

# Epistemic Sentimentalism and Epistemic Reason-Responsiveness

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Assume that ordinary agents have some epistemically justified substantive evaluative beliefs,<sup>1</sup> e.g., Katherine justifiably believes that *Trump's comments about immigration were wrong*, Umut justifiably believes that *the pianist's performance was admirable*, etc. Given this assumption, we face a further question: how can ordinary agents come to possess justified substantive evaluative beliefs?

Recently there has been interest in the following answer:<sup>2</sup>

Epistemic Sentimentalism: emotions are a source of immediate prima facie propositional justification for evaluative beliefs; emotions sometimes constitute the justificatory basis for undefeated doxastically justified evaluative beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

According to Epistemic Sentimentalism (hereafter 'Sentimentalism'), an emotion like guilt, for instance, can provide prima facie propositional justification, sufficient in the absence of defeaters to make it epistemically permissible to believe that, e.g., *my having lied to my partner was wrong*, independently of having justification for believing other supporting propositions, e.g., that *lying is pro tanto wrong*. Further, guilt (for example), may sometimes constitute the justificatory basis of evaluative beliefs. Finally, Sentimentalism claims that emotions are *a* source of immediate justification. That doesn't entail, but nor does it preclude, the stronger view that emotions are *the* source of immediate justification.

Sentimentalism is motivated by the following considerations. Firstly, for there to be justified substantive evaluative beliefs, this plausibly requires something akin to experiential 'evaluative data', in a similar way to that allegedly provided by sensory experience vis-à-vis empirical beliefs. Second, Sentimentalism is motivated by a commitment to Perceptualism about the emotions. On this view, conscious and occurrent emotions are, or are best understood by analogy with, perceptual experiences, e.g., like perceptual experiences they are

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<sup>1</sup> I'm understanding 'epistemically justified' in the following way: S possessing an epistemically justified belief that p can be understood either as (i) S believing p and there being the absence of a non-moral or non-prudential obligation on S not to believe that p, or, (ii) S believing p on the basis of something that makes probable the belief that p. By 'substantive' I mean something like 'non-formal'. See Cowan, R. (2017) "Rossian Conceptual Intuitionism", *Ethics*, for a fuller discussion of substantivity. Finally, I'm understanding 'evaluative' very broadly so as to encompass beliefs about deontic and value properties.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Döring, S. (2003); Pelsner, A.C., (2014). Note that in my (2016) I label this view 'Epistemic Perceptualism'. I've come to think that 'Epistemic Sentimentalism' is a more informative and specific label, and thus preferable.

<sup>3</sup> Moral sense theorists like Frances Hutcheson can be interpreted as endorsing Epistemic Sentimentalism.

intentional, non-doxastic, and possess phenomenal character.<sup>4</sup>Endorsing Perceptualism provides some reason for exploring Sentimentalism's prospects, i.e., if emotions are perceptual perhaps they have a perceptual epistemology (there is, however, no entailment). Finally, the idea that emotion can be revelatory of evaluative features – which Sentimentalism precisifies – has support in everyday thinking (and coheres with the alleged intentionality of emotion). For example, it is plausible that remorse can sometimes be the way in which we realise the moral import of our actions, while indignation at the judge's ruling might reveal to its subject how unjust it is. If that's right, then perhaps subjects gain justified evaluative beliefs via their emotions.

Sentimentalism is attractive. Firstly, it promises a way of halting the epistemic regress for evaluative beliefs, i.e., it identifies a source of evaluative justification that is not itself in need of justification. This will, of course, only be of interest to those who think epistemic justification is linear. The second attraction is broader in scope: if one thinks that we need something akin to experiential evaluative data to get justified substantive evaluative beliefs, then Sentimentalism potentially provides a naturalist-friendly account that doesn't require an extravagant philosophy of mind, e.g., it doesn't require positing a faculty of rational intuition.<sup>5</sup>

Sentimentalism is, however, apparently vulnerable to serious objections. Perhaps emotions are too unreliable for it to be true.<sup>6</sup> Or maybe *Epistemic Sentimentalism* clashes with an attractive analysis in the metaphysics of value: Neo-Sentimentalism.<sup>7</sup> In this paper I'm setting these (and other objections<sup>8</sup>) aside and instead focus on a family of objections that all take as a premise the claim that emotions possess a normative property that is apparently antithetical to Sentimentalism: *epistemic reason-responsiveness*.<sup>9</sup> Epistemic reason-responsiveness

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<sup>4</sup> There are various reasons for adopting Perceptualism which I don't have space to go into. Note that Döring (2003) and (2007) partially identifies Perceptualism with Sentimentalism, i.e., emotions are analogous to perceptual experiences in virtue of their normative properties. This complication shouldn't make a difference to my discussion – but the reader should note that, as I'm characterising it, the views are distinct.

<sup>5</sup> Oddie, G. (2005) argues that *desires* play a similar epistemic role vis-à-vis judgments about *goodness* to that afforded to emotions by Sentimentalism. The reader is invited to consider how my arguments impact on Oddie's view.

<sup>6</sup> But see Pelser, A. (2014) for a response.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Brady, M.S. (2013). But see my (2016) for a reply.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the objection from Brady, M.S. (2013) that proponents of Sentimentalism misidentify the primary goal of evaluative thinking as epistemic justification or knowledge, when it is actually evaluative *understanding*.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g. Brady, M. (2013); Deonna, J. & Teroni, F., (2012); Salmela, M., (2011) "Can Emotion Be Modelled On Perception?" *dialectica* 65 (1):1-29; Vance, J. (2014). Both Brady and Deonna and Teroni discuss explicitly the Neo-Sentimentalist claim that evaluative properties can be analysed in terms of *appropriate* or *fitting* emotional responses. In my view this neither entails nor is entailed by the claim that emotions are epistemically

(hereafter ‘reason-responsiveness’) can be thought of as encompassing two interconnected claims: firstly, emotions can be held or undergone for epistemic reasons, e.g., my guilt might be based upon a belief that *I have lied to my partner*, where this constitutes an *evidential* base for my guilt. If an emotion is based upon defective evidence, e.g., my belief that *I have lied to my partner* is unjustified, then the emotion is itself in some way epistemically defective, e.g., perhaps my guilt is also unjustified. Second, emotions are mental items for which epistemic justifications can be given/demanded, e.g., if I’m feeling guilty, it’s perfectly legitimate for someone to ask me to provide a *reason* for my guilt – e.g. ‘*why* are you feeling that way?’<sup>10</sup> – where this is an appeal for epistemic reasons or evidence.

