

‘Fearish’ Moods: A Non-Intentional Theory

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Are moods directed at objects? Many philosophers have answered ‘yes’: moods are about things like events or people – their intentional objects. One intentionalist view of moods – which takes them as directed at their objects – is put forward by Carolyn Price, in her “Affect Without Object: Moods and Objectless Emotions”, where she claims that an apprehensive mood is about how likely it is that a threat will occur. In this essay, I will develop some of Price’s insights and use them to give a non-intentionalist account of moods. In Section 1, I first characterise moods and contrast them with emotions. Next, in Section 2, I outline Price’s intentionalist theory of moods and raise two problems with it. Her theory of moods does not sufficiently account for how they function and mischaracterises their motivational aspect. Then, in Section 3, I propose a new way of thinking about moods by drawing on a theory of colour-blindness. Byrne and Hilbert’s ‘alien view’ treats the colours that colour-blind people see as less determinate and fine-grained than the ones that people with regular vision see. After drawing the relevant parallels in the case of moods and emotions, I show how moods, on this account, are pre-intentional, rather than non-intentional mental states and I finish, in Section 4, by addressing some objections to this view. I conclude that the mood of a subject should not be thought of as belonging to the same class as (intentional) emotions, since moods are pre-intentional states that structure the space of possible mental states in virtue of determining how likely it is that we experience some intentional state.

1 Characterising moods

Moods make up an important part of our affective experiences – those which are related to feelings and emotions. Moods are usually seen as prevailing attitudes that determine the way we generally feel, usually brought about by our environment. Paradigmatic examples of moods are depression and happiness which have widespread effects on our beliefs, desires and actions. In a depressed mood, I perceive everything in my surrounding environment as bleak and devoid of significance and form negative emotions, preventing me from pursuing anything. An elated mood, however, presents my surroundings to me as open and filled with new opportunities, making me feel more confident and open to trying out what my environment offers me.

Moods have pervasive effects on our inner life. They spread to all parts of our experience and permeate our experience of the world. An acute mood like anxiety can overwhelm us, profoundly impacting the way we attend to our current situation, while ‘we just can’t shake’¹ a mood like melancholy, which is a pensive state characterised by feelings of sorrow and ‘less intense than grief’.² Moods come in varying intensities and have a global feature to them,³ in that they affect our thought-processes, our emotions, and our behaviour.

Finally, moods have been seen as not directed towards anything specific. So, moods are usually thought of as intentional states – states which are about or directed at something. And the

¹Laura Sizer, “Towards a Computational Theory of Mood,” *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 51, no. 4 (December 2000): 743. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3541726>

²Mathea Slåttholm Sagdahl, “Melancholy as Responding to Reasons,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 29, no. 3 (July 2021): 334. DOI: [10.1080/09672559.2021.1936120](https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2021.1936120)

³See Jonathan Mitchell, “The intentionality and intelligibility of moods,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 27, no.1 (July 2018). <https://doi-org.ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/10.1111/ejop.12385>

intentional objects of moods – that which they are about – tend to be more general, as opposed to the more specific objects of emotions. Whereas we tend to be angry *at* some person, or joyful *about* an upcoming event, we do not say that we are in a depressed mood about anything in particular, but rather about our general situation. Some have claimed that moods have general intentional objects like one’s situation,⁴ and others have said that moods are directed at the one’s total environment.⁵ This contrasts with the more specific and local objects of emotions, like particular events. Moreover, Carolyn Price⁶ has claimed that whereas emotions are about specific occurrences having taken place, moods are concerned with the likelihood that some event will happen.

2 Price’s Intentionalist View of Moods

On Price’s intentionalist account – where moods have intentional objects they are about – moods are states of vigilance that look out for things that might trigger some mood. They are intentional states, in that they are directed at ‘how things are likely to turn out’⁷ in one’s situation. More specifically, moods are signals that carry information as to how likely an event that causes a mood will happen. The function of an apprehensive mood, then, is to ‘adapt the subject to an environment in which there is an increased probability that... a threat will occur’.⁸ On this view, the intentional object of a mood X concerns the likelihood that a situation that triggers X will happen.

