form of emotional reactions. This specific sense of optimality lends itself to the caution that emotional, “local” validity not be applied more generally. For instance, during the course of a conversation a specific perceived insult may be best dealt with by accepting one’s emotional reaction and responding accordingly, as opposed to denying the reaction on an intellectual faith that such an insult would be out of character and must have been unintended. It would be an error, though, on this conception of the local validity of emotions, to take such an insult as bearing on the other’s character more generally. Though I suggest this more on the level of ideals which regulate behavior, the example assumes there is room to choose one’s response, indicating that there is some space for integrating emotion and reflective consideration, which is not always the case. Here I want to focus on the merits of the emotional mode, which reveals a truth of the fleeting dynamics that the

intellectual truth dismisses. The truth of the dynamic interaction is only part of a larger picture, but it need not be dismissed simply for being local and transient. Emotions bring to the present the continuing significance of the past, which is deeply important for meaningful relationships. I am sympathetic to an interactive approach to balancing emotion and intellect, but articulating such an approach is elusive and remains on the margins of my discussion (see, e.g., Thagard & Finn, 2011).

The local truths of a personal and dynamic situation are complex. Because of its immediacy, such situations require a communicative mechanism that is quick and does not create psychological distance, both between specific individuals and between them and the environment. In this light, emotions are an optimal form of communication. The sincere response to the present situation of everyone involved brings to the surface a collection of intelligent conceptions of how to handle the emergency, which is a suddenly new context that has not yet stabilized. Because emotions depend upon past experience, the reaction will be an approximation. But it can also be rich with experience, infused with a life's intelligent mediation. This on-the-surface reaction of emotions can be quickly apprehended by others, and thus the chaotic instability of an emerging context can be attended to collectively. The idea of an "emergency," however, need not be imagined only in the extreme, such as Williams' example of a burning house. An emotional emergency is any sudden significant change, typically involving a personal comparative concern, and can be as subtle as a conversation taking an unexpected turn.

Although Ben-Ze'ev's discussion of optimality makes emotions sound ideal, he can also be read as rating them second best, as was implied by his discussion of self-deception which I

addressed in Chapter 5. He further claims that,

Emotions are the optimal response in many circumstances associated with their generation, that is, when we face a sudden significant change in our situation but have limited and imperfect resources with which to cope with it. In these circumstances, the emotional response is often optimal, because optimal conditions for the normal functioning of the intellectual mode are absent. (2003, p. 151)

Although the emotional mechanism is optimal for many daily situations of a social creature, emotions are often distorted and extreme. They focus on a specific and narrow context and are, therefore, less reliable in their claims than the broad perspective of the intellectual mode. This makes sense, because emotions are in-the-moment and the intellectual perspective is considered over time. Thus, Ben-Ze'ev claims that "intellectual calculations generate appropriate responses in a more regular and consistent manner than any other psychological mechanism" (ibid., pp. 150-51). So it seems that, in his view, intellectual deliberation would be an optimal form of problem solving for all situations, but due to practical constraints (mainly time and energy), emotions enjoy a particular niche. Although this seems plausible, the conception of mental modes complicates giving such priority to the intellect. For instance, are we to take the intellectual calculation that is supposed to generate the most appropriate response as involving an intellectual *mode* of thinking? That is, a search for regularities at the expense of noticing singularity and instability? For he claims that "Change and instability are often taken to be the surface phenomena that are governed by stable regularities; the intellectual search is often a search for such regularities" (ibid., pp. 155-56). Although such a form of apprehension indeed reveals "a more regular and consistent" picture of reality, which we might call a scientific view,

the question of the appropriateness of such a picture always needs to be grounded in a human perspective. So it seems that emotions, which are supposed to apprehend the significance of uniqueness and instability at a personal level, must be involved in the notion of appropriate intellectual calculation. Indeed, at the end of his article, “The Logic of Emotions” (2004), Ben-Ze’ev offers a very terse contrast between emotional and intellectual modes that may help us understand this relation:

Intellectual reasoning is broader than emotional reasoning: it refers to a broader scope of circumstances and it has more freedom in the types of perspective that it adopts when analyzing given circumstances. Emotional reasoning is more limited in the types of circumstances with which it is concerned and in the types of reasoning that it employs. Accordingly, we may say that intellectual reasoning can use certain principles typical of emotional reasoning, but emotional reasoning can seldom use intellectual principles while still remaining in the emotional mode. Thus, taking a broad, detached intellectual perspective typically eliminates the emotional experience; however, taking the narrow and involved perspective typical of emotions does not necessarily eliminate the intellectual mode.

As both types of logic are useful in different circumstances, it is to the benefit of each of us to integrate them in an optimal manner. (pp. 161-62)

Here, a subtle and blurred description is offered: Intellectual deliberation tends to take one out of an emotional experience, but in changing one’s orientation to the world, it does not necessarily eliminate emotional information, such as memories of the event and its dynamic narrative. The extremely difficult turn in logic occurs when he claims that “taking the narrow and involved

perspective typical of emotions does not necessarily eliminate the intellectual mode.” What it means is that the intellectual mode can be used to analyze the partial and personal perspective of emotional experience. The intellect’s freedom of perspective can be put to the narrow perspective of one’s emotional episodes and, in so doing, remain grounded in a personal point of view. Thus, the supposed reliability of intellectual calculation may depend on the integration of emotional experience and intellectual deliberation. Though obvious, it remains important to note that for such an integration to take place, both sides of the equation need to be explored. That is, one needs to experience an emotional episode in order to think well about it. Going back to the example of perceiving an insult during the course of a conversation, it seems likely that in determining how to respond, such an integration of perspectives is central to the question of how to act: though I may be seriously offended and angry, the urgency of my response ought to be appropriate to its target. The question of appropriateness is complex, but an integration of both broad and local considerations is central to the idea of an optimal response. For instance, has this person insulted me before, are they a friend, is our social setting likely to be conducive to an emotional encounter?

Even if the priority Ben-Ze’ev gives to the intellectual mechanism, deliberation, over the schematic mechanism of the emotions is meant to include an integration of emotional information, such priority remains difficult. Even while deliberating, there is often an impulsive and intuitive element involved in the process of arriving at conclusions (not to mention the broader issue of determining the significance of problems). Indeed, perhaps this helps to flesh out the suggestion that appropriate intellectual calculation is a mixed mode, because the intellectual mode of deliberating is supposed to track only logical validity. Such rules are rarely

available when making positive conclusions, as opposed to noting merely formal mistakes in argumentation, because the weight of most interesting claims depend on the personal significance one finds in them. Still, prioritizing deliberation over spontaneity remains problematic because the distinction between the two is often extremely blurry. Take my running example of being insulted during a conversation: Though I perceive the insult and feel offended, as I react and perceive my reaction, there is some space in which to make decisions. But this is clearly not the space of “cool” intellectual deliberation which typifies the intellectual mode. In many ways, this is still the spontaneous and urgent mechanism of the emotional mode, even though it may take the “thoughtful” form of considering the most appropriate response. The distinction between deliberation and spontaneity rests on an opposition of immediacy and duration, as well as impulse and consideration, but emotions approach duration and consideration because they are informed by the past, are repetitive, and often demand reflective attention, whereas intellectual apprehension approaches immediacy and impulse because, as a process, it always obtains with some particular person at a situated point in time, often involving intuitive discovery and not simply formal rules of induction and deduction.