Given reason-responsiveness, it is apparently possible to develop powerful objections against Sentimentalism. First, the reason-responsiveness of emotions may appear to entail the falsity of Perceptualism, since perceptual experiences aren’t reason-responsive: it apparently makes little sense to pose justificatory why-questions about perceptual experiences, e.g., “why are you having that experience?”, and experiences don’t seem to be held or undergone for epistemic reasons. Experiences stand beyond epistemic justification.<sup>11</sup><sup>12</sup> Given the seemingly reasonable assumption that Sentimentalism depends on Perceptualism then Sentimentalism is false. Call this the ‘Experiences Aren’t Reason-Responsive’ Objection.

Second, if emotions have evidential bases, e.g., a belief that *I have lied to you*, then emotions are *epistemically dependent*, i.e., they justify evaluative beliefs only if (and partly because) their bases are justified or justification-conferring. Given this, it is difficult to see how emotions could play an immediate justifying role, i.e., epistemic dependence and epistemic immediacy seem incompatible. Call this the ‘Epistemic Dependence’ Objection.

Finally, it is implausible that a mental item could be a source of immediate justification – i.e., it can generate justification for reason-responsive states such as beliefs – while being itself reason-responsive. This is because this combination – being generative of justification and reason-responsive – would seem to entail that such a mental item could justify *itself*, which is highly dubious. Call this the ‘Self-Justification’ Objection.

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reason-responsive. However, I suspect that, e.g., Brady, thinks that emotions are *also* epistemically reason-responsive.

<sup>10</sup> Deonna and Teroni (2012), p. 69

<sup>11</sup> Thanks to David Chalmers for highlighting this line of objection to me.

<sup>12</sup> Sceptics might pose why questions which are aimed at undermining the trust that we put in perceptual experience, e.g., “why do you think that the world is the way your experience presents it?” etc. But that is a different matter from the one under consideration, i.e. whether one can ask for a justification for *an experience*.

It might seem that the natural way to respond to these objections is to argue against emotional reason-responsiveness, e.g., perhaps *why-questions* are merely causal or clarificatory questions. I here adopt a different approach. I respond to these objections whilst *granting* that emotions are reason-responsive.<sup>13</sup> This is not only dialectically significant vis-à-vis the prospects for Sentimentalism, but also supports a broader claim about the compatibility of a mental item's being reason-responsive and its being a *generative*<sup>14</sup> source of epistemic justification. In §1 I clarify Perceptualism and Sentimentalism. In §2-§5 I respond to the reason-responsiveness objections. In §6 I conclude.

## 1. Perceptualism and Epistemic Sentimentalism

There's a reasonable degree of consensus among contemporary philosophers of emotion that paradigm cases of emotions, e.g., guilt in response to infidelity, implicate the following elements: (i) a representation of some target object or event, e.g., a belief that *I have lied to my partner*; (ii) an evaluation of that target object or event, e.g., that my lying was *wrong*; (iii) a motivation to act which is intelligible in light of the representation and evaluation, e.g., to apologise or make reparations to my partner; (iv) affective phenomenology, e.g., an unpleasant 'yucky' feeling, and, (v) bodily changes (and perhaps an awareness thereof), e.g., a lump in one's throat, dry mouth, etc.<sup>15</sup>

Disagreement emerges when we theorise about which of these elements are constitutive of emotions, which are mere eliciting causes and effects, and what the nature is of the component parts and their relations.

Perceptualists think that conscious and occurrent emotions are, or are best understood by analogy with, perceptual experiences. More specifically, Perceptualism can be understood as providing an account of the evaluative element in emotion (component (ii)): it's a perceptual experience, or is in some respects like a perceptual experience, with evaluative content. For

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<sup>13</sup> My strategy vis-à-vis Sentimentalism is similar to the approach adopted by Perceptualists to show that the seeming *irrationality* of recalcitrant emotions (e.g., fear in the face of knowledge that there is no danger) is compatible with their being experiences. See, e.g., Brady, M. (2009) 'The Irrationality of Recalcitrant Emotions' *Philosophical Studies* 145 (3):413 - 430; Tappolet, C. (2012), 'Emotions, Perceptions, and Emotional Illusions'. In Clotilde, C. (ed.), *Perceptual Illusions. Philosophical and Psychological Essays, Palgrave-Macmillan*. For an attempt to explain away the claim that recalcitrant emotions are irrational see Döring, S. (2015) 'What's Wrong with Recalcitrant Emotions? From Irrationality to Challenge of Agential Identity', *dialectica* 69 (3):381-402. I regard the issue of emotional recalcitrance as distinct from – though related to – epistemic reason-responsiveness.

<sup>14</sup> The reader can assume that *generative* and *immediate* justification are equivalent. I will, however, argue that these come apart.

<sup>15</sup> This is indebted to remarks made in Brady (2013); Deonna and Teroni (2012).

example, a proponent might claim that fear is, or involves, a perceptual experience of *dangerousness*, guilt an experience of *wrongness*, and so on.

There are various ways in which Perceptualism could be developed, e.g., whether the affective component constitutes the evaluative component,<sup>16</sup> or whether we include component (i) the “cognitive base”<sup>17</sup> as part of the emotion, etc. I’m agnostic about which version of Perceptualism is most plausible (note that this includes my being open to the possibility that different versions are plausible for different types of emotions). However, depending on which version we adopt, this will make Sentimentalism more-or-less vulnerable to objections, including reason-responsiveness objections. As it happens, I think that versions of Perceptualism which claim that component (i) is *not* part of the emotion and that component (ii) a sort of affective seeming state with *conceptual* content (which is part of the emotion but distinct from other components) will be the most vulnerable to reason-responsiveness objections.<sup>18 19</sup> I’ll tentatively assume this in what follows.

Sentimentalists claim that emotions are a source of immediate justification for evaluative beliefs and sometimes constitute the immediate justificatory basis of evaluative beliefs.<sup>20</sup> Sentimentalism can take two general forms: Reliabilism and Phenomenalism.

Reliabilists think that a subject, S, has immediate prima facie propositional (perceptual) justification for believing that p iff S has (i) an experience with an appropriate content, e.g., p, and, (ii) the experience is produced by a reliable process.<sup>21</sup> On this view, an emotion can constitute the evidential ground or basis for an evaluative belief, but does so in virtue of a non-evidential property of emotions: their being produced by a reliable process, i.e., one which issues in a favourable ratio of veridical to non-veridical states.