Moods function to adapt a subject to an environment where a relevant trigger of a mood is more likely to happen. Price also points out that this ‘need not imply that these moods typically succeed in performing this function’.⁹ Rather, moods need only perform this function sometimes, just enough to improve a subject’s well-being.

Next, Price draws an important distinction between the descriptive and directive contents of mental states. Emotions have both descriptive content – the information they usually carry – and directive content – a result to be attained. They signal that an event has occurred and motivate ‘actions designed to cope with [a] situation’.¹⁰ Moods, however, possess only descriptive content, since ‘it is not the function of these signals to motivate the subject to act’.¹¹ All that an apprehensive mood does, for instance, is make the apprehensive subject ‘poised to flee’¹², but without creating an urge to flee. So, moods, which lack directive content, do not motivate actions. Once again, Price makes this claim ‘without supposing that moods always or typically carry this information’.¹³

However, I argue that there should be some relationship between what a mood brings about and its success in performing its function. Let us consider an apprehensive mood, the function of which is to adapt the subject to an environment where there is a higher chance that a threat will happen. In a fearful mood, we tend to narrow our focus on to the most dangerous threat and pay less attention to smaller details. The function of fear – to adapt us to an environment where some danger is more likely to occur – is not successfully realised, for a small range of concentration and a lack of attention makes us more susceptible to the other potential dangers we have not considered or are biased against.

Furthermore, even if we grant that moods do not need to typically satisfy their function, they should at least *aim* to perform their function successfully. Experiencing an apprehensive mood

⁴See Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2002). <https://academic.oup.com/book/27031> and Robert Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993).

⁵See Mitchell, “Intentionality and intelligibility”.

⁶See Carolyn Price, “Affect Without Object: Moods and Objectless Emotions,” *European Journal of Analytic Philosophy* 2, no.1 (November 2006). <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/135314>

⁷Price, “Affect Without Object”, 65.

⁸Price, “Affect Without Object”, 57.

⁹Price, “Affect Without Object”, 57.

¹⁰Price, “Affect Without Object”, 54.

¹¹Price, “Affect Without Object”, 61.

¹²Price, “Affect Without Object”, 63.

¹³Price, “Affect Without Object”, 59.

should aim to adapt us to a situation where a threat is more likely to occur, but we often try to suppress our fear and attempt to calm ourselves down. Even when we try to calm down because we are having conflicting moods or experiencing mild apprehension, we are trying to restore a calm mood – which allows us to process information more carefully – and avoid an agitating mood, like apprehension. By returning to our usual, day-to-day mood, we attempt to straighten out our reasoning and find the best way out of this threatening situation. An apprehensive mood – by itself or in conflict with others – that excites us and makes us ‘overreact’ does not seem to help us in dealing with our threatening situation and its effects on us.

Next, let us suppose that there is no significant relationship between the information that a mood carries and the kind of mood it is. A specific mood, like irritability, then, is not linked to the information that it carries – that an offence is likely to occur. Since irritability need not typically carry such information, and does not do so, we can infer that the content of this mood does not play much role in determining the nature of the resulting irritable mood. However, if this is the case, then how does a situation warrant one mood rather than another? Consider a situation where we think it is likely that the person we are talking with aims to provoke us in some way. We believe that the chances that we will be offended is high. So, we are put in some mood Y whose descriptive content carries the information that an offence is more probable to occur. In this case, then, an irritable mood matches mood Y more – or, is more appropriate – than, for example, a joyful mood. This is because the evaluative aspect of the descriptive content – that which carries a positive or negative value and makes the mood feel good or bad – favours a mood with a corresponding evaluative aspect. In this case, the descriptive content has a negative evaluative dimension which matches the negative experience of an irritable mood more than the positive experience of a joyful mood. If we repeatedly find ourselves in a situation with such a trigger present, then the descriptive content of the mood we are in will typically have associated with it an irritable mood. So, there seems to be some significant relationship that holds between the descriptive content of a mood and its nature.