So what is being presupposed, by Ben-Ze’ev, when he says intellectual calculation is our most appropriate problem solving mechanism? I believe his claim rests on a value of autonomy, the idea that we don’t simply want to run wild with impulses, even potentially authentic impulses, because we want some conscious control over the direction of our lives. Though autonomy is indeed valuable, the priority given to deliberation seems to rely on the outdated notions of emotion as irrational and reason as fully conscious. Therefore, I prefer the more modest project of finding differing senses of appropriateness, various problem solving

mechanisms that suit their own niches, over the project of trying to discern ultimate reliability. The intellectual mechanism will be appropriate when trying to identify stable features of reality, such as the general characteristics of emotions, but the emotional mechanisms will be appropriate for someone in an urgent situation. More subtly, emotional considerations will be significant for apprehending particularity and a personal point of view. For instance, to consider my urgent feelings not simply as anger or as a perceived undeserved offense, but as a unique complex of feelings, thoughts, and relations bound up in a life history that defies classification. Accordingly, Goldie (2000) suggests that attending to the narrative details of one's emotions can better capture the experience than the somewhat "wooden" classification of them. He says, "let the narrative structure speak for itself in all its detail" (p. 72). Though Ben-Ze'ev wants to emphasize the subtle complexity of emotions, his commitment to describing their general and stable features basically precludes such a detailed perspective. His articles and books, then, can be described as intellectual accounts of emotion that are limited, through the very merit of articulating the regularities of emotional phenomena, to merely pointing to their "complexity." The subtlety of emotions that the theory is supposed to describe is thus somewhat obscured by the commitment to a detached and impersonal description of them. It is interesting that Goldie's approach, which appears to describe significant concepts necessary for any theory of emotion, rather than deploying a theory of its own, also appears more able to draw attention to first-personal features, such as detailed narratives, reflective and unreflective experience, and "feeling towards." Perhaps this is simply a matter of style, but there does seem to be a structural difference in the projects of describing a theory and of noticing and caring about important particular features of phenomena. In many ways, theory construction resembles the intellectual

mode of locating and describing regularities, whereas the considered dwelling upon the phenomena appears to resemble the integration of intellectual deliberation and emotional experience. Regardless, it may be necessary to work with a theory to orient oneself in the complex discussion of emotions.

To summarize what is meant by emotional optimality: It is clearly not a preference for emotion over intellect. With regard to these two systems, Ben-Ze'ev upholds their integration as a development of emotional intelligence. Even here, though, not all situations call for such integration. Some situations are more properly responded to by the intellect and others by emotions. In such situations, “where much relevant data is missing, and speed is more important than accuracy—or when the agent is not calm enough to make the relevant intellectual calculations”—the emotional system is optimal (Ben-Ze'ev, 2003, pp. 150-51). It is fast, has been developed and enriched by life experiences, is concerned with personal situations, is highly sensitive to the emotional cues of others, and is a form of engagement that is geared to the situation as a kind of spontaneous immediacy. In such situations, emotions are supposed to be highly comprehensive and, in some sense, ideal. It is this kind of appreciation of the subtlety of emotions that the description of their “optimality” refers to.

The difficulty, of course, is that this very strength is also a weakness in terms of reliability. Emotions are convincing and enable action but, like intuition, their conviction is unfounded. Though at times an emotional “take” of the situation will be appropriate, at other times it will not be; it will be out of tune with the reality of the situation. This sort of caution is an explicit part of Ben-Ze'ev's argument. For instance, he acknowledges that “Selective abstraction, in which the focus of attention is on specific aspects, and over-generalization, which

is the construing of a single event as representative of the whole situation, are frequently associated with emotions” (2000, p. 37). Thus, the partiality of emotions is both a strength and a weakness, and the point of emphasizing emotions as often optimal responses is to highlight the fact that such partiality is often what we need. Because emotions are communicative and relevant to social bonds, emphasizing partial responses is placing value on the interpersonal aspects of life. “The unique social sensitivity typical of emotions ensures that the situation of others is taken into account by us and that our situation is taken into account by others” (ibid., p. 171). Though this is not necessarily in opposition to the intellectual project of truth in terms of gaining knowledge, it suggests a human quality: Emotions are optimal because they reflect and can support basic needs, needs which are traditionally overlooked in the intellectual perspective.

Through questioning Ben-Ze’ev’s priority of the intellectual mode, I have suggest that he seems to have in mind a mixed deliberative mode that is emotionally intelligent. In the next chapter, I take up the priority of deliberation over spontaneity in terms of a concern for autonomy, and uphold the view that autonomy can be expressed in spontaneous engagement. After that discussion, I will turn to applying this theory of emotion to the concept of emotional intelligence.

Chapter 9: The Question of Profound Values

The previous discussion of emotional optimality employed a sense that emotions express, to some degree, our “profound values and attitudes” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 183). I no longer want to bracket that claim, but to give it careful consideration: “Emotions sincerely express our profound attitudes and detecting such attitudes is crucial for survival and well-being” (ibid., p. 181).

Before analyzing this claim, it worth noting that the personal baseline, which an emotion deviates from, is also supposed to “actually expresses our values and attitudes” (ibid., p. 19). Because of this correlation, it is not obvious what is being emphasized. Our personal baseline certainly embodies values; for instance, our expectations of how others will treat us and a general quality of self-esteem. In this sense, emotions, as reactions to deviations from our baseline expectations, can be seen as expressions that reinforce or defend these baseline values. Our dispositional “felt evaluations,” too—sentiments of enduring love or grief, for example, and affective traits such as shyness—also find some place in our routine habits and contribute to our personal baseline.

It is unclear, though, whether Ben-Ze’ev’s claim that emotions express profound values is being deployed descriptively or normatively. There is a descriptive sense that emotional reactions are values. Indeed, they have been defined as an intense form of felt evaluation, and I take this sense to be basically uncontroversial. But are the adjectives “profound” and “sincere” intended to make the normative claim that such values are authentically ours, as opposed to being a kind of received conviction? They certainly seem to point in this direction. Though it may be a stretch, is it possible to read the “sincere expression of our profound attitudes” as a

descriptive claim that is not attached to the project of autonomy, of endorsing such attitudes as “our own”? If so, such profound attitudes would belong to our experience of ourselves and our relations, yet be separable from an ideal of self-authorization (cf. Salmela, 2005). If such a descriptive sense of sincerity is possible, emotional reactions may appear as an important source of the material that must be taken into account when working with an autonomy-based project of determining our values. Though such a project may imply the identification of the self with an implausible contrast between internal reason and external passion, it suggests the familiar sort of hierarchy between first-order values (sincere spontaneity) and second-order values (considered judgment). Not all accounts of personal autonomy, however, center on rational deliberation (e.g., Buss, 2012), and I will turn to one of them, proposed by Diana Meyers (2005), to help analyze the normative claim of sincerity as a form of authenticity, which seems to be presupposed in Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of emotional optimality.