Phenomenalists think that a subject, S, has immediate prima facie propositional (perceptual) justification for believing that p iff S has an experience with presentational phenomenal character with respect to p. On this view, emotions constitute the evidential base for

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<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Döring, S. (2003); Goldie, P. (2000), *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration*, Oxford University Press

<sup>17</sup> Deonna, J. and Teroni, F. (2012).

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, without the assumption of conceptual content, one might wonder whether it is plausible to claim that they are reason-responsive in the first place – but see Corns, J. ‘Hedonic Rationality’ (unpublished MS) for the view that hedonics can be reason-responsive.

<sup>19</sup> For a version of Perceptualism along these lines see Roberts, R.C. (2003), *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Some proponents, e.g., Döring, S. (2003), talk of *non-inferential* justification. Others, e.g., Pelsler, A.C. (2014), refer to *basic* justification. I assume that these are equivalent to immediate justification. See, e.g., Pryor, J., (2005) “There is Immediate Justification”. In Steup, M. & Sosa, E. (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, Blackwell, 181–202

<sup>21</sup> Brady (2013) assumes Reliabilism.

evaluative beliefs in virtue of their presentational phenomenology. ‘Presentational’ character with respect to *p* apparently differs significantly from representational content found in a belief or judgment that *p*, e.g., compare visually perceiving the red postbox at the end of the road with judging that *the postbox at the end of the road is red*. Although there are competing accounts of presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*<sup>22</sup>, it can be roughly understood as it seeming that *p*, where this involves the feeling that one is being *told* that something is true, as opposed to asserting that it is true. It is also typically associated with passivity and (importantly), a lack of reason-responsiveness.

I’m ecumenical about these epistemological views, but I suggest that the reader assume the version of Sentimentalism that they take to be most vulnerable to the various reason-responsiveness objections. I now proceed to those objections and my responses.

## 2. Experiences Aren’t Reason-Responsive

The Experiences Aren’t Reason-Responsive Objection goes as follows:

P1: Emotions are epistemically reason-responsive.

P2: No perceptual experiences are epistemically reason-responsive.

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C1: Emotions are not perceptual experiences.

P3: Epistemic Sentimentalism is true only if emotions are perceptual experiences.

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C2: Epistemic Sentimentalism is false.

P1 encompasses the claim, already explained in the introduction, that emotions can be held for epistemic reasons and that justifications can be demanded or given for emotions.

P2 expresses a standard view about the nature of perceptual experience. On this view, perceptual experiences – and this is usually thought to include seeming states<sup>23</sup> – just aren’t the sort of things which can be epistemically based upon other mental items such as beliefs,<sup>24</sup> or for which justificatory why questions can be sensibly asked. It arguably doesn’t make sense to think that a subject could be experiencing the redness of an object on the basis of further evidence that they have about the object. Similarly, asking someone for a justification

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<sup>22</sup> See Chudnoff, E. (2013) and Reiland, I. (2015) for examples.

<sup>23</sup> Although note that those who countenance the existence of seemings think that they are distinct from sensations. See papers in Tucker, C. (2013) for discussion.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Lyons, J. (2011).

for having the experience of redness would strike us as odd. Indeed, we might think that possession of these features (or perhaps it is the *lack* of features) is partly constitutive of being a perceptual experience.

P3 hinges on the claim that it is only perceptual experiences that possess/lack features which enable them to confer immediate justification for beliefs. Importantly for our purposes this allegedly includes their lacking the feature of epistemic reason-responsiveness. Here is Sosa expressing something like this thought:

Experiences are able to provide justification that is foundational because they lie beyond justification and unjustification. Since they are passively received, they cannot manifest obedience to anything, including rational norms, whether epistemic or otherwise. Since unmotivated by reasons, they can serve as *foundational* sources, as regress-stoppers.<sup>25</sup>

If that's right, then emotions will be capable of conferring immediate or generative justification only if they are perceptual experiences. Hence, Sentimentalism hinges on the truth of Perceptualism. Given the intermediate conclusion that Perceptualism is false (from P1 and P2), Sentimentalism is also false.

Since I am granting P1 (reason-responsiveness), in order to defend Sentimentalism I must deny either P2 or P3. I'll first briefly explain how P2 is controversial and can plausibly be resisted. I'll then outline how P3 can be denied. However, as will become clear, a plausible denial of P3 requires dealing with further reason-responsiveness objections.

One option open to Sentimentalists is to deny P2 by identifying cases of non-emotional perceptual experiences which seem to be reason-responsive. The most plausible candidates of this are, I think, *cognitively penetrated* perceptual experiences. Roughly, cognitive penetration of (sensory) perceptual experience is possible if and only if it's possible for two subjects to have experiences which differ in content and/or phenomenal character, where this difference is the result of a causal process that traces more or less directly to states in the subjects' cognitive system, and where we hold fixed the perceptual stimuli, the condition of the subjects' sensory organs, the environmental conditions, and, the attentional focus of the subjects.<sup>26</sup> Putative cases of cognitive penetration include: beliefs about the typical colour of

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<sup>25</sup> Sosa, E. (2007) *Virtue Epistemology*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 46:

<sup>26</sup> See Vance, J. (2014).

bananas can allegedly make subjects experience them as being more *yellow* than they are; possessing a stock of beliefs about pine trees may enable perceivers to have visual experiences which represent the property of *being a pine tree* in a way that novices do not.

Why would anyone think that cognitively penetrated experiences are epistemically reason-responsive? Although this matter is highly contentious, some philosophers<sup>27</sup> think that attributing something like the property of reason-responsiveness to at least some cognitively penetrated experiences can best explain our intuitions about the epistemological features of beliefs based upon such experiences. To get a sense of what is meant by this, consider the following case:

Wishful Willy: Willy is a gold prospector but hasn't yet become an expert at identifying gold nuggets, e.g., he isn't yet able to distinguish them from yellowish pebbles. Nevertheless, Willy also has a very strong wish to find gold. Indeed, his wish is so powerful that when he observes a yellowish pebble (and has a seeming that there is a yellowish pebble) his desire cognitively penetrates his seeming such that it comes to seem to him to be a gold nugget.<sup>28</sup>

