

## **Sadness**

Sadness and regret interweave, helping us sample the fine lines that separate our gloomier emotions from one another. (Does it not seem that our gloomier emotions—sadness, anxiety, despair, dread, fear, doubt, suspicion, sadness, regret, disappointment—predominate over the sunnier aspects of our nature?) Sadness and regret are among our relatively mild negative emotions. To be sad is to live under a gentle pall of challenges from which there seems no forthcoming exit. To be regretful is to look back onto a past in which you seem irrevocably trapped in something you either did or failed to do.

The broader question emerging from the above observations is this: to what should we attribute the fineness and variegation of the 'feelings' that make up our conscious life? And what are these 'feelings'?

The 'feelings' that make up our conscious life are shadings or affects of consciousness by which we enable ourselves to take reality onto ourselves, and to know ourselves in and as a condition. (Is not this a plausible account, given the typical contours of human genetics?) Is it not tempting to describe these conditions as part of the makeup of the human condition as a whole?

And finally, then, what are these feelings that people us as consciousness? We have described these feelings as conditions—a term we first isolated earlier, in our discussion of loss. But is the term conditions too 'metaphysical,' and defectively informative? Sure sadness is a condition, but isn't it also just a way of being less than fully central to your behavior as a living whole?