That normative aspect of Ben-Ze’ev’s claim is mostly asserted without argument. Accordingly, its main support derives from the intuitive claim that “emotional values are comprehensive and relate to many events in our life” (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000, p. 35). Indeed, intense emotional engagement can often offer a sense of wholeness which, grossly speaking, may feel like complete and authentic self-involvement. Stocker (1996) refers to Descartes to describe this sense of emotional comprehensiveness:

My main explanation of why I place affectivity in the psyche and not, or not just, in the body is put nicely by Descartes. Talking of emotions or passions, he writes, “we feel as though they were in the soul itself.” This is to contrast those feelings with bodily feelings, which he says, “we related to our body or some of its parts ... which we perceive as

though they were in our members.” (p. 19)

It is this sense of emotions as profoundly expressing oneself that puts them in such a complicated relation with the value of considered judgment. Emotions seem to ring out from a core, true self, and so the comprehensiveness of emotions may seem to express one’s profound values. Indeed, emotional engagement may certainly feel authentic. But, as we all know, the narrow perspective of an emotional experience can be fleeting, contradict other values we hold, and seem, after the fact, to have taken us away from who we are or take ourselves to be. So it is difficult to pin down the appropriate source of authorization: sincere spontaneity and considered judgment need not correlate, and we find ourselves in both places. The phenomenology of the comprehensive nature of an emotional reaction expresses a broad and sweeping claim but, as has already been argued, emotional reactions are valid at the local level of current situations. Long-term considerations, on the other hand, seem to lack a direct connection to a comprehensive level of the self, and run the risk of detaching themselves from our motivational forces. For instance, considered judgments do not always promote a healthy or rewarding way of life. Therefore, notions of autonomy, which are bound up with a concern for living well, need to connect reflective judgment with emotional well-being. As Sarah Buss (2012) argues, “Evaluative and motivational conflict will thus figure in any complete account of the many varieties of human malfunctioning that can undermine autonomy” (p. 685). Though we find ourselves both in our considerations and our impulses, emotions seem to play an especially significant role in our flourishing. This chapter focuses on the emotional aspect of selfhood, specifically to analyze the normative conception of the sincere spontaneity of emotions that is involved in their supposed optimality.

For Ben-Ze’ev, emotional optimality involves the notions of spontaneity,

appropriateness, and communication. Each notion appears to have both a descriptive and a normative angle. Though the description may be accurate, the normative element presupposes that emotions express our authentic values, a claim which Ben-Ze'ev takes to be obvious, even if complicated by potential distortions. Each of these ideas—spontaneity, appropriateness, and communication—are intertwined in the notion of emotional optimality, but I will focus on spontaneity, which is distinctive of the schematic mechanism of emotions: they quickly deploy an intelligent response. Does this response also express our profound attitudes?

The spontaneity of emotions is descriptive in terms of emotional engagement: an emotional agent is directly geared to the emotional object. But the normative element involved in valuing this state of affairs is associated with the claim that such engagement expresses a sincere response. As already suggested, there is a sense of sincerity intrinsic to such engagement simply by virtue of the fact that there is no psychological room to deliberately mislead oneself or others. Indeed, because of this, there is important room in such experiences to discover personal values that one was not conscious of, or was even consciously opposed to. For instance, as Stocker (1996) recalls:

I found out part of how very bad I thought the start of a recent war was by finding myself very upset and saddened almost to distraction upon hearing that it had begun. Before hearing of the outbreak, and before reacting emotionally to it, I thought I would see the war simply as yet another of those geopolitical happenings, yet another merely very unfortunate international affair ... (pp. 56-57)

I can relate to this example by a similar coldness toward distant political crises, which was recently pierced by footage of the bombing of Gaza in 2015. It is difficult to say, though, how

much my emotions spoke or revealed my values, or if, rather, the reporting was simply more effective than usual at playing my heart strings. Though my emotions were involved, it is not obvious to me that my felt evaluation was political. I appeared to be interested in the politics of the war, but I may have been more basically horrified at the human catastrophe. I do not doubt Stocker's claim, though, that his emotional reactions led to the realization of political values that he could identify with. I know that I, for instance, often realize my anger towards someone only after I find myself compelled to give them a cold shoulder. That is not a particularly emotionally intelligent example; but generally speaking, as Diana Meyers (2005) affirms, "It seems undeniable that people sometimes spontaneously act in atypical ways, and that in retrospect they realize that this devil-may-care moment revealed a previously submerged, yet highly desirable, potentiality, one that the individual regrets not actualizing in the past and very much wants to actualize more" (p. 41).

However, there is a risk that spontaneous self-discovery may actually collude in self-deception, which is argued for by de Sousa (1981). Because our emotional reactions are shaped by cultural norms, he suggests that self-deceptive emotions are those in which "the self mostly connives rather than originates":

The paradigm scenarios for anger differ between men and women in respect both of its expression and its criteria of appropriateness. An angry man is a manly man, but an angry woman is a 'fury' or a 'bitch.' This is necessarily reflected *in the quality of the emotion itself*: a man will experience an episode of anger characteristically as indignation, a woman as something less moralistic, more like guilt-laden frustration. Insofar as the conception of gender stereotypes that underlies these differences is purely conventional

mystification, the emotions that embody them are paradigms of self-deceptive ones. (p. 291)

De Sousa emphasizes that cultural shaping of emotions is pervasive and normative. This aspect can be readily overlooked. Consider, for instance, “The CAD Triad Hypothesis,” a 1999 study by Rozin, Lowery, Imada, and Haidt, which aimed to map the facial expressions of contempt, anger and disgust to norm violations against community, autonomy or divinity. The subjects of the study were presented with pictures of posed facial expressions informed by Ekman’s research. Some viewed pictures of a female model, while others viewed a male. According to de Sousa’s argument, the facial expressions ought to be loaded with gender norms. Yet the study took no account of this, merely commenting that “Gender was not a variable of interest in this study; men and women were well represented in all samples” (Rozin et al., 1999, p. 577). The researchers supposed that gender bias would derive from the experiment’s subjects, which were well mixed, rather than from within the emotional expressions themselves. Thus the models’ expressions were regarded as gender neutral, and “Each participant ... saw the pictures of one poser, assigned randomly” (ibid.). It would be quite interesting to track the potentially different associations that subjects make between male and female facial expressions and the emotion-word or situation they believe it suits most.

Conventional mystification is the key to de Sousa’s concern for self-deceptive emotions. Indeed, when an emotion conflicts with our considered judgment, the passive aspect of the emotional reaction (as opposed to the deliberate aspect of consideration) supports the view that it is an external “infection,” as de Sousa puts it, which has been persistently internalized: “It comes from outside myself, to be sure—but so does much of what I call ‘myself’” (1981, p. 294). I

doubt that it is helpful or correct to think of identity in terms of interior and exterior, and so I concur with de Sousa for raising this problem. He puts the solution to self-deception in terms of consciousness raising that aims to cultivate “facts about myself”—presumably psychological facts such as felt evaluations, but perhaps also structural or metaphysical facts—“which then come up for endorsement as avowed parts of my identity” (ibid.). I am sympathetic to this view of approaching autonomy, but the discussion risks straying away from a complex conception of identity by focusing on a simplistic dichotomy of interior and exterior. For instance, when he claims that “We are responsible only to the extent that we are generally motivated to conform to the social and gender roles assigned to us, and that we allow ourselves to be taken in by the feigning that this necessarily requires” (ibid., pp. 291-92), de Sousa is ultimately relying on an individualistic conception of selfhood. It suggests that someone could get outside of cultural scripts on some neutral ground from which to choose, endorse, and “allow” a way of life. And although there may be a lot of room for negotiating cultural scripts, such as gender roles, there is never an inner sanctuary free from external corruption. All such choices and orientations toward problems are socially embedded, and so a more realistic conception of the self is needed to analyze the sincerity of emotions in general and the apparently internalized self-deception of some of them. After discussing a different angle of self-deception, I will turn to Meyers’ conception of the five-dimensional self to help analyze the complex problems of emotional sincerity with a nuanced conception of identity.