About this case, consider the following question: would Willy's belief that *there is a gold nugget* be epistemically justified? The intuitive verdict, I think, is 'No'. Yet, Willy had an experience with this content, and there aren't any obvious defeaters for his belief. At this point, the appeal to reason-responsiveness comes in. For example, Matthew McGrath<sup>29</sup> suggests that in order to explain the verdict about Wishful Willy, we ought to say that Willy's seeming that there is a gold nugget is a special kind of seeming (he calls it a 'non-receptive' seeming, in contrast to more basic 'receptive' seemings). Thanks to his strong desire for gold, Willy *quasi-infers* the seeming that there is a gold nugget on the basis of his receptive seeming that there is a yellowish pebble. About quasi-inference, McGrath says the following:

Let us say that a transition from a seeming that P to a seeming that Q is "quasi-inferential" just in case the transition that would result from replacing these seemings with corresponding beliefs that P and Q would count as genuine inference by the person.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., Siegel (2012); McGrath, M., (2013) 'Phenomenal Conservatism and Cognitive Penetration: the Bad Basis Counterexamples' in C. Tucker (ed) *Seemings and Justification*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>28</sup> This is adapted from a case in Markie, P. (2006) "Epistemically Appropriate Perceptual Belief", *Nous* 40: 118-42

<sup>29</sup> McGrath, M. (2013).

<sup>30</sup> McGrath, M. (2013), p. 237

Applied to the Wishful Willy case, the thought is that the relation between the non-receptive seeming of a gold nugget and the receptive seeming of a yellowish pebble is similar to the relation between two beliefs, where one is inferred from the other. As McGrath characterises this, quasi-inferred seemings

function epistemically in the way inference by the person does: they can at best *transmit* the relevant epistemic property of the inputs to the outputs; they cannot *generate* this property for the outputs when it isn't possessed by the inputs.<sup>31</sup>

A quasi-inferred seeming can fail to confer epistemic justification in two ways: (1) if the quasi-inference isn't a good one for the subject, i.e., if the content of the input seeming doesn't sufficiently support the content of the output for the subject, and, (2) if the input seeming isn't justification-conferring. Finally, note that McGrath also allows that there can be seemings that are based upon beliefs.

Back in the Wishful Willy case, McGrath would say that the seeming with gold content is quasi-inferred from the seeming of a yellowish pebble. Although the seeming of a yellowish pebble is justification-conferring (let's assume), the seeming with gold content fails to justify because the quasi-inference isn't a good one for Willy: it simply involved wishful thinking, not the deployment of some recognitional capacity (compare with an analogous case of standard inference due to wishful thinking).

If that's right, then we would have a nice explanation of our intuitive verdict about the Wishful Willy case: the gold seeming fails to justify because it is produced by a bad quasi-inference from a more basic seeming.

This proposal could make sense of our verdict about another case (although note that this is a cognitive and not a sensory seeming):

Sloppy Sherlock: Sherlock has the epistemically unjustified belief that Melanie's story about where she was at the time of the murder is a ruse (let's suppose he makes an inexplicable inferential error while listening to her testimony). Given his background beliefs about the other suspects and his general expertise in crime solving, it seems to him that Melanie is guilty. He forms a belief on the basis of this seeming.

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<sup>31</sup> McGrath, M. (2013), p. 237

In this case, I hope the reader will agree that Sherlock's belief isn't justified. Relatedly, it seems that we should also agree that the seeming that Melanie is guilty cannot confer justification for believing that content. This is well explained by the view that the seeming about Melanie's guilt is quasi-inferred from Sherlock's belief about Melanie's alibi.

Are quasi-inferred seemings susceptible to justificatory *why-questions*? Although I doubt that this will convince proponents of P2, I don't think that it would be odd for someone to ask Willy "why does the pebble seem like a piece of gold?" Neither would it be strange for someone to challenge Sherlock by asking "why does Melanie seem guilty to you?" Furthermore, in response, Willy and Sherlock may appeal to the contents of their more basic seemings or other beliefs that they hold.

Although much more would need to be said,<sup>32</sup> I think that the possibility of putative cases of quasi-inferred seemings provides us with some reason to think that a lack of epistemic reasons-responsiveness is not a constitutive part of being a perceptual experience. Hence P2 doesn't appear unassailable.

But maybe the reader rejects this: perhaps there are no non-emotional quasi-inferred seemings or perceptual experiences. If so then Sentimentalists might deny P2 by identifying emotions themselves as counterexamples. On this view, emotions would be unique kinds of perceptual experience that are epistemically reason-responsive.

Nevertheless, some may be wedded to the standard view of perceptual experience and will thus be unimpressed by these attempts to push back against P2. In light of this, I think that the Sentimentalist might be best advised to make the following three claims which together would enable them to deny P3: (1) Emotions are *not* genuine perceptual experiences. They are simply best understood by analogy with perceptual experience; (2) One way in which they differ from genuine perceptual experiences is that they are epistemically reason-responsive, and, (3) One way in which they are like perceptual experiences is that they can play an epistemically generative role.

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<sup>32</sup> Even if non-receptive seemings are in some important sense *passive*, this is still compatible with their being epistemically dependent. Many beliefs are – in some sense – passively formed yet are epistemically dependent. A similar point could be made if it was thought that non-receptive seemings are in some sense outside subjects' control. Again, it seems possible for subjects to possess beliefs that they can't get rid of – synchronically or diachronically – yet are held for epistemic reasons.

Indeed, (1) may be the best way to understand the Perceptualist proposal.<sup>33</sup> Emotions possess important features in common with perceptual experience: e.g., they are intentional, non-doxastic, they possess a phenomenal character, they can conflict with evaluative judgments without contradiction, etc. However, they also possess features that make it difficult to classify them as genuine perceptual experiences (given the standard view), e.g., they are dependent upon our cares and concerns, they are (allegedly) motivational, etc. As (2) claims, one further disanalogy on this list may be that emotions, unlike bona fide perceptual experiences, are reason-responsive (and recall, I am granting this).<sup>34</sup>

Now, in order for this to constitute a rejection of P3, it needs to be the case that, despite the fact that emotions aren't perceptual experiences, and despite one of the disanalogies being that emotions are reason-responsive, one *similarity* between perceptual experience and emotions – understood as sui generis intentional phenomena – is that emotions are capable of playing an epistemically generative role with respect to evaluative beliefs (claim (3)). But given the assumption that emotions are epistemically reason-responsive it might be hard to see how that could be true. Making good on this response to P3 thus requires responding to further reason-responsiveness objections, to which I now turn.

### 3. Epistemic Dependence

The Epistemic Dependence Objection goes as follows:

P1: Emotions are based upon epistemic reasons.

P2: If emotions are based upon epistemic reasons then they are epistemically dependent sources of epistemic justification.

