The Manifold of Sense - Part III

By Sam Vaknin

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Feeling is a "hyper-concept" which is made of both sensation and emotion. It describes the ways in which we experience both our world and our selves. It coincides with sensations whenever it has a bodily component. But it is sufficiently flexible to cover emotions and attitudes or opinions. But attaching names to phenomena never helped in the long run and in the really important matter of understanding them. To identify feelings, let alone to describe them, is not an easy task. It is difficult to distinguish among feelings without resorting to a detailed description of causes, inclinations and dispositions. In addition, the relationship between feeling and emotions is far from clear or well established. Can we emote without feeling? Can we explain emotions, consciousness, even simple pleasure in terms of feeling? Is feeling a practical method, can it be used to learn about the world, or about other people? How do we know about our own feelings?

Instead of throwing light on the subject, the dual concepts of feeling and sensation seem to confound matters even further. A more basic level needs to be broached, that of sense data (or sensa, as in this text).

Sense data are entities cyclically defined. Their existence depends upon being sensed by a sensor equipped with senses. Yet, they define the senses to a large extent (imagine trying to define the sense of vision without visuals). Ostensibly, they are entities, though subjective. Allegedly, they possess the properties that we perceive in an external object (if it is there), as it appears to have them. In other words, though the external object is perceived, what we really get in touch with directly, what we apprehend without mediation – are the subjective sensa. What is (probably) perceived is merely inferred from the sense data. In short, all our empirical knowledge rests upon our acquaintance with sensa. Every perception has as its basis pure experience. But the same can be said about memory, imagination, dreams, hallucinations. Sensation, as opposed to these, is supposed to be error free, not subject to filtering or to interpretation, special, infallible, direct and immediate. It is an awareness of the existence of entities: objects, ideas, impressions, perceptions, even other sensations. Russell and Moore said that sense data have all (and only) the properties that they appear to have and can only be sensed by one subject. But these all are idealistic renditions of senses, sensations and sensa. In practice, it is notoriously difficult to reach a consensus regarding the description of sense data or to base any meaningful (let alone useful) knowledge of the physical world on them. There is a great variance in the conception of sensa. Berkeley, ever the incorrigible practical Briton, said that sense data

exist only if and when sensed or perceived by us. Nay, their very existence IS their being perceived or sensed by us. Some sensa are public or part of lager assemblages of sensa. Their interaction with the other sensa, parts of objects, or surfaces of objects may distort the inventory of their properties. They may seem to lack properties that they do possess or to possess properties that can be discovered only upon close inspection (not immediately evident). Some sense data are intrinsically vague. What is a striped pajama? How many stripes does it contain? We do not know. It is sufficient to note (=to visually sense) that it has stripes all over. Some philosophers say that if a sense data can be sensed then they possibly exist. These sensa are called the sensibilia (plural of sensibile). Even when not actually perceived or sensed, objects consist of sensibilia. This makes sense data hard to differentiate. They overlap and where one begins may be the end of another. Nor is it possible to say if sensa are changeable because we do not really know WHAT they are (objects, substances, entities, qualities, events?).

Other philosophers suggested that sensing is an act directed at the objects called sense data. Other hotly dispute this artificial separation. To see red is simply to see in a certain manner, that is: to see redly. This is the adverbial school. It is close to the contention that sense data are nothing but a linguistic convenience, a noun, which enables us to discuss appearances. For instance, the "Gray" sense data is nothing but a mixture of red and sodium. Yet we use this convention (gray) for convenience and efficacy's sakes.

B. The Evidence

An important facet of emotions is that they can generate and direct behaviour. They can trigger complex chains of actions, not always beneficial to the individual. Yerkes and Dodson observed that the more complex a task is, the more emotional arousal interferes with performance. In other words, emotions can motivate. If this were their only function, we might have determined that emotions are a sub-category of motivations.

Some cultures do not have a word for emotion. Others equate emotions with physical sensations, a-la James-Lange, who said that external stimuli cause bodily changes which result in emotions (or are interpreted as such by the person affected). Cannon and Bard differed only in saying that both emotions and bodily responses were simultaneous. An even more far-fetched approach (Cognitive Theories) was that situations in our environment foster in us a GENERAL state of arousal. We receive clues from the environment as to what we should call this general state. For instance, it was demonstrated that facial expressions can induce emotions, apart from any cognition.

A big part of the problem is that there is no accurate way to verbally communicate emotions. People are either unaware of their feelings or try to falsify their magnitude (minimize or exaggerate them). Facial expressions seem to be both inborn and universal. Children born deaf and blind use them. They must be serving some adaptive survival strategy or function. Darwin said that emotions have an evolutionary history and can be traced across cultures as part of our biological heritage. Maybe so. But the bodily vocabulary is not flexible enough to capture the full range of emotional subtleties humans are capable of. Another nonverbal mode of communication is known as body language: the way we move, the distance we maintain from others (personal or private territory). It expresses emotions, though only very crass and raw ones.

