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Citation for final published version:

undefined 2019. Emotional intentionality and the attitude-content distinction. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 100 (2) , pp. 359-386. 10.1111/papq.12270

Publishers page: <https://doi.org/10.1111/papq.12270>

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# Emotional Intentionality and the Attitude-Content Distinction

Jonathan Mitchell – jonathan.mitchell@manchester.ac.uk

Note: This is a draft. Please refer to the final version, *forthcoming* in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*.

ABSTRACT: Typical emotions share important features with paradigmatic intentional states, and therefore might admit of distinctions made in theory of intentionality. One such distinction is between attitude and content, where we can specify the content of an intentional state separately from its attitude, and therefore the same content can be taken up by different intentional attitudes. According to some philosophers, emotions do not admit of this distinction, although there has been no sustained argument for this claim. In this article, I argue that the way values figure in emotional experience qualifies the content of emotional experience such that the attitude-content distinction cannot be applied.

## Introduction

Typical intentional states, such as belief, desire, and perception, admit of a distinction between their attitude and content. For propositional attitudes like ‘S believes that P’, we can distinguish between the attitude, in this case believing, and the representational content, ‘P’. One reason this distinction is important is because if we can describe, and so individuate, content separately from attitude, then the same content can be entertained by different intentional attitudes.<sup>1</sup> For example, as we can say ‘S believes that P’, we can also say ‘S desires that P’, or ‘S wishes that P’, where the propositional content remains the same across the different intentional attitudes. If one broadens the range of intentional states to include intentional experiences, we can still apply the distinction. Consider a standard visual experience, which takes a physical particular as its object, and so has presentational content. Arguably, the presentational content of that visual experience can be taken up by different non-propositional attitudes, such as ‘imagining P’.<sup>2</sup>

If this distinction between attitude and content did not typically hold, it is difficult to see how our communicative discourse – the productivity and systematicity of thought and language – could function. First, consider that the productivity of thought and language is usually cashed out in terms of the ability to entertain and understand an infinite number of arbitrary thoughts and sentences. Yet, arguably this unbounded competence is best made sense of in terms of being able to entertain attitudes towards a potentially infinite number of propositions whose contents are individuated separately from the relevant attitudes (this is usually thought to be a necessary condition on having learned a language). If propositions were not complements to attitudes, but rather the attitude and content were fused, then we would need a different explanation of what this unbounded competence amounts to.

Second, and relatedly, consider that the systematicity of thought and language is usually cashed out in terms of the ability to entertain and understand thoughts and sentences whose surface grammar seem importantly connected. For example, ‘S believes that P’ and ‘S desires that P’. Yet, if the attitude-content distinction did not hold for sentences like these, if the attitude and content were fused, resulting in the atomic sentences ‘S believes-that-P and ‘S desires-that-P’ – no different in essence to  $F(x)$  – then it is difficult to see how thought and language could be systematic. This is because an ability to entertain and understand either sentence would not ground any competence to entertain or understand the other. There would be no content component separable from the attitude, and so the similarity in their surface grammar would be misleading.<sup>3</sup>

Emotions are often included in lists of intentional attitudes in discussions of intentionality and content.<sup>4</sup> This is unsurprising, given the widespread view that typical emotions are intentional states in at least the minimal sense that they are directed toward something – they have objects and so intentional content.<sup>5</sup> For example, in a paradigmatic episode of anger, there is often something I am angry about, such as the individual who just barged past me. Likewise, in a paradigmatic episode of happiness, there is often something I am happy about, such as having passed my driving test. Emotions also come in propositional and non-propositional varieties.<sup>6</sup> So, as we say ‘Smith believes that P’ we can also say

‘Smith fears that P’ (propositional); and as we say ‘Smith sees Sally’ we can also say ‘Smith loves Sally’ (non-propositional). Therefore, it seems emotion-types like fear, anger, love, regret, grief, and sadness are, at least in significant part, intentional attitudes – perhaps constituting a class captured by the verb emoting. Moreover, emotions, like other paradigmatic intentional states, ostensibly admit of the attitude-content distinction. For example, I believe that the stock market will crash, while you fear it will; I regret a rude comment said to a colleague, while you wish I had said it sooner. Furthermore, within the class of emotions, I can hate whom you love, or despise what you admire. So, *prima facie*, emotions involve attitudes towards independently specifiable contents, that is, contents which can be described, and so individuated, separately from the emotional attitude. I call this the standard view (SV for short).

Against the SV, a number of philosophers claim that the attitude-content distinction does not apply to emotions while maintaining they are intentional states.<sup>7</sup> The latter caveat is important. If emotions were non-intentional states – say nothing more than Reidian raw feels – then in not having intentional content, there would be no question of whether the emotion-attitude was separable from its content. In broad terms, the view of these authors is that we cannot separate content from attitude for emotions since emotional experience qualifies its content in such a way as to make the distinction problematic. I call this the revisionary view (RV for short). If the RV is correct then the above transpositions – you believing ‘that P’, me fearing ‘that P’ – are misleading with regard to the logical properties of emotions. We should, therefore, resist modelling emotional intentionality after the way emotion-verbs can be transposed for terms designating other intentional attitudes.