We can approach a more complex conception of the self, indirectly, by considering a concern about the sincerity of emotions put forward by Stocker. He suggests that some emotions express “fantasy values.” We can get swept up in our friends’ stories and emotionally identify

with their enthusiasm—for instance, about a recent trip to Spain. Our emotional connection may suggest that we also value the contents of the story, “the intensity of the sun, the blueness of the sky, the spirit of bull fights” (Stocker, 1996, p. 60). However, Stocker recalls going home after such an evening and remembering “just how much I disliked the heat, the crowds, and especially the bull fights.” So he wants us to consider the possibility that he “was somehow just swept up by and into my friends’ enthusiasm, and for a while imagined and fantasized myself enjoying what I in no way do enjoy, neither in aspect nor on the whole and overall” (ibid.).

Though this is a relatable experience, Stocker’s outright rejection of the values to which he seemed emotionally connected is a difficult generalization to draw from it. Emotions can be fleeting, certainly, and we tend to think of values as having some substantial duration. We are unlikely, then, to say that Stocker really did value the bull fights while swept up in the story. After some consideration, he realized his more stable disposition, which is opposed to them. Stocker’s example of fantasy values, however, is concerned not merely with stable values. The idea of “fantasy values” appears as a problem only within the consideration, by Stocker, that emotions are a site of self-discovery, specifically the discovery of personal values. But I think we need to bracket the ideal of consistency or stability if we are to attend to issues of self-discovery.

What Stocker wants to claim is that some emotions are merely a social contagion that do not speak to personal values at all. Though this is an intriguing suggestion which may sooth our guilt of laughing at a horrible joke, I do not believe it amounts to much. If we take a more fragmented or decentralized perspective on values—one that focuses on actual experiences of felt evaluations and not the supposed consistency of character—Stocker’s emotion of enthusiasm may make sense as a spontaneous and positive evaluation of the story, including his unreflective

emotional identification with the bull fights. Just because consideration reveals a broader perspective and a different value, this does not deny that a partial value ever obtained. Indeed, a considered negative opinion of bull fights may be all the more substantial when based on some preceding interest and enthusiasm for the sport. Stocker's enthusiasm for his friend's story, then, may be interpreted as a brief point of connection to this more naive evaluation. If this is so, the fleeting nature of that emotional connection can bring fresh reinforcement to his more sustained disposition. No doubt, as Stocker suggests, "we can seriously misidentify our emotions and what values and valuings they show." There is clearly room for his enthusiasm to relate more to his friend's happiness than the contents of the story, which is also part of an adequate account of his emotions. However, Stocker's claim to "fantasy values" conflates the local validity of felt evaluations and the more global validity of a broader, intellectual perspective. In this way, values are conceived within a frame of consistency that functions to reflectively deny actual experience. I would rather not evaporate such values by dismissing them as fantasy, but find some room to identify with them and their fleetingness.

Let us now turn to Meyers' conception of the five-dimensional self. Because she considers the idea of unreflective "agency skills," the five-dimensional self may be of significant help with mapping the idea of emotional sincerity. Her argument is concerned with developing a conception of autonomy that is not overly bound to reasoned decision-making, which risks leaving "the individual inhibited, rigid, unspontaneous, and shallow" (Meyers, 2005, p. 29). Such concern is very much related to Ben-Ze'ev's distinction between the intellectual mechanism of deliberate thinking and the emotional mechanism of spontaneous response. Unlike Sarah Buss's (2012) argument for a broad and nuanced conception of agency, "self-determination in the

passive mode”—which locates a niche for deliberation within a wide set of factors that are beyond an agent’s direct control, including emotions—Meyers rather turns to the question of whether apparently passive aspects of the self, such as emotions, can in fact be direct expressions of personal autonomy. If so, then such expressions would qualify as authentic. Her argument, then, is closely aligned to the question of emotional sincerity. Though I am sympathetic to both Buss and Meyers, I focus on Meyers because of her interest in the possibility of spontaneous and unreflective autonomy.

I have previously noted that the idea of emotional optimality, if in some sense correct, suggests the need to have faith in, or to trust, our emotions. There is this need because, on the one hand, emotions seem to take over our personality. But also, on the other hand, emotions can seem this way only for someone who centrally identifies with some other aspect of themselves, such as the voice in their head. If they identified with their emotions, centrally, then emotions couldn’t appear to take over their personality. So this problem may belong to intellectuals.

Because deliberate thinking is thwarted during an urgent personal situation, a habit of looking to one’s thinking mind for direction will be disappointing and unsuitable for an intense emotion. If Ben-Ze’ev’s description of the emotional mode is correct, this will be so for structural reasons, and such a habit can be diagnosed as part of the problem of “a zealous commitment,” as Meyers puts it, “to reasoned decision-making” (ibid., p. 29). Ben-Ze’ev concludes from this lack of fit between the phenomenology of emotions and the intellectual mechanism that we should embrace the spontaneous nature of emotions as our best response. He believes that emotions are more trustworthy than we take them to be, and that embracing their appropriate mechanism will not betray us as much as we suppose. This much is plausible,

especially considering the long tradition of distrust toward emotions, which was built on many conceptual mistakes. However, Ben-Ze'ev buttresses his claim within the language of emotional optimality, sincerity, and profound values. It is unclear how much we should accept these claims. The intense personal engagement of an emotional reaction can certainly have a phenomenology of profound sincerity. But, also, with the disappearance of the reflective mind, there is the question of who or what is acting: Why should I not think of this reaction as a stereotyped response to something I don't understand, a response which has been prefabricated through my socialization and is ultimately, as de Sousa would put it, an external infection? Further, an external infection that is a form of self-deception by its very phenomenology of sincerity! It is, then, the task of the rest of this chapter to parse the aspects of emotional reactions that we can identify as sincere or self-deceptive. For instance, on the one hand, taking an emotional reaction to be privately sincere—an emotional authenticity that stems solely “from within”—would be self-deceptive, because this stance is built on an implausible conception of identity that is too individualistic. Such a conception cannot reasonably distinguish between socialization and indoctrination. On the other hand, taking an emotional reaction to be a social contagion, an external infection, would be an opposing extreme that would also be self-deceptive. Such a conception also falls prey to the same problem of conflating socialization and indoctrination, this time coming from the opposing extreme. We are social creatures, and so the divide of internal and external, based on the contours of the body, is insufficient for thinking through the problems of emotional sincerity.

Meyers (2005) argues that the phenomenon of selfhood can be describe in terms of dimensions of identity that are derived from, and invested in, different aspects of human

existence. She describes five such dimensions in terms of a “self-as”: unitary, relational, social, divided, and embodied. I will briefly outline her conception of the role that each dimension plays in the constitution of personal identity. The *unitary self* is closely aligned with the intellectual mode that we have already been working with. It describes a private and mentalistic aspect of the self that is “independent, self-monitoring, self-controlling As the seat of rationality and thus rational deliberation and choice, the self-as-unitary is often viewed as the ground for free will and responsibility” (ibid.). Meyers discusses each of the five aspects of identity as being “invested in a different dimension of human experience” (ibid.). Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of different psychological modes of orientation can complement this view. Although not all of Meyers’ dimensions have a corresponding mode of awareness, the relational self is closely aligned to the emotional mode: “The *relational self* is the interpersonally bonded self” (ibid., p. 30). I do not want to overly stress thinking of dimensions of identity in terms of modes, because the structure of identity that Meyers describes is on a different level of analysis. Nonetheless, some connection is evident and may be productive. The *social self*, by contrast, could not be considered in terms of a mode, because it describes the inherently encultured nature of identity. It “underscores people’s assimilation of social norms and mastery of appropriate ways to act and interact” (ibid., p. 29). As will be discussed later, this dimension is closely aligned with Goleman’s (1995) conception of emotional intelligence. The *divided self* describes the tension of a conscious agent that is not transparent, neither to itself nor to others. It is “Split between consciousness and self-awareness, on the one hand, and elusive unconscious affect and desire, on the other” (Meyers, 2005, p. 30). The contrast here which Meyers employs to describe the divided self is intuitive but difficult. It is unclear how much work “unconscious affect and

desire” can do for the distinction she is aiming at. Yet, whatever else might constitute the unconscious nature of identity, “unconscious drive and repressed desire” are certainly familiar enough phenomena to admit some notion of a divided self. Lastly, the *embodied self* describes aspects of identity including body image, body memory, and physical skills, emphasizing the ground of sensation in a material, organic, and vulnerable form. The embodied self, too, may have close overlaps with an emotional mode of awareness, a connection which will be drawn out shortly.