P3: If emotions are epistemically dependent sources of epistemic justification then emotions do not confer immediate justification.

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C: Emotions do not confer immediate justification, i.e., Epistemic Sentimentalism is false.

As before, I'm taking P1 for granted. On the version of Perceptualism that I'm assuming, guilt, for instance, could be mediated by a belief that *I lied to you*, or fear might be mediated

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<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Doring, S.A. and Lutz, A. (2015) 'Beyond Perceptualism: Introduction to the Special Issue', *dialectica* 69 (3): 259-270. On p. 260 they say that "in its strong version at least, perceptualism in emotion theory has lost lots of its original attraction",

<sup>34</sup> Doring and Lutz (2015), p. 265, agree.

by a perceptual experience of a *snake*. So, emotions are *causally* dependent upon cognitive bases. It's plausible that the cognitive bases of emotions are also *evidential* bases because emotions are apparently susceptible to justificatory 'why?' questions, and, answers to these questions tend to identify features (re)presented in the cognitive base of the emotion. Consider the following case:

Guilty Party: During a conversation with some colleagues at a work Christmas party James reveals some intimate details about his partner to them. James knows that his partner would be horrified to learn that strangers knew about such private details. After the conversation ends, James is overcome with guilt.

Were someone to ask James why (in the justificatory sense, let's assume) he was feeling guilty, it wouldn't be unusual for him to reply 'I broke my partner's trust.' This, we might think, is good reason to think that James's emotion is evidentially based upon a (re)presentation of this fact, e.g., a belief. However, even if a subject's attempts at demonstrating that they're justified are not necessarily a good guide to what actually justifies a particular mental item (more later), proponents of P1 may think that it's independently plausible that Alex's belief that *he has broken his partner's trust* is the evidential basis for his guilt.

P2 says that if emotions have evidential bases then they are epistemically dependent. Minimally, this is the claim that if emotions are based upon a *bad* evidential base, e.g., an unjustified belief, they will fail to confer justification for evaluative beliefs. More strongly, it says that emotions can *themselves* be epistemically (un)justified depending on the justified status of their cognitive bases.<sup>35</sup>

P3 makes the further – seemingly plausible – claim that epistemic dependence entails that a particular source of justification is only a source of *mediate* justification, which is antithetical to immediate justification.

Given the acceptance of P1, Sentimentalists must deny P2 or P3.

Although P3 is questionable (since epistemic dependence and epistemic mediacy may come apart, cf. memory justification) Sentimentalists may attempt to deny P2 in the following way. It might be thought that P2 is vulnerable to the fact that states other than beliefs can be

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<sup>35</sup> There may be additional normative constraints on the cognitive bases of emotions, e.g., perhaps the content of cognitive bases must be such that *were they true/veridical* then the emotional response would be a *fitting* or *appropriate response* to the object or event.

cognitive bases of emotions. For example, my perceptual experience of a snake could be the cognitive base of fear. Or an imaginative episode wherein I consider pushing someone off a bridge to save five people might be the cognitive base of a sort of moral revulsion. This is significant because, unlike beliefs, it's standardly thought that perceptual experiences and imaginative episodes can't be (un)justified, e.g., it apparently doesn't make sense to say that my experience of the snake is *justified*. Perhaps emotions which take perceptual experiences or imaginative episodes as evidential bases aren't epistemically dependent because they're based on states or processes that are *beyond* justification (although see §2).

In response it might be argued that, if the evidential base of one's emotion is, e.g., an experience of a snake, the experience must be *justification-conferring* in order for the emotion to confer justification. This is true, even though perceptual experiences can't themselves be justified. If that's right, then emotions based on perceptual experience would be epistemically dependent. Perhaps similar points could be made about imaginative episodes.<sup>36</sup>

I leave it others to pursue this line of attack on P2. Instead, I propose to grant the *soundness* of the Epistemic Dependency Objection, but deny that this is fatal for Sentimentalism. Let me explain.

Suppose that emotions are epistemically dependent sources of justification. That would seem to require that Sentimentalists jettison their view. However, even if emotions are epistemically dependent upon their cognitive bases this is compatible with their functioning as 'evaluative data' and serving as *fundamental* or *generative* sources of justification for evaluative beliefs.<sup>37</sup>

According to this proposal, an emotion, e.g., guilt, would fail to justify an evaluative belief, e.g., *my having lied to you was wrong*, if the cognitive base for this emotion, e.g., a belief that *I have lied to you*, was itself unjustified. This is the sense in which it's epistemically dependent – it requires that the subject have justification for believing non-evaluative propositions. However, when the cognitive base of an emotion *is* justified then emotions can

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<sup>36</sup> Emotions also have *motivational* bases, e.g., moods and character traits (see Deonna, J. and Teroni, F. (2012)). I don't take these to be good candidates for evidential bases. Moods seem to be best thought of as potential defeaters for emotional justification, e.g., if my anger is a product of my bad mood, then this might serve to undermine the justification I'd otherwise get from the emotion. Note, however, that moods might sometimes be epistemically beneficial, e.g., perhaps my being in a bad mood makes me more sensitive to the presence of (genuine) offenses. Character traits – construed as (partly) emotional dispositions, thus standing in a partially constitutive relation to emotional episodes – might impact on the reliability of emotions, but don't seem to be best thought of as evidential bases.

<sup>37</sup> Adam Pelsler's (2014) discussion is suggestive of this point.

justify beliefs with *evaluative* content, *independently of having further justification for believing supporting evaluative propositions*. This is the sense in which emotions are epistemically fundamental or generative. If that's right, then emotions being epistemically dependent upon their cognitive bases is compatible with their playing the epistemic role that Sentimentalists require of them: they sometimes generate evaluative justification.

On this proposal there is a sense in which emotions are epistemically *independent* with respect to their evaluative content, since emotions don't require further justification for supporting evaluative propositions in order to justify evaluative beliefs. However, if the content of emotions links evaluative and non-evaluative contents – e.g., my having lied to you was wrong – then emotions are clearly epistemically dependent upon their cognitive bases, i.e., they can't justify evaluative beliefs unless their cognitive bases are justified or justification-conferring. Even if emotions have 'thinner' non-evaluative content – e.g., what I did was wrong – then emotions may still be epistemically dependent upon their bases (yet also generative of justification).