This paper argues that on a Goldie-inspired reconstruction of the phenomenology and intentionality of emotional experience the attitude-content distinction does not apply. The main thesis is as follows: the way values figure in emotional experience is as having the power to intelligibly motivate felt valenced attitudes, and it is this feature which blocks application of the attitude-content distinction. The discussion proceeds as follows. Section 1 outlines the intentionality of emotions with respect to the SV. I argue that specifying their

intentional content as evaluative poses no challenge to applying a version of the attitude-content distinction. Section 2 then presents an extended argument for the RV. Finally, section 3 considers two challenges for the RV and suggests responses.

### 1. The Intentionality of Emotions and the SV

In this section, I first provide reflections on the objects of emotions in relation to issues of attitude and content pertinent to the SV. I then introduce the view that the intentional content of emotional experience is evaluative (a familiar view in contemporary emotion theory). I argue that this view poses no challenge to applying a version of the attitude-content distinction between emotions and other non-emotional intentional states. However, this view does make applying it within the class of emotions problematic, that is when we are thinking about two different emotions directed toward the same object. This section will also allow me to introduce some terminology that will be helpful in further discussion.

Contemporary emotion theorists regard typical emotions as intentional states, at least in the minimal sense that they are directed towards objects, such as physical particulars, persons or animals, events, and states of affairs. Emotion theorists label these the particular objects of emotions, as the target or focus of the emotion.<sup>8</sup> For example, the particular object of an episode of fear could be an Alsatian (animal); of anger, my boss (person); of embarrassment, my having tripped over (event); of despair, that Bill has been appointed Dean of the Faculty (state of affairs).

However, a number of caveats need bearing in mind. First, particular objects should not be confused with physical particulars. Physical particulars are only one possible type of object of emotions. Second, talk of particular objects does not commit one to a positive metaphysical claim. To say the particular object of an episode of fear is an Alsatian can be correct, and yet the Alsatian can be imaginary or part of a hallucinatory experience. So, as per standard theory of intentionality, emotions can be about non-existents (the existence independence thesis). Third, the notion of a particular object should not be confused with, or taken to entail, the idea of specificity, either in terms of the emotion necessarily targeting a

single thing or something which satisfies a definite description. For example, I may fear someone is a spy, whilst having no specific individual in mind. Nonetheless, the idea of a particular object is supposed to capture the thought that the fear is about something. The emotion has a target and so an intentional content, albeit in the aforementioned case a content that is indeterminate or non-specific.

Building on the above, all emotions, understood as intentional states, have particular objects in the relevant sense.<sup>9</sup> So, emotions which take propositional form, and so have propositional content, are nonetheless about particular objects and not about propositions per se. Consider the difference between an emotion which has propositional content, like fearing <that the stock market has crashed>, and an emotion which has a proposition itself as its particular object. For example, literally fearing the proposition <that the stock market has crashed>. In the former case, the emotion has propositional content, but its object is a state of affairs.<sup>10</sup> In the latter (albeit odd) case, the particular object is a specific proposition. So, one should not draw a distinction between emotions which target particular objects and those which target propositions – all emotions are directed towards particular objects – it is just that some have propositional content, and in odd cases have actual propositions as their particular objects.<sup>11</sup>

The particular objects of emotions can also vary for the same emotion. For example, I can be sad about my mother's illness, or my bad test results. Moreover, the same particular object can provide the same intentional content for different emotions. For example, I can love whom you hate, or despise what you admire. If specification of particular objects exhausted the intentionality of emotions, then the attitude-content distinction would clearly be applicable, and the SV would be correct.

Yet, in line with the SV, I can be in an intentional state which represents the same particular object as is represented by an emotion without experiencing any emotion. For example, believing my mother is ill without being sad. Given this, specifying the particular objects of emotions is not sufficient to capture their felt phenomenology.<sup>12</sup> For example, as the subject of sadness one typically experiences bodily sensations, such as a lump in the

throat, or an empty feeling in the stomach, and arguably a range of other phenomenal and affective qualities (e.g. attentional switch or focus, conscious psychological attitudes such as felt (dis)favour, and hedonic qualities such as (un)pleasantness).<sup>13</sup> One way of dealing with this phenomenology, congenial to the SV, is to build it into the attitude. Emotion-attitudes would be distinct from other intentional attitudes insofar as they involve the relevant phenomenal states. Therefore, the difference between, for example, believing that my mother is ill and being sad that my mother is ill, can be specified in terms of the relevant phenomenology in the emotional case. Yet, both are directed towards the same particular object, and so have the same intentional content. Again, if this understanding of the intentionality and phenomenology of emotions were along the right lines, then the attitude-content distinction would be applicable, and the SV would be correct.

