

Appendix to 'Emotional Strength': our vocabulary of affect

The diversity and complexity of psychological phenomena encompassed under the concept of emotion (Griffiths, 1997, 2004; Rorty, 1980, 2004; Ryle, 1949) and the abundance of often poorly defined emotion-related terms makes discussions of emotions notoriously messy (Frijda, Mesquita, Sonnemans, & van Goozen, 1991; Russell & Barrett, 1999; Scherer, 2005), one might say, almost as messy as the emotions themselves. So much so that any writer on emotion is practically obliged to carefully explicate usage of terms at the outset.

In general we follow as closely as possible influential discussions of psychological terms in the contemporary literature (especially, Frijda et al., 1991; Russell & Barrett, 1999; Scherer, 2005), distinguishing between core affect, emotion episode, and mood. We distinguish these terms for occurrent affect from the important non-occurrent affect terms, emotion disposition and emotion narrative (for the distinction between affective states and affective dispositions, see Wollheim, 1999). We use terms for occurrent affective phenomena in the following ways.

core affect

The most primitive feeling component of emotion experience, felt as undirected pleasure or displeasure with varying degrees of tension or relaxation (similar usage in Russell and Barrett's (1999) and Frijda and colleagues' (1991) accounts).

emotion episode

Occurrent emotions or emotion episodes are what we think of as the paradigm case of an emotion, and corresponds to how Scherer (2005) argues that emotion

should be understood. It is also similar to what Russell and Barrett (1999) call an 'emotional episode', although their account includes emotional action as a part of emotion episodes whereas we exclude any action from the emotion itself (Hooper & Faye, 2009).

In our view, a situation or event (broadly taken: a perception, an action, a construal of the actions of others or of a state of affairs, a realization, a thought episode, an imagination, a memory) is appraised (with varying degrees of passivity or activity) with respect to someone's beliefs and commitments (including desires and values), sometimes but not always leading to a value judgment. The appraisal (and subsequent judgment, if present) issues in a representation that is accompanied by a (hedonic) phenomenology (sometimes including bodily sensations) and typical involuntary manifestations or expressions (such as visible effects of autonomic changes, facial expressions, changes in bodily posture). The phenomenology and involuntary manifestations drive a particular tendency to action (Arnold, 1960; Frijda, 1986). This complex of phenomenology plus representation plus involuntary manifestations (including action tendency) is the emotion. Thus, our understanding of the term emotion episode is a type of component process account argued for most prominently by Scherer (1982, 1984, 1986, 1987, 2001, 2005). We differ from Russell's account here in excluding action in response to the emotion from the emotion proper, *even if the action is influenced to a large degree by the action tendency*, for the reasons given in the discussion below.

Primary emotion episodes are typically thought to last in the order of seconds to minutes.

complex emotion episode

An emotion episode may also refer to what Frijda and colleagues (1991) call an (complex) emotion episode. A complex emotion episode is an affective experience stimulated by a particular event that “gives rise to a multiplicity of emotions that follow one another, blend into one another” (Frijda et al. 1991, p. 200) and tend to be reported by persons as a single experience even though multiple emotions (and other forms of cognition such as reasoning, visualisation, imagination, rumination) are involved in the report. At times it will be useful to distinguish between what we will call primary emotion episodes, emotion episodes which spontaneously arise toward a particular object largely in the absence of *reflective* cognition (and which tend to be describable by a maximum of one emotion word), and complex emotion episodes (as just described). The importance of the distinction lies in the presence of active response to emotion *within* the ‘emotion episode’ in the case of complex episodes, and the absence of active response *within* the episode in the case of primary emotion episodes (where we think the active response should be considered a subsequent to the emotion episode, the primary emotion episode itself being involuntary). This distinction may be in practice difficult to make with precision because the emotion experiences or subjects’ reports of those experiences often lack precision and clarity.

Complex emotion episodes typically last in the order of minutes to hours.

mood

“Prolonged core affect without an object or with a quasi-object” (Russell and Barrett 1999, p. 806), typically thought to last in the order of hours.

emotion narrative

repeated experience of an emotion or multiple emotions about a single target, where repeated experiences of the target are intertwined with continued thoughts about the target, each experience restimulating or amplifying the emotions, and altogether forming a complex narrative that consolidates and intensifies the meanings associated with the target, of an indefinite duration, as long as the agent's relationship persists with the target concerned (corresponding approximately with Frijda and colleagues' (1991) use of 'sentiment'; see also Wollheim (1999) and Goldie (2000)).

There are also non-occurrent affective phenomena, or affect-related dispositions, the terms for which we use in the following ways.

emotion disposition

A relatively stable tendency to experience a particular emotion to repeated occurrences of a particular object over time (Wollheim, 1999).

response disposition

Tendencies to respond in particular ways to particular emotions. The class can be broadened to include a person's behavioural tendencies established to avoid feeling certain emotions at all. Formation of associations (often marked by anxiety) between types of situation or objects (including symbolic objects) facilitates creation of behaviour dispositions directly to those situations to block the feeling of the emotion before it is even experienced at all.

The distinctions between these different affect terms are important but they are rarely clearly demarcated in emotion experience. An emotion episode arises while a person is already in some mood state, and for familiar situations or objects belongs to

an existing emotion narrative. The primary emotion episode will be affected by a person's existing emotion-response dispositions, and may develop into a complex emotion episode in the interaction of the pre-existing mood state and a person's response to his experience of the primary emotion experience (if it is not disrupted before it is allowed to unfold). These interactions correspond to the characteristic complexity and richness associated with emotional life.

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