It may help to compare this proposal with Michael Huemer's account of *inferential appearances/seemings*.<sup>38</sup> These are non-doxastic, perceptual-like, propositional states which allegedly play a key role in inferential (or 'mediate') justification. They are distinguished from other seeming states, e.g., sensory perceptual seemings, because they (or at least some of them) involve or require the exercise of reason or understanding. They are thus labelled 'intellectual' seemings. They are also distinct from other intellectual seemings: intuitions. Unlike intuitions, which simply represent the truth of some proposition, inferential appearances involve some proposition seeming true to a subject *in light of the* presumed truth of some other proposition. Specifically, inferential appearances "occur during inference and represent that a conclusion must be true or is likely to be true *in light of* something else that one believes"<sup>39</sup> To illustrate consider the following case. I get home from work and see Jen's shoes. I immediately infer that Jen is probably home. On Huemer's view what may be going on is that I have a belief that Jen's shoes are in the hall and then undergo an inferential appearance that in light of Jen's shoes being in the hall, Jen is probably home. On this basis I form the belief that Jen is probably home.

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<sup>38</sup> Huemer, M. (2013) 'Phenomenal Conservatism Uber Alles', in Tucker, C. (ed.) *Seemings and Justification*, Oxford University Press; Huemer, M. (2016) 'Inferential Appearances', in *Intellectual Assurance: Essays on Traditional Epistemic Internalism*, eds. Coppenger, B. and Bergmann, M., Oxford University Press.

<sup>39</sup> Huemer, M. (2013), p. 338

Suppose that there are inferential appearances. There are two similarities between these and what I have just said may be true about emotions (remember that I am thinking of the perceptual component of emotions as involving an evaluative conceptual seeming state). Firstly, Huemer suggests that inferential appearances, e.g., it seems that *p*, given *q*, lead to doxastically justified beliefs *only if* the subject has justification for believing the premise(s), e.g. *q*. This epistemic dependence is similar to the relation between the cognitive bases and evaluative judgments on the current proposal about emotions. Second, emotional experiences might be thought to be experiences *in light of* their cognitive bases, e.g., in guilt my actions (represented in the cognitive base) appear *wrong*. Are emotions thereby a kind of inferential appearance? No. There is a crucial point of disanalogy: inferential appearances are apparently *not based* upon the premises which they are formed in the light of. Instead, an inferential appearance “plays an essential role in the process of basing a belief on another belief, because it is what constitutes one’s *seeing* the premise *as* an adequate ground for the conclusion”<sup>40</sup>. Inferential appearances are not themselves epistemically dependent. This contrasts with emotions which, on the current proposal, *are* epistemically dependent (but also epistemically fundamental).

Instead, on one version of the proposal I’m offering, emotions are (or involve) evaluative seemings that are *themselves* the result of something like a quasi-inference from their cognitive base. This quasi-inference may be made against the subject’s background beliefs, commitments (some of which may have evaluative content) and character traits. Is this compatible with emotions being fundamental sources of justification for evaluative propositions? It could be so long as the subject didn’t require justification for believing supporting evaluative propositions in order for the quasi-inference to be a good one (and thus for the emotion to be justification-conferring). And I suggest that it’s not implausible that this is indeed the case. To illustrate: in *Guilt Party*, James might have the following kinds of commitments in light of which he experiences guilt: my partner is deeply important to me, my partner doesn’t want strangers to know about aspects of her private life, trust is important in a relationship, etc. None of these directly support the proposition that *my having revealed to strangers private details about my partner was morally wrong*. Yet James’ guilt could plausibly be justification-conferring with respect to this proposition, in light of the cognitive base of the emotion, and given his background commitments. Hence, guilt could be epistemically fundamental with respect to this evaluative proposition.

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<sup>40</sup> Huemer, M. (2013), p. 338.

Finally, note that the combination of dependence and fundamentality being posited here is not without precedent: it is similar to the ontological relation that apparently holds between *emergent properties* and their base properties, e.g., between mental states and physical states of the brain. On this view, mental phenomena are ontologically dependent on physical states, but are nonetheless ontologically fundamental.<sup>41</sup> Hence, one way of understanding the current proposal about emotional justification is that emotions constitute *emergent* sources of epistemic justification for evaluative propositions.

How could emotions be epistemically emergent with respect to evaluative propositions? This will be because emotions possess epistemically important properties with respect to evaluative propositions: either being the outputs of a conditionally reliable process which generates veridical experiential outputs given true/veridical non-evaluative evidential bases, or possessing something akin to presentational phenomenal character with respect to evaluative propositions. Regarding the latter, Phenomenalist option, it might be thought that, if emotions really are reason-responsive (as I'm granting), this precludes them from having presentational character of the same kind as that allegedly found in sensory experience (since one of the features of presentationality, noted earlier, may be a lack of reason-responsiveness). Although a lot more would need to be said, note two things in defence: (i) presentationality is a condition on immediate justification, but emotions are not here being claimed to provide immediate justification, and, (ii) emotions lacking the presentationality of sensory experience is compatible with their possessing something similar, e.g., to the subject of an emotion it may feel like they are being told that some evaluative proposition is true. Of course, if one has serious doubts about the Phenomenalist option, Sentimentalists may instead wish to adopt a Reliabilist account. In order to do that, proponents will, however, need to address the issue of whether emotions are indeed reliable. But demonstrating how and explaining why, e.g., emotions could be reliable, is beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>42</sup>

Despite these limitations, I take myself to have said enough to show that Sentimentalists could accept the soundness of the Epistemic Dependence Objection whilst maintain the spirit (though not the letter) of their view. On this proposal, emotions are not sources of immediate justification. They don't halt the epistemic regress *tout court*. However, this is compatible

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<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., Barnes, E. (2012) 'Emergence and Fundamentality', *Mind* 121 (484):873-901.

<sup>42</sup> One might wonder whether there is anything epistemically special about emotions on this proposal, i.e., it seems that an evaluative *judgment* could be just as easily emergent from a cognitive base and one's background commitments. Unless one adopts a Phenomenalist view of emotional justification, this may turn out to be correct. However, even if true, it may be the case that emotions play a motivational role that renders them important for evaluative justification.

with emotions functioning as generative sources of justification for evaluative propositions and being an empiricist-friendly source of value input. That's all Sentimentalists need to secure the aforementioned attractions of the view.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. Why? Questions

Consider now Why-Question Objections to Sentimentalism<sup>44</sup> which concern the claims that (1) when challenged with *why-questions* for evaluative judgments subjects don't (and shouldn't) cite emotions, and, (2) emotions are themselves susceptible to *why-questions*. Note that (1) doesn't take emotional reason-responsiveness as a premise. I discuss it because my response to it connects with my response to the Epistemic Dependence Objection and leads on nicely to (2), which does assume epistemic-reason-responsiveness.

