

DO EMOTIONS REQUIRE APPRAISALS?

A reply to the challenge from emotional contagion

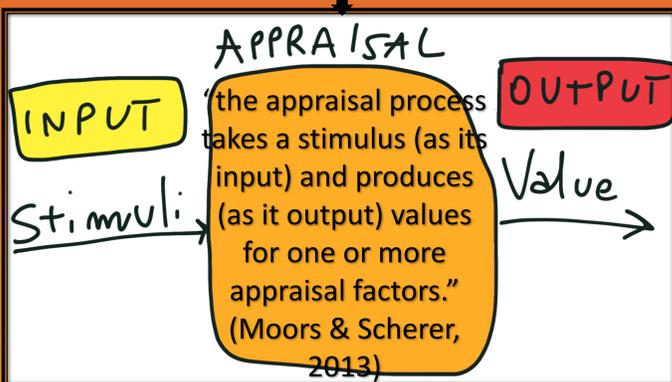
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Summary

Many theories of emotions assume that **appraisals** are necessary for the emotions to activate. However, **emotional contagion** provides a counterexample to this assumption. This is because the most prominent model of emotional contagion explains emotional activation by mimicry, without appealing to any appraisals (Hatfield et al, 1994). I argue that the theory of the necessity of appraisals can be retained without rejecting the existence of emotional contagion. My solution consist in proposing associative appraisals that elicit the emotions in cases of emotional contagion.

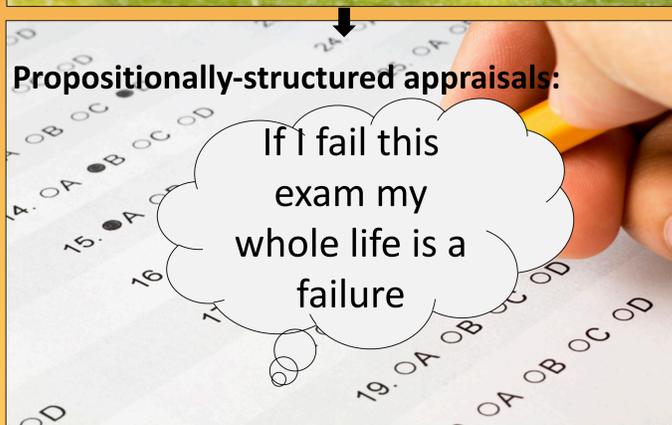
1. Appraisals

- Appraisals are evaluations of the stimuli in relation to the well-being of the subject (Lazarus, 1991).
- Appraisals determine the activation and the differentiation of emotions (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2001).



2. Structure of the appraisals

Associative appraisals



3. The necessity of appraisals

Appraisals:

- (1) Explain regularities between the activation of the emotion and environment.
- (2) Explain the differences between subjects in what causes the emotions to activate.
- (3) Accounts for the intelligibility of emotions.

4. Emotional Contagion

“Emotional contagion is the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person’s and, consequently, to converge emotionally”. (Hatfield et al., 1993)



Mechanism underlying emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994):

- (1) The mimicry of the object
- (2) The feedback received from such mimicry
- (3) The emotional sharing

5. The challenge

Appraisals are necessary for the activation of the emotion

BUT

The emotions aroused as a result of emotional contagion does not require appraisals

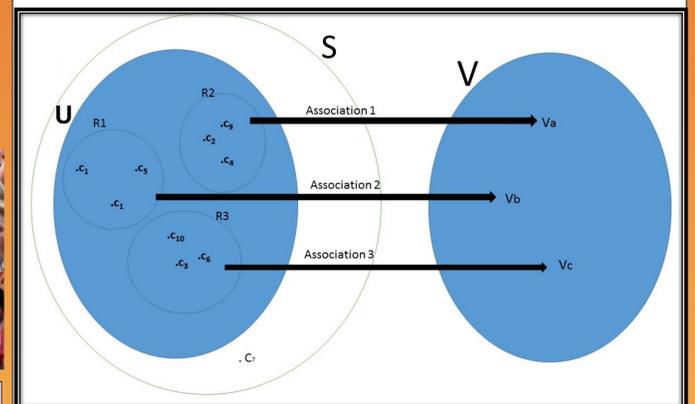
THEREFORE

Emotional contagion challenge the theory that appraisals are necessary for the activation of the emotion

6. My proposal: associative appraisals

- My solution to the challenge consists showing that emotional contagion do require appraisals.
- I propose a function that individuates appraisals that elicit the emotions in cases of emotional contagion.

Let S be the set of all bodily states. Let U be the set that has as elements R_i , R_i are sets of bodily states which have a certain property, namely to occur when the subject undergoes each basic emotion.



Let V be the set of values that are related with each basic emotions. I define the function F that associates to each element of U , one and only one element of V according to the following rule: an element R_i is associated to an element V_i if all the bodily states that belong to R_i have been previously paired with V_i .

7. My solution to the challenge

- (1) The mimicry of the object
- (2) The feedback received from such mimicry
- (3) **Associative appraisal**
- (4) The emotional sharing