Now, let us suppose that there *is* a significant relationship between the information that a mood carries and the nature of the mood. Here, moods do typically carry the information that a relevant trigger is likely to occur. One way they can do so is by representing the world in a reliable way across a range of contexts. So, if an irritable mood typically carries the information that an offence is likely to occur, then it represents situations where an offence did occur in an accurate way – e.g. in all situations where we were in an irritable mood, there were more cases where an offence did happen than cases where no offence took place. But, if an irritable mood typically carries the relevant information, then, upon encountering a new situation where there is a high chance of an offence, it is hard to see how we will not be motivated to act in some way – for example, to adapt to our environment. If we have performed certain actions in the past based on the correct information carried by our irritable mood in many cases – perhaps leading to successful outcomes like dealing with our situation effectively – then we will be more inclined to perform those actions in a new situation where we are presented with similar information via our irritable mood. Therefore, there being a significant relationship between the kind of mood we are in and the information it carries means that moods can be motivating.

We can also see this motivating feature of moods when Price considers the difference between moods and objectless emotions – emotions that are not about anything or seem to be directed at nothing, like happiness immediately after waking up. She considers the example of apprehension and objectless fear. When we are walking on a deserted street at night and a sudden feeling of fear comes over us – without knowing what it is directed at – the main difference between the two states, she claims, is that objectless fear can motivate action, while apprehension cannot. While a subject experiencing an objectless fear can have an ‘urge to flee, or... be torn between fleeing and hiding’, an apprehensive subject would merely be ‘poised to flee’.¹⁴ When the subject has an objectless fear, they are still ‘motivated to act in some way consistent with [their] fear’,¹⁵ despite

¹⁴Price, “Affect Without Object”, 63.

¹⁵Price, “Affect Without Object”, 63.

there not being enough information to decide how to act ('torn' between alternatives). For an apprehensive subject, though, there are no alternatives presented *at all*. They are merely 'poised to flee', and not torn between opposing motivations (since there are none).

But, just because there is no determined action that they are drawn to, like fleeing, does not mean that the subject is not motivated to take themselves out of the threatening situation. Imagine, for instance, someone who is having an unproductive day who suddenly decides to stop wasting it and do something worthwhile their time. To motivate action, they do not need to know what their options are or how they want to act. It is enough, as a motive for them, to want to escape the situation without having something to move toward. Similarly, an apprehensive mood can motivate us to escape the situation, without determining any of our possible routes of escape (and without presenting alternatives for *how* to escape). On this motivational understanding of moods, we can construct 'poised to flee' to mean that we want to leave the situation at hand, but without knowing how to do so, rather than the situation merely causing us to be 'poised to flee'.

3 Colour-blindness and moods

Instead of thinking of moods as intentional mental states, I propose an alternative way of thinking of moods. First, I will present a model of colour-blindness that can serve as a tool for thinking about moods and their relation to emotions. Then, building on some of Price's insights and Matthew Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings, I outline how to apply this model to moods.

3.1 Byrne and Hilbert's theory of colour-blindness

Regular human vision consists of short wave, medium wave, and long wave cone cells. These cone cells combine to output colors along three corresponding opponent processes: black-white, red-green, and blue-yellow. These make up our colour space – all the colours that we can see (see Figure 1). The 'response to the colour at one end of the dimension is antagonistic to the response at the other end',¹⁶ meaning that an increase in the detection of red means a decrease in the detection of green, and detecting unique yellow – yellow with no traces of any other colour – entails zero detection of unique blue.