Meyers’ description of the five-dimensional self is abstract enough to outline a plausible structural analysis of the phenomenon of selfhood. It is also quite subtle because each dimension, like a colored lens, can be blended with one or more of the others to reveal different shades of emphasis. For instance, by focusing on the relational self and the divided self, we may be better able to grasp the emotional nature of intelligent hesitation, appropriate forgetting, and related emotional phenomena that arise during personal interactions—potentially positive objects in their own right, in a sense made familiar by Nietzsche and Freud, but which are under-theorized in contemporary emotion research.

The five-dimensional self is a conception of identity that Meyers uses to broaden the emphasis that autonomy researchers tend to place on rational choice. She believes that each dimension is capable of providing self-direction and self-definition, but that only the unitary self does so with reflective awareness. The other dimensions, then, are supposed to contribute to personal autonomy without deliberation. If such a contribution is plausible, then we may gain some insights into Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of emotional optimality. Meyers argues that, though important, giving the unitary self too much emphasis tends to promote “a mentalistic,

individualistic conception of the autonomous subject and ... a rationalistic account of autonomous deliberation and volition” (ibid., p. 27). To broaden this focus, she considers two personal experiences that she believes were autonomous, but which in different ways undermine the plausibility that a rational choice was involved: “Indeed, I experienced no introspectable decision-making process at all” (ibid., p. 32). One example focuses on the familiar, but extreme, case of a survival emergency. Hiking down a mountain, solo, Meyers slipped and broke both of her wrists. Amazingly, she descended the rest of mountain on her own, without further injury. From the point of emergency onward, she felt as though her “body took over.” This example can be analyzed along the same lines as Goldie’s example of a car crash (2000, pp. 62-66). Such experiences are not reflective, but are direct engagements for which even the awareness of one’s feelings can be absent. Nonetheless, they exemplify an emotional mode of engagement, and can be inferred to involve emotions, such as fear, by observing the agent’s behavior. In the case of the car crash, we would expect an emotional, fearful response associated with clenched fists and a racing heart. Goldie takes survival emergencies as a way to think about emotional reactions that do not involve self-awareness of one’s feelings, and perhaps this lack of self-awareness helps to explain Meyers intuitive description that her “body took over.” Meyers’ point, however, is not to disassociate herself from that bodily agency which “improvised quite ingeniously, and proceeded with extraordinary determination and alacrity in the face of considerable danger” (2005, p. 33). Indeed, she claims precisely that this non-reflective bodily agency is one dimension of her identity. Given the situation, Meyers’ solution to the problem of her descent was autonomous, she argues, without involving an introspectable decision-making procedure. The solution, we can infer, involved a drastic switch to an emotional mode of engagement, a

mode which focused and sustained her physical awareness and created an intelligent route through the emergency at hand.

In the other case, identified with the relational self, Meyers discusses a metabolic condition which requires her to maintain a restricted diet. What is significant to her discussion of autonomy is that the presence of others at meals unwittingly affects, not only her behavior, but also her appetite. Though witnesses may amplify one's ability to repress guilty pleasures, she argues that thinking of her experience in terms of repression is inadequate. "The mere knowledge that there would be witnesses to my delinquency curbs my appetite" (*ibid.*, p. 32). It is desire itself that is activated in this social situation. Though such a grasp of the interpersonal nature of desire could be put to deliberate use, Meyers' main point is that an indirect form of control and self-direction came about as a result of relational concerns, not conscious choice, simply by telling friends about her condition without having any particular purpose in mind. It was only later that she came to notice the effect their awareness had on her. "Without realizing what I was doing, and unbeknownst to these individuals, I had transferred some of my agentic powers to our relationships" (*ibid.*, p. 33). Is this a happy coincidence? Or might the bonds of relationships have the potential to support our well-being? Meyers believes that "a relational conative capacity simply materialized as an unintended consequence of my disclosures, and this conative capacity enabled my self-as-relational to autonomously refuse harmful delectables" (*ibid.*). By sharing the news of her dietary restrictions, her bonds of friendship seemed able to sustain an environment for which harmful foods were, at the level of appetite, easily avoided.

This is certainly a complex situation to analyze in terms of autonomy. The aspect which is claimed to be autonomous is the non-deliberate relating to others, the part of an individual that

is a network of relationships. Can this point of connection between the individual and the group be considered an autonomy promoting form of agency? Because it is plausible that her group of friends could have encouraged the opposite—could have promoted dietary indulgence and ridiculed her for being a strict disciplinarian—Meyers is not arguing that the relational self inherently promotes autonomy. Rather, she claims that this powerful interconnectedness that operates on a different level than conscious decision-making is a site for self-direction and self-discovery that can be thought of as having “volitional structures,” and thus agency skills. The autonomy-seeking individual will seek and build social groups that are supportive, while managing those that are not. This is, therefore, a conception of autonomy that is concerned with well-being. As opposed to de Sousa’s contrast between self-deceptive emotions and authentic ones, Meyers suggests that we think along the lines of self-betrayal and self-development. And rather than focusing on autonomy in terms of self-definition, which has a top-down, rational structure, she wants to bring out the significance of self-discovery, which is an aspect of autonomy that can be found through spontaneous, non-deliberate engagement—though it is important to note that this emphasis is ultimately brought out for the sake of balancing extreme views which focus too heavily on either self-definition or self-discovery.

Meyers’ notion of self-discovery thus brings us back to question of spontaneous authenticity, which can be specifically applied to the sincerity of emotions. Returning to de Sousa’s concern about self-deceptive emotions, it seems that he focuses on a conflict between the unitary self and the social self. Meyers’ suggests that this is, at root, a cultural conflict within the individual, for which resolution will be measured by social integration and emotional well-being. Though the unitary self gives the appearance of a “view from nowhere,” the values and

skills with which it resists cultural norms are themselves a cultural inheritance. Meyers thus refers to a culture's "mechanisms of resistance," reminding us that counter-cultural norms are not external to culture. Where such mechanisms are repressed, we can speak of indoctrination. Otherwise, however, the individual should not be considered as a socially fabricated unit, but as an ongoing intelligent response to the processes of socialization. Rather than siding with either the extreme of the unitary self or the social self, Meyers' description of selfhood enables us to consider that conflict will be inevitable and productive, for it is through the space of conflict that personal preferences emerge. Accordingly, where there is no conflict, there is no thought. The conception of the social self can enable us to further realize that we will harbor vicious social norms within us, and that this is normal. This situation of a social creature need not promote complacency or resignation, but realizing it may take some steam out of the guilt and shame that can attend persistent anti-social thoughts, be they sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise. Perhaps this framework of interpretation cannot reach the emotional level of fear and disgust, but it can enable realistic self-interpretation, which may minimize emotional "noise"—emotional reactions to emotional reactions that are ultimately self-destructive.