I now want to consider a further feature of the intentional content of emotions, and examine its implications for the SV. Emotional intentionality is putatively more complex than can be captured by reference to particular objects. Emotions also arguably have formal objects, which are specified in terms of thick values, such as the disgusting, fearsome, admirable, grievesome and sublime.<sup>14</sup> On one prevalent view, these formal objects are understood as represented evaluative properties which qualify the particular objects of emotions.<sup>15</sup> For example, fear does not just represent an Alsatian, but represents it as fearsome; grief does not just represent Sally being dead, but represents Sally being dead as grievesome (the 'as' phrasing indicates that the representation is not necessarily veridical). Formal objects – so specified – therefore play a crucial role in the conditions of adequacy or success specific to a given emotion. For example, given the represented formal object of fear is the fearsome, an emotion of fear with regard to a precipice will be correct just in case the precipice really is fearsome, and alternatively fear of a mouse is not warranted because mice are not fearsome. There are further features of the formal objects of emotions that could be remarked upon, such as their role in individuating emotions.<sup>16</sup> I now focus on how the claim that emotions have evaluative intentional content affects applying the attitude-content distinction, and so the plausibility of the SV.<sup>17</sup>

If emotions have evaluative intentional content it might follow that the attitude-content distinction cannot be upheld between (1) emotions and paradigmatic non-emotional intentional attitudes such as belief, desire, and perception, or (2) within the class of emotions. I consider (1) first.

If I believe that P and you fear that P, then the respective intentional states share the same particular object (P). Yet, if emotions also have formal objects, and therefore evaluative intentional content, then the content of my belief cannot be exactly the same as your emotion since it misses out the evaluative dimension (surface grammar notwithstanding).<sup>18</sup> Remember, for the SV to be correct the content of emotions must be capable of being described, and so individuated, separately from the emotional attitude, so as to be potentially taken up as the same by different intentional attitudes. So, represented value properties which qualify the intentional content of emotions as evaluative seem to create problems for the SV. Therefore, we can provide prima facie motivation for the RV by specifying the content of emotional experience as evaluative.

Responding, the SV can grant that emotions have evaluative intentional content but argue that admitting this does not involve abandoning the attitude-content distinction. Intentional attitudes like believing or perceiving cannot have the same content as an emotion when they are non-evaluative. Yet, there are a range of evaluative intentional states, of which emotion is merely one. One can have evaluative beliefs, judgements, and perhaps even perceptions. Consider the following examples:

- (a) Mary believes that the dog is dangerous
- (b) Mary is afraid that the dog is dangerous
- (c) Mary sees the painting as beautiful
- (d) Mary is in awe of the beautiful painting

Taking (a) and (b) first, we can apply the attitude-content distinction. The relevant evaluative, in this case propositional, content <that the dog is dangerous> is shared by both the emotion



and the evaluative belief. So, there is an independently specifiable evaluative intentional content. The relation between (c) and (d) is more difficult, since (c) involves a non-emotional form of evaluative perception. Yet granting the intelligibility of perceiving beauty non-emotionally (e.g. a value intuition; see section 2), we can apply the attitude-content distinction. The relevant evaluative intentional content, which can be specified independently of the relevant intentional attitudes, is the painting as beautiful.

In light of the above, the evaluative content of emotions, as understood so far, is no barrier to applying the attitude-content distinction between emotions and other non-emotional intentional attitudes. As such, there is no simple route to the RV through the evaluative content of emotions. However, the intentional attitudes which 'take up' the independently specifiable content of emotions must be evaluative. As such, they must be states capable of evaluative representation (e.g., evaluative judgements and beliefs). So, while a simple attitude-content distinction may not be applicable, the attitude-evaluative-content distinction is (attitude-(e)content distinction hereafter). I call this the standard evaluative view (SEV for short).

However, there are emotion theorists who argue that the SEV is mistaken. Before considering an argument for a RV which denies that SEV is correct, I consider whether the attitude-content distinction can be upheld within the class of emotions. Here we get a different conclusion given the claim that emotions have evaluative content.

Within the class of emotions, it seems incorrect to say that the intentional content of my love is exactly the same as your hate even if our emotions directed at the same particular object. For example, if both our emotions are about Mary. The intentional content of hate has a different evaluative qualification insofar as it represents Mary as hateful, whereas love represents Mary as loveable. It might be objected, however, that by locating the difference at the level of content in this way we have to counter-intuitively accept that the respective emotions are about different things.<sup>19</sup> Yet, this does not obviously follow. On this view, they are still about the same thing (i.e. Mary) but under a different evaluative aspect, which differently qualifies the part of the content they share. So, since the emotions have different

formal objects – something which is arguably necessary (although perhaps not sufficient) to individuate my emotion as hate as opposed to yours as love – they cannot have the same evaluative intentional content.

We should, therefore, not be misled by the idea that because emotions are typically about particular objects, they cannot also be about values. Emotions, like arguably all intentional states, typically present their objects under specific aspects or modes of presentation – their aspectual shape<sup>20</sup> – and for emotions this is often thought to be an evaluative aspect. So, when different emotions are directed towards the same particular object their intentional content is evaluatively qualified in different ways, and so they do not have exactly the same content. This suggests that the attitude-content distinction cannot be upheld within the class of emotions, because different emotion-types cannot have exactly the same evaluative content. I return to this issue at the end of section 2, after providing an extended argument for the RV.

## 2. The Revisionary View

### *2.1 Preliminaries*

Peter Goldie is one emotion theorist who holds the RV. Here is what he says about the difference between an emotion and evaluative belief which prima facie share the same content:

[In Emotion] the whole way of experiencing, or being conscious of the world is new...the difference between thinking of X as Y without feeling and thinking of X as Y with feeling will not just comprise a different attitude towards the same content – a thinking which earlier was without feeling and now is with feeling. The difference also lies in the content...