On Byrne and Hilbert's view of colour-blindness,¹⁷ colour-blind people detect different colours from the ones that people with regular vision detect. So, dichromats – colour-blind people who are missing one of the opponent processes, like the red-green one – do not see only a subset of the colors that trichromats see (like the space of only lighter and darker shades of yellow and blue). Rather, they 'see some other colours entirely – some less determinate colours'¹⁸ that are less specific and less fine-grained than the colours that trichromats see.¹⁹

According to Byrne and Hilbert, when a person with regular color vision (a trichromat) sees unique yellow, for example, then the red-green opponent process gives a neutral signal, i.e. that there is a balance between red and green. Dichromats, however, 'have no functioning red-green channel',²⁰ so there is nothing to signal that there is a balance between red and green. These two cases are different, though, because a neutral signal is not the same as no signal: the former accurately indicates unique yellow, whereas the latter produces no signal to accurately determine unique yellow. So, what is signaled for a red-green colour-blind person when what we would normally call yellow is present? The output of their yellow-blue channel signals '*yellowishness*': a color that is somewhat yellow and lies between unique red and green on the yellow half of the hue

¹⁶Fiona Macpherson, "Novel Colour Experiences and Their Implications," in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Colour*, eds. Derek H. Brown and Fiona Macpherson (London: Routledge, 2020), 180. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/10.4324/9781351048521>

¹⁷See Alex Byrne and David R. Hilbert, "How Do Things Look to the Color-Blind?" in *Color Ontology and Color Science* eds. Jonathan Cohen and Mohan Matthen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press Scholarship Online, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262013857.003.0012>

¹⁸Macpherson, "Novel Colour Experiences", 184.

¹⁹Macpherson, "Novel Colour Experiences", 184.

²⁰Byrne and Hilbert, "How Do Things Look to the Color-Blind?", 282.

circle. Such dichromats cannot see determinate colours like unique yellow and orange. Instead, they ‘see colours that are less determinate than people who are not colour-blind’²¹ – colours like *yellowish* and *bluish*.

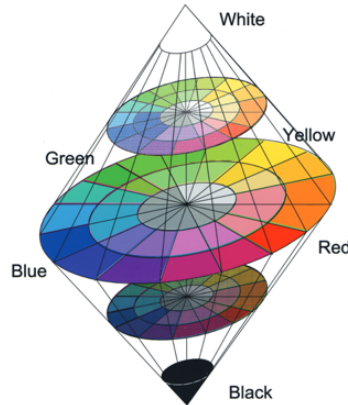


Figure 1: The Classical Colour Space, with red-green and blue-yellow opponent processes along the surface of the circles. Taken from Churchland (2005), p.531²³.

3.2 ‘Fearish’ moods

Byrne and Hilbert’s model of colour-blindness can help us understand moods and emotions. Price suggests a way to think about the relationship between the two: a mood increases a subject’s sensitivity towards certain kinds of cues or triggers that help generate a relevant emotion.²⁴ Suppose, for example, that a subject is in an apprehensive mood. So, when this fearful subject hears the wind blowing violently against their window, they interpret this event as having a higher chance of threatening them. Hence, the subject needs less ‘in the way of additional evidence to warrant’²⁵ their fright about the wind outside. The mood of the subject, then, makes them more sensitive towards relevant emotions.

Let us now think of emotions like the determinate colours that trichromats see, and of moods like the less determinate colours that dichromats see. Emotions are, then, more fine-grained than moods since they are specific mental states. This seems consistent with the pervasive quality of moods – while emotions tend to be about single objects, moods spread to all parts of our experience and, hence, allow a range of emotions to form. Conversely, moods are more general and range over different contexts, being less precise than emotions. Moods have often been described as hazy,²⁶ having ‘vague, nebulous characters’²⁷ and changing the experience of our environment ‘in ways that are difficult to pin down’.²⁸ In some mood, it is also more likely that we develop a range of emotions. In a joyful mood, we can be excited about an event in the future happening, satisfied with our current situation, and elated about good news we have received.

To continue, consider the diagram in *Figure 2*.²⁹ This diagram shows emotions spread out around a circle divided up along two axes: the horizontal ranging from pleasant to unpleasant, and the vertical ranging from active to deactivated. Emotions are grouped according to how they rank

²¹Macpherson, “Novel Colour Experiences”, 185.