Above all, Meyers reminds us to consider the individual from a complex point of view: "one's self is being constituted and reconstituted in an ongoing and intelligent way. Thus, there is no reason to distrust positive affective and visceral feedback and no reason to suspect that one's sense of wholeness attests to rampant self-deception" (ibid., p. 49). This optimistic view of intelligent self-reflection suggests that various aspects of the self can be integrated into an emotionally thriving personality. That very thriving is taken to be a gauge of success for one's "autonomy competency" (ibid.). However, the sense of wholeness that Meyers' speaks of is not

used in the same sense as the emotional wholeness with which I began this chapter: the immediate sense that emotional engagement expresses complete and authentic self-involvement. Meyers' conception of wholeness is more reflective, sustained, and dispositional. How would this sense of wholeness be felt? If it is dispositional, it will be less intense than an emotion, but it will also structure one's habits and feed into occasional emotional outbursts. It is plausible that a life which one can emotionally identify with, on the whole, would also bring together various locally valid emotions into a harmonious tenor for which felt local comprehensiveness and broad coherence come together. Though this suggests an ideal of emotional authenticity, this broad generalization may be unreachable for most of us. It also does not speak to the sincerity of individual emotional reactions, but takes a comprehensive view from which these reactions can be determined sincere. "In the aggregate, these positive feelings anchor a confident sense of who one is, of one's worthiness, and of one's ability to translate one's traits, affects, values, and desires into acceptable conduct—in short, a sense of wholeness" (ibid., p. 46). But this emotional authenticity is only found in the positive case, where there is thriving engagement and a sense of wholeness.

Though the sincerity of individual emotional reactions remains problematic, Meyers' argument can be plausibly construed to suggest that a concern for autonomy that embraces the five-dimensional self is conducive to emotional intelligence: "since exercising agentic skills well typically confers a lively awareness of oneself and others together with a robust sense of engagement ... it is no wonder that someone who uses these skills adeptly would develop a sense of wholeness" (ibid., p. 49). It appears, then, that the profound values and emotional sincerity that emotions can express does not entail that emotions are the key or the route to personal

thriving, but rather are a sincere expression of that thriving. Attending to and integrating emotions thus entails a form of practical wisdom, or emotional intelligence, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

The sincerity of isolated emotional reactions remains problematic because sincerity is associated with character, which is supposed to be a sustained site of coherence. If emotions are regarded as sincere, then the various directions of locally valid reactions suggest a multitude of potentially authentic characters. This is so because the local validity of emotions is situational, and the self is de-centered the more its values pertain to diverse situations at hand. Such values can suggest various and conflicting directions, and since some particular direction needs to be taken, its pursuit will preclude others. For such reasons, I doubt the merit of describing emotions as sincere. As opposed to Ben-Ze'ev, I would decouple the description of local validity from ideals of authenticity. It makes more sense to speak of emotional sincerity in terms that Meyers suggests, as a gauge of success for the much broader project of living well. From this comprehensive perspective, emotions can indeed be regarded as expressing our profound values and attitudes. If I have understood Ben-Ze'ev correctly, this runs counter to his normative claim, but upholds his descriptive framework of what an emotion is and how it operates. With regard to happiness as a sentiment in particular, though, it may be noted that his view is close to that of Meyers. For instance, he suggests that, "As a sentiment, happiness ... comprises a general evaluation of our life as a whole or at least of significant aspects of life, such as work and family. Happiness in this sense touches upon our deepest strivings and concerns" (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p. 450).

Chapter 10: Emotional Intelligence

To conclude this thesis, I will briefly consider the emerging concept of emotional intelligence, which is a focus of ongoing discussion and research in psychology, but has received relatively little attention in philosophy. I have previously associated emotional intelligence with practical wisdom, a claim that I will explain further in this chapter.

I do not intend this discussion as a survey of contemporary research, but as a way to draw out the implications of the theory of emotion that I have been analyzing. Nonetheless, to situate my discussion, I will briefly outline the field. The main focus can be separated into three aspects: theoretical conceptions, measurement, and everyday application (cf. Brackett & Salovey, 2013; Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006; Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2007). Theoretical conceptions tend to be tied to the empirical focus of psychological research, and therefore tend to connect with a concern for measurement. Indeed, Keith Oatley (2004) questions the “psychometric” focus of such research:

Psychology has been so affected by the intelligence test that it is today almost impossible to hear the term intelligence in psychology without IQ coming to mind. One even hears asserted without irony the idea that intelligence is what intelligence tests measure. My question ... is this: Have they not, perhaps, become too concerned with psychometrics? ... [I wonder how,] without denigrating important uses of testing, we can avoid the conclusion that emotional intelligence is what emotional intelligence tests measure. (p. 216)

Accordingly, Matthews et al. (2007) suggest that “Promising conceptualizations are neglected because they are hard to assess (e.g., EI as contextualized knowledge or as unconscious, implicit

competencies)” (p. 8). Yet another conception that is difficult to measure involves the idea of expertise. Accordingly, Oatley (2004) suggests that “An approach that affords contrast with psychometric questions in exploring emotional intelligence is that of expertise” (p. 216). This is also the approach that Ben-Ze’ev takes, and I will return to it shortly. A key theoretical question in contemporary research is whether emotional intelligence is a set of abilities, which are associated with a metrics of performance, or rather if emotional intelligence is a trait, which is associated with dispositions to enact such abilities. The everyday application of emotional intelligence by researchers tends to focus on health and education. Even though there is widespread debate about how to conceptualize emotional intelligence, there is general agreement that it can be learned. There is disagreement, though, about whether or not emotional intelligence is always beneficial to one’s psychological well-being, a debate which involves different conceptions of emotional intelligence.

The focus of this chapter is theoretical and its scope is quite narrow. Because I have argued together with Ben-Ze’ev that emotions are a mental mode or a form of engagement, the material discussed so far may help us to answer the central question of what ought to count as emotional intelligence. As Matthews et al. (2007) suggest, “lacking [in EI research] are criteria for deciding which constructs and definitions truly belong to the world of EI, and which are better treated as facets of conventional intelligence, personality, or other domains” (p. 13). I propose to conceive of such criteria by distinguishing between emotional intelligence, on the one hand, and being intelligent about emotions, on the other. This contrast does not capture all of the psychological questions, of course, but it may enable certain concrete forms of thinking about emotional intelligence that should apply to a more developed conception. By clarifying the

difference between emotional and intellectual modes of engagement, this issue also fits into the aim of the thesis as a whole: to better understand the nature of emotions in the hope that they can be more appropriately integrated into questions of how to live well, which includes questions of intellectual flourishing.

Before explaining the distinction between emotional intelligence and being intelligent about emotions, it is worth elaborating briefly on the suggestion that emotional and intellectual systems need to be integrated or kept in balance. Though I have suggested that emotional intelligence is a form of practical wisdom, it is unclear whether balancing the two systems ought to belong to the notion of emotional intelligence or if, rather, that is a broader form of wisdom more generally. Mayor and Ciarrochi (2006) suggest that such balancing is indeed one of the promises of emotional intelligence: “A persistent theme of contemporary life is that we can solve technical problems far better than human problems. The promise of emotional intelligence is that it might help us solve at least one aspect of human problems, namely, conflicts between the heart and the head” (p. xiii). I am less sure that we want to take this route and will end this chapter by clarifying my doubt that emotional intelligence, important as it is, can promise this much.