And there is overt behaviour. It is determined by culture, upbringing, personal inclination, temperament and so on. For instance: women are more likely to express emotions than men when they encounter a person in distress. Both sexes, however, experience the same level of physiological arousal in such an encounter. Men and women also label their emotions differently. What men call anger – women call hurt or sadness. Men are four times more likely than women to resort to violence. Women more often than not will internalize aggression and become depressed.

Efforts at reconciling all these data were made in the early eighties. It was hypothesized that the interpretation of emotional states is a two phased process. People respond to emotional arousal by quickly "surveying" and "appraising" (introspectively) their feelings. Then they proceed to search for environmental cues to support the results of their assessment. They will, thus, tend to pay more attention to internal cues that agree with the external ones. Put more plainly: people will feel what they expect to feel.

Several psychologists have shown that feelings precede cognition in infants. Animals also probably react before thinking. Does this mean that the affective system reacts instantaneously, without any of the appraisal and survey processes that were postulated? If this were the case, then we merely play with words: we invent explanations to label our feelings AFTER we fully experience them. Emotions, therefore, can be had without any cognitive intervention. They provoke unlearned bodily patterns, such as the aforementioned facial expressions and body language. This vocabulary of expressions and postures is not even conscious. When information about these reactions reaches the brain, it assigns to them the appropriate emotion. Thus, affect creates emotion and not vice versa.

Sometimes, we hide our emotions in order to preserve our self-image or not to incur society's wrath. Sometimes, we are not aware of our emotions and, as a result, deny or diminish them.

C. An Integrative Platform – A Proposal

(The terminology used in this chapter is explored in the previous ones.)

The use of one word to denote a whole process was the source of misunderstandings and futile disputations. Emotions (feelings) are processes, not events, or objects. Throughout this chapter, I will, therefore, use the term "Emotive Cycle".

The genesis of the Emotive Cycle lies in the acquisition of Emotional Data. In most cases, these are made up of Sense Data mixed with data related to spontaneous internal events. Even when no access to sensa is available, the stream of internally generated data is never interrupted. This is easily demonstrated in experiments involving sensory deprivation or with people who are naturally sensorily deprived (blind, deaf and dumb, for instance). The spontaneous generation of internal data and the emotional reactions to them are always there even in these extreme conditions. It is true that, even under severe sensory deprivation, the emoting person reconstructs or evokes past sensory data. A case of pure, total, and permanent sensory deprivation is nigh impossible. But there are important philosophical and psychological differences between real life sense data and their representations in the mind. Only in grave pathologies is

this distinction blurred: in psychotic states, when experiencing phantom pains following the amputation of a limb or in the case of drug induced images and after images. Auditory, visual, olfactory and other hallucinations are breakdowns of normal functioning. Normally, people are well aware of and strongly maintain the difference between objective, external, sense data and the internally generated representations of past sense data.

The Emotional Data are perceived by the emoter as stimuli. The external, objective component has to be compared to internally maintained databases of previous such stimuli. The internally generated, spontaneous or associative data, have to be reflected upon. Both needs lead to introspective (inwardly directed) activity. The product of introspection is the formation of qualia. This whole process is unconscious or subconscious.

If the person is subject to functioning psychological defense mechanisms (e.g., repression, suppression, denial, projection, projective identification) – qualia formation will be followed by immediate action. The subject – not having had any conscious experience – will not be aware of any connection between his actions and preceding events (sense data, internal data and the introspective phase). He will be at a loss to explain his behaviour, because the whole process did not go through his consciousness. To further strengthen this argument, we may recall that hypnotized and anaesthetized subjects are not likely to act at all even in the presence of external, objective, sensa. Hypnotized people are likely to react to sensa introduced to their consciousness by the hypnotist and which had no existence, whether internal or external, prior to the hypnotist's suggestion. It seems that feeling, sensation and emoting exist only if they pass through consciousness. This is true even where no data of any kind are available (such as in the case of phantom pains in long amputated limbs). But such bypasses of consciousness are the less common cases.

More commonly, qualia formation will be followed by Feeling and Sensation. These will be fully conscious. They will lead to the triple processes of surveying, appraisal/evaluation and judgment formation. When repeated often enough judgments of similar data coalesce to form attitudes and opinions. The patterns of interactions of opinions and attitudes with our thoughts (cognition) and knowledge, within our conscious and unconscious strata, give rise to what we call our personality. These patterns are relatively rigid and are rarely influenced by the outside world. When maladaptive and dysfunctional, we talk about personality disorders.

Judgements contain, therefore strong emotional, cognitive and attitudinal elements which team up to create motivation. The latter leads to action, which both completes one emotional cycle and starts another. Actions are sense data and motivations are internal data, which together form a new chunk of emotional data.

Emotional cycles can be divided to Phrastic nuclei and Neustic clouds (to borrow a metaphor from physics). The Phrastic Nucleus is the content of the emotion, its subject matter. It incorporates the phases of introspection, feeling/sensation, and judgment formation. The Neustic cloud involves the ends of the cycle, which interface with the world: the emotional data, on the one hand and the resulting action on the other.