²⁴Price, “Affect Without Object”, 64.

²⁵Price, “Affect Without Object”, 64.

²⁶Goldie, “The Emotions”.

²⁷Sizer, “Computational Theory”, 765.

²⁸Matthew Ratcliffe, “The Phenomenology of Existential Feeling,” in *Feelings of Being Alive* eds. Joerg Fingerhut and Sabine Marienberg (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 34. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110246599.23>

²⁹The following summarises ideas based on James A. Russell, “A Circumplex Model of Affect,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39, no. 6 (1980). DOI: 10.1037/h0077714

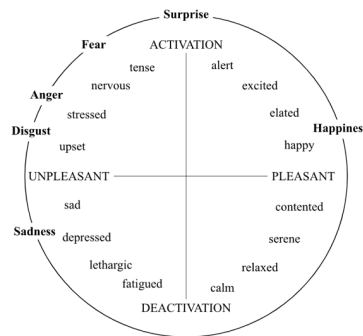


Figure 2: Circumplex structure of emotions. Taken from Scarantino and de Sousa (2021).³⁰

on each axis. Elation is a very positive emotion where we tend to be more energetic than average, while depression is characterised as a negative emotion (which, I will argue, should be revised) where we tend to be more inactive.

Using the way that Byrne and Hilbert view colour-blindness, and our previous comments on moods and emotions, we can think of moods as grouping together relevant emotions. Whereas the domain of emotions is more detailed, moods are less determinate and less fine-grained than emotions. To illustrate, imagine a more accurate diagram. Considering the part of the circle where we see ‘nervous’ and ‘tense’, we would see a host of other emotions there as well – emotions like ‘worried’, ‘anxious’, ‘alarmed’, ‘frightened’, ‘panicked’ and ‘horrified’. These emotions would spread out across this area according to how unpleasant and active they are. ‘Panic’ would be closer to where ‘tense’ is, whereas ‘worried’ would be closer to ‘nervous’. All these emotions, as the diagram shows, are grouped under ‘fear’. When we claim that we are ‘anxious’, we can determine our exact location on this diagram: the position of ‘anxious’ according to how it ranks along the two axes. If, however, we say that we are in an apprehensive mood – that we are fearful – our mental state is less determinate, less specific and more vague. We are not at an exact location on this diagram, but rather our mental state concerns the range of emotions that fall under ‘fear’. My suggestion is that this mental state that we denote by ‘fear’ is best understood as a fearful, or following Byrne and Hilbert’s terminology, *‘fearish’* mood.

Furthermore, this way of thinking of moods can make this diagram more accurate. Depression is usually considered a mood characterised by a pervasive and ‘indiscriminate generality’³¹ with the ‘typical responses found in depression [including] feeling... miserable, dispirited, listless’.³² So, by treating depression as a less determinate mood located below sadness and connected to several emotions, like feeling fatigued and listlessness, we can make more sense of its nature than seeing it as one specific emotion.

This view is also consistent with Price’s suggestion that moods make us more sensitive towards certain kinds of cue. In a *‘fearish’* mood, we are more sensitive towards the occurrence of a threat and less likely to miss one. Once such a threat occurs, we develop an emotion towards it, like worry, covered by this mood. So, in a *‘fearish’* mood, we are more likely to experience emotions like anxiety, and less likely to experience emotions like elation (which would fall under a *‘happy-ish’* mood).

So, undergoing a mood is a less determinate experience where experiencing some relevant emotions is more likely. The experience of a *‘fearish’* mood is a more indeterminate and vague experience that ranges over a host of emotions – like worry and horror – situated between the unpleasant and active poles in Figure 2, analogous to a dichromat’s less determinate experience of *‘yellowish’* that lies between unique red and green. By increasing the likelihood of experiencing such

³¹Jennifer Radden, “The Self and Its Moods in Depression and Mania,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 20, no. 7-8 (January 2013): 84.