Let me turn to Ben-Ze’ev’s conception of emotional intelligence. His conception of two systems of emotion and intellect appears to create a fundamental opposition, namely, their perspectives on the significance of change and stability contradict each other. He suggests, however, that integration is possible, for which he introduces a third form of thinking that would exemplify emotional intelligence (2000, p. 175). I am less optimistic in this regard. I doubt that there is a form of cognition that is both spontaneous and broadly valid. After outlining Ben-Ze’ev’s view, I will suggest a different application of his descriptive framework.

Building on Spinoza, Ben-Ze'ev argues that the local validity of emotions can be broadened with the integration of the intellect. This integration is supposed to obtain with a spontaneous mechanism, and so is described as kind of intuition. Although it is clear that some emotional reactions are more appropriate than others, the idea of spontaneous and broad validity is difficult to reconcile. Ben-Ze'ev argues on the model of expert knowledge: "Like emotional knowledge, expert knowledge is intuitive in the sense that it is not based upon a careful intellectual analysis of the given data, but rather on activating cognitive structures such as schemata" (ibid., p. 177). Acquiring such schematic responses, he suggests, is like building a repertoire of skills:

Before acquiring the cognitive schema associated with riding a bicycle, riding is a controlled thoughtful activity done in stages; the transition from one stage to another is usually accompanied by conscious deliberations. Once the schema is acquired, the mediating stages disappear along with the reasoning processes. These learned activities can then be performed automatically since the intellectual rules have become part of the agent's cognitive structure. (ibid.)

What I find valuable in this analogy of riding a bicycle is the point that thoughtful activity permeates the body's reactions, such that deliberative thought is no longer required. Emotional skills, if they are to belong to a spontaneous mechanism, will often need to dwell within bodily memory in a similar, know-how manner. In this way, the action tendencies of emotions can become increasingly thoughtful while remaining spontaneous. What is difficult about the analogy, however, is that a bicycle is a fixed object bound to laws of movement. The thoughtful deliberation that goes into learning to ride a bike can thus aim at a perfect fit between the

intuitive skill and its object. But emotional reactions are not like this. Each reaction is new, typically pertaining to a dynamic relationship that evolves along with one's emotions. The idea of emotional expertise is, therefore, misleading. Because emotional reactions always risk being out of tune with their object, the idea of emotional expertise seems more appropriately applied to skilled and flexible engagement with a dynamic situation. This may be what Ben-Ze'ev has in mind, as he also claims that "Emotional intelligence expresses the skills, rather than knowledge per se, that an individual can attain in order to function adequately from an emotional point of view" (ibid., p. 180).

From this perspective, the skills constituting an emotional repertoire are key components of emotional intelligence. This sensitivity to emotions will include schematic forms of perception and response. Ekman's research, for instance, aims to increase our sensitivity to facial expressions that indicate emotions occurring in others. Indeed, during the course of this research, I had a moment of angry but still calm words towards my son. Addressing his misbehavior, the moment was quickly followed by intense indignation for being ignored during what I took to be an important conversation. Although from all normal outward appearances he was indeed avoiding me, I happened to notice that a wrinkle had risen over his chin. Noticing this caused a change in perspective: I suddenly entertained the prospect that I had in fact been heard, and that my son was not ignoring me but was upset for being called out. Adapting my behavior to this recognition, a calm and supportive attitude was well received by my son, and we were able to finish the conversation productively. If only such emotional attunement were more frequent and widespread.

While such sensitivity is a component of emotional intelligence, I am not sure that it is

correct to claim, as Ben-Ze'ev does, that "Emotional intelligence may be characterized as sensitivity to certain types of higher-level stimuli" (ibid., p. 178). I doubt that sensitivity to emotional information, in the self or others, can characterize emotional intelligence because that information can be used in self-destructive or otherwise unintelligent ways. Even if used appropriately, such information could be employed simply as a form of being intelligent about emotions. Let me explain the distinction. Consider the character, Data, an android from the TV series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Data has logical reasoning and can rapidly process information for its logical results, but he does not have emotions, at least early in the series. He is regularly seen internally accessing troves of data that are rationally relevant to the given problem and spelling them out for the benefit of the crew. If emotional intelligence is captured by the idea of sensitivity to emotional cues, then it can be applied to Data. For instance, when explaining results to the crew, he turns to face them and registers their reactions. If they are appalled by the inappropriateness of his rational account about the given situation, evident in their facial expressions and lack of positive engagement, Data quickly halts his operation, quiets down, and attends to the priorities of the others. This happens, for example, when Data reports troves of statistics and details to a crew horrified by barbaric atrocity. Data registers the lack of fit between his information and the crew's reception of it. So he is in this way sensitive to the higher-level stimuli of emotional cues. Although this may appear to be a form of emotional intelligence, Data does not have emotions. Because emotional intelligence is essentially connected with the emotions of the agent, Data's skills are better described as a form of intelligence about emotions. He is not emotionally intelligent, but rationally so, and in a way appropriate to navigating interactions with emotional beings.

The basic distinction between emotional intelligence and rational intelligence about emotions can be explored by considering Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), which remains a substantial focus of debate. He builds on Solvey's five domains of personal intelligence (Goleman, 1995, p. 43):

1. Knowing one's emotions;
2. Managing emotions;
3. Motivating oneself;
4. Recognizing emotions in others;
5. Handling relationships.

These domains indeed seem to capture the terrain of emotional intelligence. However, these domains, perhaps to the exclusion of knowing one's emotions, all seem open to different forms of regulation, which we might describe as either top-down or bottom-up. Although emotional intelligence is not primarily a concept of *regulation*, Goleman's discussion is certainly dominated by a "monitor and manage" approach to emotions, giving the impression that emotional intelligence is a top-down regulation of emotions for the sake of achieving goals. In that light, we need to be in touch with our emotions in order to understand our personally rewarding goals. But because emotions are supposedly impulsive, we need to stay on top of them so that they do not cause us to run amok. Thus, Goleman claims, "'goal directed self-imposed delay of gratification' is perhaps the essence of emotional self-regulation" (ibid., p. 83). This conception is closely aligned with an American ideal of achievement. However, this is not the whole of emotional intelligence, even for Goleman. He ultimately claims that "Being able to enter flow is emotional intelligence at its best" (ibid., p. 90).

Indeed, flow seems to express an alternative approach to regulation that we might describe as bottom-up. Rather than monitoring and managing emotions, flow expresses the idea of complete engagement. Oatley (2004) describes flow as “being fully engaged in what one is doing so that self and the activity merge. It is a state of creativity” (p. 220). This issue fits into the aim of the entire thesis which, again, is gain a better understanding of the fleeting, yet unshakable, psychological atmosphere of emotion. The kind of engagement that states of flow express is closely aligned, that is, with the emotional mode of orientation, characterized by spontaneous and direct engagement. If flow is emotional intelligence at its best, the question then becomes: What distinguishes flow from every other emotional response? Goleman suggests that “Flow is a state of self-forgetfulness ... In this sense moments of flow are egoless. Paradoxically, people in flow exhibit a masterly control of what they are doing, their responses perfectly attuned to the changing demands of the task” (1995, p. 91). I am not sure that we want to describe flow as self-forgetfulness, but I agree that, when “in flow,” reflection or the self-as-unitary is minimized. However, there are other forms of self-awareness that do not obstruct direct engagement, such as we find when the embodied self or the relational self predominates. The self-direction that is achievable in flow is only paradoxical if we try to understand self-direction exclusively in terms of the unitary self.