We started by saying that the Emotional Cycle is set in motion by Emotional Data, which, in turn, are comprised of sense data and internally generated data. But the composition of the Emotional Data is of prime importance in determining the nature of the resulting emotion and of the following action. If more sense data (than internal data) are involved and the component of internal data is weak in comparison (it is never absent) – we are likely to experience Transitive Emotions. The latter are emotions, which involve observation and revolve around objects. In short: these are "out-going" emotions, that motivate us to act to change our environment.

Yet, if the emotional cycle is set in motion by Emotional Data, which are composed mainly of internal, spontaneously generated data – we will end up with Reflexive Emotions. These are emotions that involve reflection and revolve around the self (for instance, autoerotic emotions). It is here that the source of psychopathologies should be sought: in this imbalance between external, objective, sense data and the echoes of our mind.

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The Exhaust System

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Your car's exhaust system carries away the gases created when the fuel and air are burned in the combustion chamber. These gases are harmful to humans and our environment. A frequent check of your exhaust system is a must to provide for you and your family's safety. Make sure there are no holes in the exhaust system or in the passenger compartment where exhaust fumes could enter. Let's begin by listing the parts of the exhaust system and their functions.

Exhaust manifold: The exhaust manifold attaches to the cylinder head and takes each cylinders exhaust and combines it into one pipe. The manifold can be made of steel, aluminum, stainless steel, or more commonly cast iron.

Oxygen sensor: All modern fuel injected cars utilize an oxygen sensor to measure how much oxygen is present in the exhaust. From this the computer can add or subtract fuel to obtain the correct mixture for maximum fuel economy. The oxygen sensor is mounted in the exhaust manifold or close to it in the exhaust pipe.

Catalytic converter: This muffler like part converts harmful carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons to water vapor and carbon dioxide. Some converters also reduce harmful nitrogen oxides. The converter is mounted between the exhaust manifold and the muffler.

Muffler: The muffler serves to quiet the exhaust down to acceptable levels. Remember that the combustion process is a series of explosions that create allot of noise. Most mufflers use baffles to bounce the exhaust around dissipating the energy and quieting the noise. Some mufflers also use fiberglass packing, which absorbs the sound energy as the gases flow through.

Exhaust pipe: Between all of the above mention parts is the exhaust pipe which carries the gas through it's journey out your tail pipe. Exhaust tubing is usually made of steel but can be stainless steel (which lasts longer due to it's corrosion resistance) or aluminized steel tubing. Aluminized steel has better corrosion resistance than plain steel but not better than stainless steel. It is however cheaper than stainless steel.

Common Problems:

Well the worst enemy of your exhaust system is corrosion.... or more commonly known as rust. Rust is caused by moisture reacting with the iron in the steel and forming iron oxide. Moisture, or water vapor is present in the exhaust as a by-product of combustion and the catalytic converter. Moisture can also come from the outside in the form of rain.

Short trips in your car can shorten the life of your exhaust system. When you shut down your engine whatever water vapor is in the pipes condenses and turns back into a liquid. On a short trip the water never has a chance to get hot enough to turn back into water vapor and just stays in the system and rusts away the pipes. If you drive for short distances consider replacing your exhaust system with stainless steel when the plain steel one rusts through. If you drive more than 15 miles at a time then you should not have to worry about this.

If you live in an area, which uses salt on the roads in the wintertime, make sure to wash the underside of you car with water every few weeks. Salt speeds up the corrosion process and getting it off as soon as possible will help stop the corrosion. Make sure you run the engine after washing to drive off all of the water on the pipes.

Noticing a decrease in your gas mileage? Your oxygen sensor could be going south on you. As time goes on the oxygen sensor begins to wear out and becomes less accurate. This sometimes results in a rich fuel mixture where your engine burns more fuel than is needed. Most of the time your check engine light will come on and alert you to a failing oxygen sensor. I suggest changing the oxygen sensor every 60,000 miles just to be safe. Even though your check engine light might not be on, you could be using more gas than is needed. Pay a few bucks and change the sensor, your wallet will thank you when you have to buy less gas down the road.

The next part in line to go is the muffler. Most of the time mufflers rust through and need to be replaced. There are allot of options out there for replacement mufflers. Some cheap and some expensive. It holds true... you get what you pay for. If you plan on keeping your car for any period of time, spend the extra cash and get an OEM muffler or a high quality name brand muffler.

On rare occasions the catalytic converter will become clogged and need to be replaced. Symptoms include loss of power, heat coming from the floor of your car, glowing red converter or a sulfur smell. Never let a mechanic tell you that you can do without the catalytic converter. Removing this component is illegal in most states and can lead to a hefty fine to the government if you are not careful.

That's about it for the exhaust system; just remember that rust is the biggest enemy to your exhaust system. Take the above-mentioned steps and your exhaust system will last a long time

Kevin Schappell maintains http://www.carbuyersclub.com where he gives advice on buying, selling, insurance, and financing. A mechanical engineer and car guy, Kevin has decided to spend his online time helping others learn about automobiles. To learn more about how your car works, Kevin has created http://www.mycarwizard.com.

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