³²Radden, “The Self”, 84.

emotions – by making us more sensitive to certain cues, for instance – this mood involves a broader experience that concerns this set of related emotions – like how ‘*yellowish*’ would be related to unique yellow and orange. In a mood, we are undergoing an experience where we are more likely to experience certain emotions rather than others. In a ‘*fearish*’ mood, like when walking on a deserted street at night, we are more likely to feel worried about the figure approaching us and horrified at the dark side streets. In turn, this experience of a ‘*fearish*’ mood is a less determinate one that ranges over (but is not identical to any of) the related emotions.

3.3 Pre-intentionality

Drawing on Matthew Ratcliffe’s work on existential feelings can help to see more clearly why moods are not intentional states. In this section, I show how moods are ‘pre-intentional’ – rather than intentional – states that determine the kinds of emotions we can experience.

For Ratcliffe, everything we experience is ‘permeated with fundamental affectivity’,³³ meaning that basic affective states – states laden with feeling – ‘pre-structure our experience’.³⁴ These basic states – existential feelings – are ‘background orientations’ that influence the ‘ways in which specific objects can appear to us’³⁵ and the kind of intentional states we can experience. They ‘shape our space of possibility’³⁶ by determining what experiences are possible for us. For example, a feeling of detachment structures our space of possible experiences by making us feel hopeless about our situation, while making it harder to feel excited about any events. ‘Intentional states presuppose existential feelings’ because to feel threatened by an event, for example, ‘one’s world must accommodate possibilities of those kinds’.³⁷ Existential feelings are ‘pre-intentional’,³⁸ since they precede intentional states in virtue of determining ‘what kinds of intentional state are amongst one’s possibilities’.³⁹ An existential feeling is not about or directed at anything, but is an ‘underlying tone’⁴⁰ that determines how and what kind of intentional states we experience. The existential feeling of a depressed person, for instance, makes salient the emotion of feeling helpless about oneself and the belief that one’s actions are worthless.

On the view suggested, moods are similar to Ratcliffe’s existential feelings. In a ‘*fearish*’ mood, we are more vigilant as to the occurrence of a threat and more likely not to miss any signs of danger. From Section 3.2, this entails that we are more likely to experience emotions like anxiousness or fright, since we are on the lookout for signs that give rise to such emotions. This mood, then, structures the space of emotions that we can have. So, the kinds of emotions we will and will not have in a ‘*fearish*’ mood will be different from the ones in a ‘*happy-ish*’ mood – where there is a higher chance of experiencing elation or joy, and a lower chance of experiencing anxiousness or fright. Depending on the mood we are in, the space of emotions that we can experience changes. Therefore, moods are not themselves directed at anything, but are ‘pre-intentional’ in virtue of determining what kinds of emotions are in our space of possibility.

The fact that one can experience a pre-intentional mood while simultaneously having an emotion, without these two states being identical, helps to see the distinction between the two more clearly. Consider someone who is expecting some good news that is likely to arrive. There is a high chance that a positive trigger will happen, and so the subject is in an excited mood. Simultaneously, the subject can feel content with the view from their window, since their excited mood, in virtue of increasing the likelihood of undergoing contentment, can bring about this emotion. However, there is still a difference between the pre-intentional mood that makes it more likely to experience certain emotions (like contentment) and constitutes a broader experience, and the single localised and intentional emotion of contentment.

³³Kreuch, “Existential Feelings”, 75.

³⁴Kreuch, “Existential Feelings”, 85.

³⁵Kreuch, “Existential Feelings”, 82.

³⁶Kreuch, “Existential Feelings”, 82.

³⁷Ratcliffe, “The Phenomenology of Existential Feelings”, 32.

³⁸In both Kreuch, “Existential Feelings” and Ratcliffe, “The Phenomenology of Existential Feelings”.

³⁹Ratcliffe, “The Phenomenology of Existential Feelings”, 32.