Goleman intriguingly suggests that flow exemplifies emotional intelligence because it expresses perfect attunement. With flow, the spontaneous mechanism of emotions finds a medium that resonates seamlessly. Such resonance does not necessarily entail an absence of challenge or conflict, but only that such conflict can be managed without disrupting spontaneous self-direction. Though put in different terms, this is perhaps close to the spirit of Ben-Ze’ev’s

discussion of the integration of intellect and emotion as a form of expert intuition. Building on Oatley's discussion, this seamless attunement is a creative process, involving skill. Flow is not every emotional engagement; but, to put it crudely, it may amount simply to those that go well. Oatley concludes that,

Flow is about expertise in engaging creatively in what one is doing, as opposed to worrying, or wishing to be somewhere else, or feeling oppressed by circumstances.... We will not be able to be experts in this all the time. But the hypothesis is that as we learn more about ourselves and the principles of our emotional life, we will be able to engage more often in what we are doing in a way that we can be creative about it. (2004, p. 221)

This conception of "flow" corresponds to an ideal form of emotional engagement, and so it is aptly described as a form of emotional intelligence. However, this artistic description of emotional intelligence brings to mind an exceptionally creative person who excels at a particular art, but who "fails miserably at life." Oatley's description seems to counter this narrow focus by identifying flow as a process of engaging with everyday tasks. Does emotional intelligence, then, require a comprehensive description? Does emotional intelligence entail living well? This is the point at which Goleman's focus on emotional regulation for the sake of attaining goals begins to make sense, because goals indicate core aspects of personality. However, Goleman goes even further, claiming that "emotional aptitude is a *meta-ability*, determining how well we can use whatever other skills we have, including raw intellect" (1995, p. 36), a claim which is certainly false. It goes much too far by claiming that the use of any skill is limited by the degree of one's emotional intelligence. We all know someone with an emotionally disastrous personality who, nevertheless, excels in other areas. People can use their success at work, for instance, to avoid

miserable personal lives. And although that is indeed a common form of emotional regulation, it cannot be emotionally intelligent because it aims to avoid significant personal problems. That would only be intelligent if the problems were insurmountable.

Emotional regulation can occur at different levels. Some aspects of regulation belong to the notion of emotional intelligence, while others do not. I believe that the idea of emotional intelligence is best suited to competence for an emotional mode of engagement. Because we have multiple impulses, a form of spontaneous regulation can occur at this level. For instance, in Mischel's famous marshmallow experiment (see Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p. 180; Goleman, 1995, pp. 81-83), children were offered the choice between eating one marshmallow placed on a table in front of them, or waiting a while in order to get two marshmallows later. Those who waited were considered emotionally intelligent, because of their impulse control and goal-oriented behavior. I believe we can be more subtle in this assessment, though, and describe some of them as emotionally intelligent and others as intelligent about emotions—which is to follow Goleman's discussion that this desire for sweets is an appropriate analogy for emotional regulation. Some of the children that waited and received two marshmallows were quite tempted by the one in front of them, and had to employ cognitive strategies to control their impulses. I consider such an approach to be intelligent about emotions, because it adopts a strategy to manage impulses for the sake of a recognized goal. But I doubt that is an example of emotional intelligence. On the other hand, the children exemplifying emotional intelligence will have less of a need to control their impulses, or at least an easier time controlling them, because they will have stronger positive desires for the two future marshmallows than the one on the table in front of them. In this way, there will be less emotional dissonance: the emotion generated is more appropriate to

the goal at hand. This idea is expressed well by Klaus Scherer (2007):

the most important facet of [emotional intelligence] ... is the production of the most appropriate emotional reaction to different types of events based on adequate appraisal of internal goal states, coping potential, and the probable consequences of events. If you react with the wrong emotion to a given type of situational meaning, you are not using the potential that this powerful mechanism provides. (p. 107)

Generating the most appropriate emotion is much like an Aristotelian virtue: a matter of focusing on the most significant target, in the right way, at the right time, to the right degree—a form of practical wisdom. We can also be intelligent about our emotions even when spontaneous reactions are less than ideal. Common strategies such as cognitive behavioral therapy, for instance, aim to address dysfunctional emotional experiences in order to understand them better. The goal is that such an understanding will transform spontaneous reactions. In this way, the connection between intelligence about emotions and emotional intelligence can be seen: top-down, mentalistic, and deliberate engagement with emotions succeeds in affecting bottom-up, spontaneous reactions to the extent that emotional reactions improve—that is, become more appropriate.

The Aristotelian virtue of generating the most appropriate emotion may appear to suggest that emotional intelligence entails a thriving personality, and thus entails a happy integration of emotion and intellect. An appropriate emotional relation to the world, however, does not necessarily entail happy circumstances. Nor does an appropriate emotional response entail that the agent understands it accurately. It therefore may be best to separate the idea of emotional intelligence from concerns about how to integrate emotion and intellect. Scherer suggests some

ideas that are motivated in this direction. For instance, he distinguishes between two criteria of emotion competence, one of which is the Aristotelian model of appropriateness already indicated. In the second “Galtonian, or *ability*, model, the criterion is ‘the more the better’ ... The example is emotion recognition ability, a skill that may have perfect accuracy as a ceiling condition” (ibid., p. 119). There is concern that a greater ability to recognize emotions may entail more emotional episodes and more suffering, as hedonic self-deception is reduced. Scherer argues that *competency* with the emotional mechanism is separable from happiness:

the happiness criterion should not be confused with the competence criterion. The possibility that lower competence is preferable in some contexts and for some domains does not invalidate the *definition and measurement* of competence. However, it may well be that high [emotional competence] is not to be aspired to universally. (ibid.)

I think that this separation of happiness and emotional intelligence is correct, and that this undermines the idea that emotional intelligence pertains to the integration of emotion and intellect. Such integration likely has more to do with happiness and wisdom more generally. This suggests that Mayor and Ciarrochi (2006) are incorrect to believe that the emerging conception of emotional intelligence promises to reduce “conflicts between the heart and the head” (p. xii). That conflict may remain as elusive as wisdom itself, although greater facility with emotional and intellectual ways of engaging with the world ought to be key components in its ongoing solution.

So, this thesis as a whole has contended that emotion is a mode of engagement that is geared to social concerns. Emotion has been contrasted with intellect, which, as another mode of engagement, apprehends different features of reality and is more concerned with the significance

of stable features and repeatable patterns than the dynamics of everyday living. Thus, in order to think well about social and personal issues, attention to emotional views of the world is paramount. The social concern of emotion opens what may seem private about our reactions to an interpersonal reading. As such, a valid level of an emotion's analysis goes beyond the limits of the body and one's private history, constituting an in-the-moment relational structure between individuals and social environments. Emotionality, then, helps us to understand what it means and how it feels to be a social creature. An individualistic conception of emotions suggests that their management may be mastered; here, however, with a social conception, I have argued that emotion is partly beyond us and, therefore, can never be truly mastered. This suggests attention to indirect forms of management and giving some free play to direct emotional engagements. I believe that vulnerability and impermanence are important values that may promote realism in emotional life, and have argued for a conception of emotional intelligence as a capacity to handle with skill the emerging and chaotic urgency of emotional reactions.

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