(Goldie 2000: 60).

To capture the distinctness of Goldie's proposal from the SEV considered in the previous section, the predicate Y should be read as referring to an evaluative property. Indeed, it is

difficult to see what else serves as 'thinking of X as Y' in a discussion of emotions. His argument against the attitude-(e)content distinction can be formulated as follows:

(P1) Emotions involve particular kinds of feelings.

(P2) These feelings modify their evaluative content.

(P3) Non-emotional evaluative intentional states lack these content modifying feelings.

(C) Non-emotional evaluative intentional states could not be different intentional attitudes towards the so modified evaluative content of an emotion. So, the attitude-(e)content distinction does not hold for emotions.

Goldie's argument for the RV looks valid. We can also grant P1 and (part of) P3. We need this contrast between an emotion with feeling and a non-emotional evaluative belief (or other evaluative intentional states) without feeling to make distinctions between these states. Although note, P3 embeds P2's claim about those feelings as content modifiers.

P2 is the substantive premise: it claims that emotional feelings, which Goldie takes to be characteristic of typical emotional experience, are content modifiers.<sup>21</sup> Importantly, these feelings are not somatic states. Rather, Goldie has a special term for what he takes to be the distinctive felt component of emotional experience, which he calls feelings towards. Feelings towards have a number of features, but we can think of them initially as occurrent, pre-reflective, emotional experiences of value. Moreover, they are said to be neither reducible to belief or desire, nor to be thought along the lines of a cognitive evaluative component (e.g. an evaluative judgement) plus some non-intentional felt component. Goldie's feeling towards are therefore supposed to capture the way phenomenology and evaluative intentionality are connected in emotional experience.

However, we need a more substantive account of feelings towards, and their supposedly 'content modifying' nature. Goldie himself suggests that perhaps the difference in content, when it is a case of feeling towards, 'cannot be captured in words', and even that 'there is no requirement to give a substantial characterization' of the difference in content.<sup>22</sup> Such

remarks are not promising with regard to showing P2 in the above argument to be true, and so justifying the aforementioned argument. I now reconstruct a Goldie-inspired view of the phenomenal intentionality of emotions, providing a more detailed account of feelings towards. I then return to Goldie's argument for the RV.

## *2.2 Reconstruction of feelings towards*

We can provide a reconstruction of Goldie's feelings towards in the following way. Here is the theoretical claim: in emotional experience the evaluative standing of the particular object – the formal object (evaluative property) as qualifying the particular object – is represented through a feeling of favour or disfavor (as a felt response). Emotional intentionality would, therefore, involve a specific kind of phenomenal intentionality. However, this needs unpacking.

Consider an episode of indignation in which I seem to affectively register the offensive character of a remark. In virtue of what aspect of my emotional experience do I register such offensiveness? Or take an episode of amusement in which I seem to affectively register the humorous quality of a joke. In virtue of what aspect of my emotional experience do I register the joke as funny? There are a range of cognate, paired, (bi)valenced attitude terms which capture this felt responsive aspect and which putatively involve affectively registering the relevant evaluative properties. Here is a by no means exhaustive list: approval/disapproval, reject/accept, attraction/repulsion, like/dislike, approach/avoid, toward/away. Some of these attitude terms fit the affective response dimension of certain emotional experiences better than others. For example, while disapproval is a good candidate to capture that dimension in the case of indignation, it does not sound right for fear, given the moral overtones of disapproval.

Nonetheless, what is common across cases is an occurrent attitudinal response, as part of the emotional experience, which is consciously felt and valenced. So, at the general level, emotional experiences involve positively or negatively charged feelings, as felt favourings or disfavourings. Further, these felt valenced attitudes are both intentional and monadic: they

target a particular object under an evaluative specification (e.g. the colleague's offensive remark, the funny joke), rather than being preferences expressible by way of comparative attitudes (i.e. favouring x over y). As such, they are a kind of feeling towards value.

It is important to emphasize that such felt favourings and disfavourings are not properties of the object of the emotion. In other words, these felt valenced attitudes are not themselves presented as characteristics of the object. Furthermore, the 'of' in 'feelings of favour or disfavor' is that of constitution (or specification), not intentionality; these feelings are what is doing the representing, and are not themselves, in pre-reflective affective experience, objects of representation.

So, if these felt valenced attitudes of favour and disfavour are the component in virtue of which the subject affectively registers a particular object as possessing an evaluative property then we can understand them as vehicles for the evaluative content of those experiences. We can understand the idea of a vehicle as the mental component that does the representational work or carries the relevant phenomenal information. In other words, the component which has the relevant intentionality. In this sense feelings towards, as felt responses, involve a felt uptake of the (apparent) evaluative standing of the particular object of the emotion.<sup>23</sup>

Admitting these feelings towards values into the class of mental states involves questioning the following way of dividing up emotions. It might seem to make sense to parse emotional experience into two aspects: the felt, yet supposedly non-intentional, component(s) and the (evaluative) intentional, yet supposedly non-affective, component(s). This way of dividing up emotional experience, on the Goldie-inspired view, needs rejecting. This is especially so when those aspects are (a) taken to exhaust the logical space of possibilities for what emotional experience is composed of; and (b) the felt component is taken to be a 'mere feeling', i.e. a non-representational quale.