⁴⁰Kreuch, “Existential Feelings”, 82.

Thinking of moods as existential feelings also makes more salient the way they both structure and constitute experience, as mentioned in Section 3.2. Moods are ‘a pre-structuring background of all experience’ – in virtue of determining which emotions we are more (and less) likely to experience – and ‘a part of experience at the same time’⁴¹ – in virtue of being a less determinate experience that ranges over the related set of emotions.

4 Objections

In this section, I consider some objections to the view proposed in Section 3.

One might object that thinking of moods as determining what emotions we can and cannot have is an inaccurate picture of how moods work. Consider a subject in a miserable mood. If this mood structures their space of possible emotions, then emotions like melancholy and agony will be in the range of possible emotions, whereas cheerfulness and bliss will be excluded. But, when someone attempts to cheer up this subject – by consoling them and trying to make them laugh – then if cheerfulness is not in the range of possible emotions the miserable subject can experience, then this means that they cannot be cheered up: they will only be capable of experiencing ‘*miserable-ish*’ emotions. However, after a while, initially miserable subjects can start to cheer up and have their mood improve, so miserable subjects *can* experience positive emotions like cheerfulness. Therefore, the objection concludes, thinking of moods as determining what emotions we can and cannot possibly have is not consistent with how moods really work.

However, following from the discussion above, we can think of moods not as affecting the *possibility* of experiencing some emotion, but rather as affecting the *likelihood* of experiencing some emotion. Thinking of moods in this way still shows that moods, since they are pre-intentional, structure the space of possible emotions. But, instead of determining which emotions are possible (and not), moods determine which emotions are more (and less) likely to be experienced by a subject. To continue, they are still pre-intentional states that are not directed at anything, but rather influence the chances of undergoing some emotion(s) rather than others. That in a miserable mood we can experience cheerfulness shows that the miserable mood is distinct from an intentional emotion of misery where we would experience only that one, specific emotion. On the view that moods determine likelihood instead of possibility, the theory proposed is consistent with how moods work in reality, while preserving the idea that moods are pre-intentional states that structure the space of possible emotions – by making the experience of some more likely than others.

One might also object that since moods allow opposing emotions to occur, they do not succeed in performing their function – namely, to adapt the subject to an environment where the relevant trigger has a high chance of occurring – and that this account falls prey to the same objection presented against Price’s account in Section 2. However, on the account I have proposed, moods do *typically* succeed in performing their function. By increasing the sensitivity towards certain kinds of cue, and thereby making it more probable that relevant emotions will obtain, moods give rise to the relevant emotions more often than they give rise to opposing emotions – typically satisfying their function.

A final objection may point out that since moods do not have directive content and do not seem to have descriptive content on this pre-intentionalist view, moods cannot motivate actions. Arguing that moods do or do not have descriptive content is outside the scope of this paper, but showing that moods can be motivating does not hinge on this matter. This is because merely in virtue of increasing the likelihood of experiencing some emotions, a given mood will have associated with it relevant emotions with directive content. So, by giving rise to directly motivating emotions, moods incline us towards performing certain actions which make moods (indirectly) motivating.

⁴¹Kreuch, “Existential Feelings”, 85.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented a non-intentionalist account of moods. First, I characterised moods, highlighting their pervasiveness. Then, I outlined Price's account of moods as states of vigilance that concern the likelihood of relevant triggers occurring in a subject's environment. I presented some problems with this view, and then used some of Price's insights to put forward my own account of moods. Drawing on a theory of colour-blindness, I showed that experiences of moods are less determinate than the more specific emotions that – in virtue of making it more likely that we experience them – they group together. In a '*fearish*' mood, we have a more vague experience where we are more likely to experience emotions like worry and anxiety. I then went on to show how these moods are pre-intentional states – structuring the range of emotions we experience – and finished by addressing some objections. I conclude that such a non-intentional account of moods is a useful way to think about them, and should be explored further.

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