Sentimentalists claim that emotions can (and sometimes do) constitute the epistemic *base* of justified evaluative beliefs. Emotions allegedly function in an epistemically analogous way to perceptual experience vis-à-vis empirical beliefs. An alleged sign that perceptual experience is the basis for perceptual beliefs is that in response to why-questions regarding these beliefs, subjects typically appeal to their experience, e.g., in response to 'why do you think that the ball is green?' a natural answer is 'I can see it'. However, the emotional case is apparently different: we *don't* typically respond to why-questions for evaluative beliefs, e.g., *the dog is dangerous*, by appealing to emotions. It would be unusual to respond to the question 'why do you think that the dog is dangerous?' by saying 'because I am afraid'. Not only are these responses atypical, they seem like the incorrect thing to say. Instead, when faced with why-questions regarding evaluative beliefs, we tend to (and should) identify features, objects or events that are represented in the cognitive base, e.g., 'because the dog is rabid'.

This allegedly provides reason for thinking that emotions aren't the justificatory basis for evaluative judgments. If they were then we would identify emotions when challenged with why-questions. But we don't. Further, the fact that an appeal to one's emotion would seem illegitimate suggests that emotions are insufficient to justify evaluative judgments.

I present two responses. Firstly, the above data about why-questions is what we should expect if emotions are epistemically dependent sources of justification. If challenged on one's evaluative judgment, of which the justificatory basis is an emotion, then it's unsurprising that

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<sup>43</sup> In Cowan, R. (2016), I discuss another version of this sort of objection which claims that emotions are always *based* upon mental items with *evaluative* content. I don't have space to discuss this here, except to note that this seems to be question-begging against Sentimentalism (since it can be understood as the claim that emotions are sometimes the way in which we non-derivatively recognise evaluative features).

<sup>44</sup> See Deonna, J. and Teroni, F. (2012); Pelser, A.C. (2014).

subjects appeal to the cognitive basis of their emotion rather than the emotion. For if they were to only appeal to the emotion they would still face justificatory questions regarding the emotion. Further, Sentimentalists should admit that emotions are not, by themselves, sufficient to justify evaluative beliefs: they are, after-all, epistemically dependent. However, as I have argued, this is compatible with their being generative sources of evaluative justification. Sentimentalists should also claim that it's compatible with emotions being the justificatory *base* for evaluative beliefs (or at least the partial base): in at least some cases, without an emotional response, subjects wouldn't have (and may not have formed) a justified evaluative belief, since it's the emotion which generates evaluative justification.

An alternative response is that, when subjects respond to justificatory *why-questions* about their evaluative beliefs, perhaps they are covertly appealing to their emotions rather than simply to cognitive bases, i.e., if a subject responds to the question 'why do you think what you did was wrong?' by claiming 'I lied to my partner', this is elliptical for 'I lied to my partner, and my having lied to my partner was wrong'. Sentimentalists could then claim that, in at least some instances, subjects are thereby partially appealing to the *content of their emotion*, e.g., my having lied to my partner was wrong. It's only a partial appeal, because they're also appealing to what justifies the emotion, e.g., the belief that *they lied to their partner*. Far from eschewing emotions when attempting to show that evaluative beliefs are justified, subjects sometimes implicitly appeal to them.

If we implicitly appeal to emotions, one might wonder why it seems illegitimate to defend an evaluative judgment, e.g. *I did something wrong*, with an *explicit* appeal to emotion, e.g., 'I feel guilty'. Sentimentalists should again highlight the epistemic dependence of emotions: appealing to emotion will be insufficient to justify the evaluative belief. An alternative explanation is that evaluative discourse is subject to additional norms not operative in non-evaluative discourse. For example, perhaps in order to be entitled to evaluative beliefs one requires evaluative *understanding*.<sup>45</sup> When engaged in evaluative discourse perhaps subjects ought to offer justifications for beliefs that demonstrate their understanding (at least when they are in a position to do so). Appealing explicitly to emotions fails to do this.

Even if these responses are accepted, it's possible to develop a second Why Question Objection. Suppose that I'm being challenged with a justificatory why-question about my

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<sup>45</sup> See Brady, M.S. (2013) for something like this suggestion. See also Hills, A. (2009) 'Moral Testimony and Moral Epistemology', *Ethics* 120(1): 94-127 for a full discussion of the alleged importance of moral understanding.

emotion: ‘why are you feeling guilty?’ As suggested, a natural response would identify features represented in the cognitive base, e.g., *I lied to my partner*. However, if this is elliptical for the content that *my having lied to my partner was wrong* (as was suggested previously) and if that involves a covert appeal to emotion, then the justification being offered for the emotion is circular.

Moreover, even if identifying the cognitive base of an emotion doesn’t involve a covert appeal to the emotion, an interlocutor might challenge the attempt to justify the emotion: ‘why does your having lied to your partner justify your guilt?’ If one responded by claiming ‘because lying to my partner was wrong’ it would seem that Sentimentalists are committed to claiming that the subject would (at least sometimes) be thereby appealing to their *emotion* (according to Sentimentalists emotions are sometimes the way we register evaluative properties). But that is to engage in illegitimate circular justification.

In attempting to respond to why-questions regarding emotions, subjects may end up engaging in illegitimate circular justification. Is that a problem for Sentimentalism? No. Let me explain.

Firstly, we should distinguish between *demonstrative* and *agential* justification, i.e., between a subject *showing* that they’re justified and a subject *being* justified with respect to a mental item/proposition.<sup>46</sup> The fact that some mental item, e, is justified by another item, d, (agential justification) doesn’t entail that subjects will appeal to d when challenged about e (demonstrative justification), e.g., subjects might be inarticulate. Conversely, the fact that a subject appeals to some mental item f, in order to justify, e, doesn’t entail that f is *what justifies* e, e.g., the structure of justification may be unclear to the subject.

Secondly, the fact that someone fails to give a good demonstrative justification for e, doesn’t entail that they’re not justified with respect to e, e.g., I might not be able to provide much if anything in the way of a justification for a fundamental arithmetical belief I have, e.g.,  $2+2=4$ , or my belief that *the Law of Identity is true*. For example, in demonstratively justifying the belief in the Law of Identity, I might only be able to give circular justifications. Yet that needn’t entail that my belief is unjustified.