A notion of emotional feelings similar to Goldie's – that is, of representational mental states carrying specifically evaluative information which they detect – is found in Jesse Prinz's embodied appraisal theory of emotion. So, although he thinks the felt component

which plays this role are bodily feelings, he claims that 'feelings can obviate the need for cognition because feelings carry information'.<sup>24</sup> Where the Goldie-inspired view differs is in its claim that emotions represent the evaluative standing of their particular objects through personal level felt valenced attitudes of favour or disfavor, rather than through registering bodily changes. Summing up, emotional experiences, on this view of their phenomenology, represent values in a non-cognitive mode.<sup>25</sup> This is my reconstruction of Goldie's feelings towards.

### *2.3 Values as affective powers*

With this reconstruction of feelings towards in hand, we can return to P2 in Goldie's argument for the RV which says 'these feelings modify their evaluative content'. However, even given my reconstruction, it is still unclear why this claim follows. To make progress we can turn to one of the examples Goldie gives:

Imagine you are in a zoo, looking at a gorilla grimly loping from left to right in its cage. You are thinking of the gorilla as dangerous, but you do not feel fear, as it seems to be safely behind bars. Then you see that the door to the cage has been left wide open. Just for a moment, though, you fail to put the two thoughts – the gorilla is dangerous, the cage is open – together. Then, suddenly, you do put them together: now your way of thinking of the gorilla as dangerous is new; now it is dangerous in an emotionally relevant way for you. The earlier thought naturally expressed as 'That gorilla is dangerous', differs in content from the new thought, although this new thought, thought with emotional feeling, might also be naturally expressed in the same words. (Goldie 2000: 61).

Given my reconstruction, part of what is different in the emotional case is the presence of a strong feeling of disfavour towards the gorilla, which affectively represents it as dangerous (or fearsome). Yet, this would not get us the RV. This would not show that the evaluative content was different, but rather just that emotional experience has a distinctively affective

way of representing the same content as is putatively represented by non-emotional evaluative modes.

The claim that still needs substantiating is that emotional experience does not merely affectively represent value properties, but insofar as it does it necessarily represents those value properties with modified emotional salience ('in an emotionally relevant way'). We need to ask what this 'modified emotional salience', as pointing to a difference in content, amounts to.

We can first note that Goldie's feelings towards fall within the category of what Michael Stocker (another author who argues for the RV) calls 'psychic feelings'. Two senses of these 'psychic feelings' involve being interested in 'the world' and 'seeing the world' to be interesting.<sup>26</sup> While Stocker does not fully spell out the notions of interest – also using the terms care and concern to capture what is at stake – if we take 'interest' as something like emotional salience, then feelings towards might combine these two senses. First, what constitutes being interested in particular objects is that one has a certain felt valenced attitude towards them. Yet one 'sees' such objects to be interesting insofar as they possess evaluative characteristics which intelligibly motivate precisely those felt valenced attitudes, where the relevant notion of intelligibly can be initially framed as that of 'making sense' from the first-person perspective. It is this idea which proves central to the RV, and I now spell it out in detail.

Here is the central claim, which I call the values as affective powers view, which formalizes the above thought:

Values as Affective Powers View (VAP hereafter): In emotional experience value properties are experienced as having the power to intelligibly motivate felt attitudes of favour or disfavour.

If VAP is correct it should follow that the evaluative content of emotional experience cannot be accurately characterized other than in affective-attitudinal terms. In other words, a

specification of that content would have to make a necessary – and so ineliminable – reference to feelings towards the evaluative standing of a particular object. It would have to do so insofar as those values are experienced as having the power to intelligibly motivate a particular affectively valenced response. Substantiating this claim is the goal of the rest of this section. I then return explicitly to the RV in section 2.4.

First, consider the following objection. VAP suggests that we experience the value properties of objects as intelligibly motivating the relevant affective attitudes. However, a critic might claim there is a more plausible alternative in the vicinity of this view. Namely, that we experience the relevant felt attitudes as intelligibly motivated by non-evaluative features of the particular object. Granted, so the critic might concede, these features are in some sense evaluatively-relevant, but the relevant experience of intelligible motivation runs from non-evaluative features to felt valenced attitudes.

This alternative raises a broader question about the rationale for specifying the content of emotional experience in evaluative terms. While an independent defense of the evaluative content view is not possible here,<sup>27</sup> something can be said in favour of this aspect of VAP over the proposed alternative. Consider the case of paradigmatic fear, say of a dog which is perceptually present. The non-evaluative, but evaluatively-relevant, features that could plausibly intelligibly motivate the strong disfavour characteristic of fear might be the dog's big teeth, growling, barking, and behaving erratically. One problem, however, is that this non-evaluative characterization underdetermines which emotion is being experienced since it is compatible with a range of different emotional responses. If I am a dog handler, I might experience an emotion quite different from fear, perhaps some kind of thrill (involving felt favour toward the dog). Nonetheless, my emotion shares the relevant non-evaluative content (i.e., the object under this non-evaluative mode of presentation). So, considerations relating to the specificity of what emotion is being experienced support the claim that it is our experience of value, rather than merely non-evaluative features, which intelligibly motivates the relevant affective response.



This proposal connects to points made by David Wiggins about the connection between affectivity and value. He claims that value-properties ‘impinge on us’ in a special way in emotional experience, such that the relevant affectivity and the evaluative property are, as he puts it, ‘made for each other’.<sup>28</sup> Put in the terms of VAP, the idea would be that it makes sense to have a particular felt valenced attitude in response to the experienced value. Contrastingly, the connection between non-evaluative features and the relevant affective response is weaker. The non-evaluative features, even those which might seem evaluatively-relevant (e.g., the dog’s big teeth, or aspects of its behavior) are not obviously ‘made for’ the strong disfavour characteristic of fear.

However, a more precise sense needs to be given of the claim that value properties are experienced as having the power to intelligibly motivate felt attitudes of favour or disfavour. What does this claim about experienced motivation amount to?

First, to forestall confusion, the claim is not that there are two representations in emotional experience. For example, one which represents the particular object as having the relevant value, and a separate ‘higher-order’ one which represents that value as having the power to intelligibly motivate affectivity. Nor does VAP involve the claim that there is an additional thought or judgement about the motivating power of the relevant value; say as reflecting the fact, dealt with in different ways by emotion and value theorists, that value concepts appear to be response-dependent at the same time as (at least sometimes) being attributed in a way that is warranted on the basis of objective properties of their target. The point is not about properties the conceptual explication of which might – as a condition on their correct application in judgements – make a necessary reference to appropriate responses.<sup>29</sup> Rather, the idea is that the way values are represented, and so given in first-order emotional experience, is as somehow having the power to immediately, that is without further thought or reflection, intelligibly motivate affectivity.

One helpful way of framing this claim about the experienced power of values – as immediate intelligible motivation of the relevant affective attitude – is in terms of intentional causation. Consider, first that feelings towards in emotional experience have a mind-to-world

direction of fit. They are, on the Goldie-inspired view, affective representations of the evaluative standing of the particular object of the emotion. Yet, they also have a world-to-mind direction of intentional affective causation, since one's felt valenced attitude is experienced as immediately and intelligibly motivated by that evaluative standing. It is important to emphasize, therefore, that VAP is about experienced, intentional affective causation, as immediate intelligible motivation of affective response. It is not about reflective knowledge of what is in fact the cause. Affective intentional causality is not, therefore, to be confused with the factive sense of 'knowing' causes. It is rather to be thought in terms of, as Nico Frijda puts it, 'experienced motivation' of the relevant affective attitude, which we experience insofar as we are moved in the way we are.<sup>30</sup>

VAP, therefore suggests that emotional content is in a specific way self-referential. More specifically, its content includes affect, and its causal connection to value. It should be noted, however, that the notion of self-referential experiential causal content is contentious. For example, John Searle's claim that sense-perceptual experience involves a causal self-reflexivity, which figures in its content (and so correctness conditions), has been criticized. One significant worry is as follows. Sense-perceptual experience is often claimed to be transparent, in that it is experienced as involving a direct, immediate non-inferential relation to the relevant object. However, if it involved a self-referential causal aspect in its content then this would obstruct the phenomenology of what seems like (what is experienced as) a direct relation.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, a similar worry does not carry over for emotional experience. On the Goldie-inspired view, emotional experiences phenomenal character involves a component which does not seem like a property of the object – namely, felt valenced intentional attitudes of (dis)favour. As such, emotional experiences are not claimed to be transparent in the first place, or at least not transparent in the way sense-perceptual experience is thought to be. So, a familiar 'transparency' worry with self-referential causal content does not have the same force in the emotional case.

It is also worth emphasizing that on Searle's account the purported causal self-reflexivity in sense-perceptual experience concerns the entire experience. Searle writes, 'the visual experience does not represent the causal relation as something existing independently of the experience, but rather part of the experience is the experience of being caused'.<sup>32</sup> However, one might question what phenomenological acquaintance we have with the experience itself being experienced as caused in the paradigmatic sense-perceptual case (i.e., the 'causing' itself). In other words, it seems more open to question that we experience something causing the experience. However, in emotional experience, on the Goldie-inspired view, we have two experiential dimensions. We, therefore, have a more tangible framework within which we are able to identify something that can figure as a cause of something else (as so-called 'distinct existences'); namely, the cause as the particular object under an evaluative qualification, and the intentional feelings toward as the effect of it. As such, we can more plausibly point to how we are acquainted with the relevant experience of causation (again, the 'causing'). Part of the emotional experience involves the experience of the relevant affective component being caused by its object's evaluative standing.

So, there are considerations which support the idea that in the affective domain of felt responses the notion of experienced intentional causation, and so this specific kind of self-referential content, is more plausible (and less contentious) than in the standard sense-perceptual case.<sup>33</sup>

However, a critic might ask the following question. Do we really emotionally experience value properties as having causal powers? In answering we should note that the relevant sense of the 'causal power' of values is distinctive to emotional experience, as explicated in terms of experienced immediate and intelligible motivation of the relevant affective attitude. In this sense, values are not necessarily experienced as having 'causal power' per se. Rather more specifically, according to VAP, they are experienced as having the causal power to motivate affectivity.