Now apply these points to the emotional case under discussion: that subjects may end up engaging in circular justifications when attempting to provide demonstrative justification for their emotions would only be a problem for Sentimentalism if (i) demonstrative justification

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<sup>46</sup> See Shafer-Landau, R. (2003), *Moral Realism*, Oxford University Press

always tracked agential justification (since it would entail that subject's emotions are somehow justified by themselves), and/or, (ii) a failure to provide a good demonstrative justification always undermined agential justification (since engaging in dubious circular justification would undermine a subject's justification). But as I just argued, both of these claims are problematic.

Further, the emotional case is plausibly one where demonstrative justification doesn't track agential justification, and where failure to provide demonstrative justification doesn't undermine agential justification. Regarding both of these points recall that emotions are fundamental sources of evaluative justification. Emotions are justified by appropriate non-evaluative cognitive bases. Given this, a legitimate response to 'why does your having lied to your partner justify your guilt?' is (in a sense) 'it just does'. But the structure of justification may be unclear to subjects. Note also that, because emotions are fundamental sources of evaluative justification, it's unsurprising that, when challenged as to why features identified in the cognitive base justify the emotion, some subjects end up engaging in circular justification (compare with the Law of Identity case). Note of course that they might not, e.g., philosophically trained subjects may appeal to theories. However, Sentimentalists should claim that the emotion can confer justification for evaluative beliefs independently of such appeals.

That subjects may sometimes engage in dubious circular demonstrative justifications of emotions doesn't undermine Sentimentalism. In the next section I finally consider an objection to Sentimentalism which claims that the view is committed to the claim that emotions really do justify themselves, and thus ought to be rejected.

## **5. Self-Justification**

Consider, finally, the Self-Justification Objection:

P1: If emotions can generate justification for reason-responsive mental phenomena, e.g., evaluative beliefs, then they could generate justification for themselves.

P2: Emotions cannot generate justification for themselves.

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C: Emotions cannot generate justification for reason-responsive mental phenomena.

P1 says that, given the assumption that emotions can generate justification, and are themselves reason-responsive, an entailment is that emotions are capable of generating justification for themselves. P2 claims that 'self-justification' is illegitimate. Putting these

two claims together we appear to be led to the conclusion that emotions cannot generate justification, i.e., they are not a fundamental source of justification for reason-responsive phenomena like evaluative beliefs. Put another way, the Self-Justification Objection appears to entail that the refined version of Sentimentalism – introduced to deal with the Epistemic Dependence Objection – is false.

There are two more specific versions of the Self-Justification Objection. On an Indirect version, P1 says that if emotions can generate justification for evaluative beliefs, then the evaluative belief could confer propositional justification for (and possibly constitute the base of) the emotion. P2 claims that this is illegitimate. On a Direct version, P1 says that simply by having a justification-conferring emotion, one gets a justificatory boost (in the propositional sense) for that very emotion. P2 claims that this is illegitimate.

Note that this worry is allegedly particular to emotions. It doesn't apply to beliefs, since although they are reason-responsive, apparently they can only *transmit* justification for propositions from other sources (e.g., perceptions) to other beliefs, rather than *generate* justification in the way that perception does. It doesn't apply to perceptions, since although they're capable of generating justification they're apparently not epistemically reason-responsive (but again see §2 for doubts about that view of perceptual experience).

How should Sentimentalists respond? Against the Indirect version, Sentimentalist's should claim that the relevant evaluative beliefs can merely *preserve* the justification from the emotion. So the justification they confer for the content of the emotion is no more or less than the justification conferred by the emotion. Contra-P1, subjects don't get an extra justification boost for the emotional content over-and-above that which they started with.<sup>47</sup>

Against the Direct version Sentimentalist's should also deny P1. Although emotions can generate justification for believing their contents (regarding those contents as true) they cannot generate justification for themselves. They can preserve justification for their own contents, but they cannot provide an evidential boost for emotionally (re)presenting those contents.

This might seem ad hoc. I demur. Sentimentalists can point to cases where one entity has the authority to confer some status on another entity, but lacks the authority to do so upon

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<sup>47</sup> A more complex version of the Indirect Self-Justification objection would amount to a 'Bootstrapping' worry of the sort proposed by Vogel, J. (2008), "Epistemic Bootstrapping". *Journal of Philosophy* 105 (9):518-539. I address this in my (2016). Let me simply note that this is an objection which can be brought against *any* theory which allows that experiences can generate justification for beliefs

themselves. For example, we might think that a judge in a just legal system will have the authority to hand down sentences to convicted citizens, but will at the same time lack the authority to pass a sentence upon themselves. Notice that it might not simply be a contingent matter that things are this way: instead it may be a constitutive part of being that sort of entity (a judge in a just legal system) that they can confer a normative status upon other entities, but not upon themselves. Or take another example: Catholic priests are able to administer confession – which, according to Catholicism, can lead to the forgiveness of sins by God – to laypersons and other members of the clergy. However, Catholic priests are not able to administer confession to themselves. That is arguably not because of some historical anomaly, but because of something about the nature of forgiveness and penance. So, if the nature of confession is bound up with the nature of forgiveness, then we might think that it is constitutive of being an entity that can administer confession to others that one cannot confer God’s forgiveness on oneself.

Although these examples are by no means strict analogues of the emotional case, their purpose is to establish that we are already familiar with cases where claims that are analogous to P1 are false, i.e., it is false that *if a Catholic priest has the authority to administer confession to another person then they have the authority to administer it to themselves*. The thought then is that this should make it seem less ad hoc to deny P1 of the Self-Justification Objection. At least, it seems that the onus is on the proponent of P1 to provide some good reason for thinking that it could *not* be constitutive of a mental item – such as emotion – being a generator of epistemic justification, that it can only generate justification for other mental items, and not onto itself (even though that mental item is otherwise epistemically reason-responsive). Unless they do, Sentimentalism is not undermined.

## **6. Conclusion**

Epistemic Sentimentalism can be defended against epistemic reason-responsiveness objections, whilst granting that emotions are epistemically reason-responsive. This puts Sentimentalists in a dialectically powerful position. However, perhaps emotions are not epistemically reason-responsive after-all. Maybe we are confused into thinking this because we equivocate between different kinds of normative assessment, i.e., talk of the justification of emotion may be tracking a distinct set of norms – e.g., those essential to Neo-

Sentimentalism – easily mistaken for epistemic justification. Considering that proposal is, however, the job for another paper.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Thanks to Michael Brady, Jennifer Corns, Michael Milona, and audiences at the 2015 Bled Philosophy Conference, and the 2016 British Society for Ethical Theory conference in Cardiff for very helpful feedback.