The following cases, reflecting the above phenomenological claim, might be thought to clarify and support VAP. Specifically, I want to consider a case in which the felt valenced

attitudes are missing, and contrast this with a normal case. Consider again the case of fear, absent the relevant felt valenced attitude. If in an experience of fear I was to subtract the strong feeling of disfavor towards the object, that is the felt valenced attitude (including all the avoidance behavior that is consequent on it), what would be left? Perhaps, as attested by people who have suffered specific kinds of neurological damage – Phineas Gage style cases<sup>34</sup> – there would be an intellectual appreciation of the object of one’s experience as fearsome, but putatively no affective appreciation of its fearsomeness. Indeed, Goldie’s example of the gorilla in the zoo attests to a more everyday case of this sort. Yet what does this ‘affective appreciation’ of fearsomeness amount to? In such cases, part of what is lacking is that component of ordinary affective intentional experience posited by Goldie, namely feelings towards as felt valenced attitudes. However, we need to say more about how the absence of the relevant felt valenced attitudes impacts on our experience of those objects as having the evaluative significance they do – that is how it impacts on the evaluative content of that experience and so is relevant for the RV.

In everyday fear – in contrast to the subject who intellectually appreciates fearsomeness but for whatever reason does not ‘feel fear’ – the phenomenological difference cannot be fully captured just by noting that the emotional subject also has the relevant felt valenced attitude (the affective response). Rather, in virtue of the ordinary affective experience involving the relevant felt valenced attitude, the emotion represents the object’s evaluative standing differently. It represents it not only as fearsome per se, but being fearsome such as to involve an experience of that value as having the power to intelligibly motivate strong feelings of disfavor towards it – as an affective appreciation of its fearsomeness. So, when felt valenced attitudes go missing, and so when affective representation drops out of the picture, the value loses that affective power or experiential affective salience. As such, values no longer move us in the immediately intelligible way they often do.

Summing up this discussion, VAP arguably attests to something important about the phenomenology of emotional salience, and its connection to the evaluative content of

paradigmatic emotional experiences. I now explain in detail how this negatively impacts on our ability to make the attitude-(e)content distinction for emotions and so supports the RV.

#### *2.4 The RV and affectively charged content*

If emotions are plausibly characterized as involving an experience of values as affective powers in the specific way outlined in the previous subsection, we get the following claim: emotions have affectively motivating evaluative intentional content. According to this picture, the content of emotional experience is distinctive not merely in virtue of its evaluative dimension, but because of its affectively motivating evaluative character. So, once VAP is understood we can begin to see why the attitude-(e)content distinction is not applicable to emotions. The content of emotional experience, as involving this kind of affective charge, is unlike that of any other non-affective evaluative state. For example, an evaluative judgement, or non-emotional evaluative perception. To subtract the power to motivate affectively from the content, say in a non-emotional evaluative belief, is not merely to lose some extra phenomenological component that can be attributed to the attitudinal side. It is to lose something essential to the content one is trying to individuate as manifest in emotional experience. Specifically, it is to lose the way the value is experienced as having the power to intelligibly motivate the specific felt valenced attitude that it does.

Goldie talks of the whole way of experiencing the world being 'new', i.e. a modification. This is because he is considering the case of moving from a non-affective evaluative thought to an emotion. In the case of the non-affective evaluative thought, the value is not experienced as having affectively motivating power. Whereas in the case of the emotion the value is experienced as having the power to intelligibly motivate the relevant affectively valenced attitude.<sup>35</sup> In this context, the idea of modification with emotional salience highlights this putative difference in content. Yet, the reason why the attitude-(e)content distinction cannot be applied to emotional experience in general is because arguably there is

no other evaluative intentional state that represents value in this affectively charged sense. This is why it seems a logical impossibility for emotional content to be taken up by any other non-emotional attitude. It is not merely that emotions involve an affectively charged attitude to an independently specifiable evaluative content. Rather, according to VAP, they have affectively charged evaluative content – the attitude infuses the content.<sup>36</sup>

A critic might, however, question the above claim that it is not logically possible for affectively-charged evaluative content to be the object of any other non-emotional attitude. For example, the critic might suggest it is possible to think of value as affectively charged in the relevant sense (e.g., in an evaluative judgement). Further, they might point to non-doxastic evaluative intentional states (e.g. evaluative intuitions) which at least in principle could have affectively-charged content.

Let's consider the suggestion of a judgement with affectively charged evaluative content. In this context, it is pertinent to consider Neo-sentimentalism in meta-ethics, as a specific view concerning what is involved in being a competent user of evaluative concepts.<sup>37</sup> According to such theories, the use of evaluative concepts (e.g. fearsome) should be understood as making a necessary reference to the appropriateness of a specific emotional response. To judge that O (object) is E (evaluative property) is, in part, to judge that it is appropriate to feel a specific emotion in response to O. For example, to judge that rabid dogs are fearsome – and so correctly apply the concept fearsome to rabid dogs – is (in part) to judge that it is appropriate to feel fear in response to rabid dogs. If Neo-sentimentalist theories are correct then a full explication of our value concepts includes a reference to the power of values to intelligibly motivate affectivity.

At first glance, the conclusion of the previous paragraph undermines the RV. It shows that the content of emotional experience as including an affective charge is reflected in value concepts as they figure in evaluative judgements. However, the defender of the RV has a number of responses.

First, they might point to the full explication clause as suggesting an important distinction between how we think about our value concepts. On the one hand, we can consider the

rational implications of our value concepts as given a full explication in a theory like Neo-sentimentalism. On the other hand, we can consider such value concepts as they typically figure in the content of our everyday judgements. Arguably there is no explicit reference to the power of values to intelligibly motivate affectivity in the content of our everyday value judgements.

A second response is as follows. Take for granted that Neo-sentimentalist views are correct as a view about the content of our everyday value judgements – such judgements include the power of values to intelligibly motivate affectivity. Consider then a case of going from emotional experience to non-emotional evaluative judgement, where the content putatively remains the same (the content of the evaluative judgement is also affectively charged). The problem is that it looks like the attitude-content distinction has, in fact, failed to be properly applied with respect to the original emotional experience on which the evaluative judgement is based, and from which it inherits its content. After all, the attitude-infused content has gone ‘upstream’, so to speak, insofar as the attitude now also figures in the evaluative content of the judgement. This is significant, so the defender of the RV might insist, because avoiding this situation is essential to the SEV. What the SEV requires is being able to take up the relevant evaluative content without the attitude being embedded in the content.

Moving on, we can now consider whether there are non-doxastic, non-emotional intentional experiences which could have the relevant affectively-charged content of emotional experience. In this context, one might appeal to evaluative intuitions. Consider, for example, Antti Kauppinen’s account of moral intuitions. He frames them as ‘non-doxastic, spontaneous, primitively compelling, potentially non-inferentially justifying experiences’, which are phenomenologically ‘rich and diverse’ and ‘intrinsically motivational’. Such moral intuitions are, therefore, in significant ways distinct from epistemic or intellectual intuitions.<sup>38</sup> Kauppinen, in fact, uses this view of moral intuitions to propose a quasi-perceptualist theory of emotion, on which moral intuitions are constituted by emotions. Such moral intuitions – pace traditional cognitivism about emotion – are not constituted by beliefs, judgements, or

even non-doxastic intellectual intuitions.<sup>39</sup> Rather, they are said to either be or involve kinds of 'non-committal appearances' that the particular object has the relevant evaluative property. For sake of simplicity, I refer to the relevant mental state as an evaluative intuition.<sup>40</sup> Framed in terms of the present discussion, the critic of the RV might claim that such evaluative intuitions can have affectively-charged content.

The defender of the RV can respond to this suggestion in a number of ways. First, it might be claimed that evaluative intuitions embed emotions. Indeed, Kauppinen's account of moral intuitions is one according to which they are constituted by emotions. Yet, if this is correct then the class of evaluative intuitions is not that of a non-emotional intentional attitude which could 'take up' the same content as emotion. Rather, evaluative intuitions would turn out to be a specific class of emotions.

If one finds the above move implausible, insofar as it is desirable to clearly distinguish evaluative intuitions from emotional experiences, then the defender of the RV needs to find a way of denying that evaluative intuitions could have affectively-charged evaluative content. As a first step towards that conclusion, consider that evaluative intuitions, understood as distinct from emotions, don't motivate affectivity. Simply put, they are not affective states. For example, take fear. Fear is not just a non-doxastic presentation of the fearsome, as a non-emotional evaluative intuition. It is also a felt affective response to (an affective registering of) that which is fearsome.

But given (i) we accept this way of distinguishing evaluative intuitions from emotions, and (ii) think of evaluative intuitions as having affectively-charged evaluative content, we are drawn to the following conclusion. Evaluative intuitions have an affectively-charged evaluative content, but nonetheless do not, in the case where one is in this state in fact motivate affectivity. Yet, this view saddles evaluative intuitions with a strange phenomenology. When enjoying an evaluative intuition one would experience the value as having the power to intelligibly motivate affectivity, but nonetheless not experience affectivity. Rather, one would just enjoy a non-affective presentation of affectively-charged value. Take a non-emotional evaluative intuition of a painting as beautiful. On the view under



consideration, the content of the evaluative intuition includes the power of the relevant instantiation of beauty to intelligibly motivate affectivity. Yet, one is not experientially acquainted with this affectivity (say a felt favour toward the painting) since one is not emotionally moved.

The defender of the RV can suggest that there is a more plausible way to go here that does not involve positing any strange phenomenology. The position would be that evaluative intuitions are non-doxastic presentations of value, that neither motivate affectivity nor have affectively-charged evaluative content. Such a view is in keeping with thinking of non-emotional evaluative intuitions as akin to other intuitions in having a non-affective presentational content. Further, even if we want to construe evaluative intuitions as having some kind of self-referential content – Elijah Chudnoff thinks intuitional content is necessarily self-referential<sup>41</sup> – it would not make reference to the power of values to cause affectivity. If this view of non-emotional evaluative intuitions is along the right lines, then they are not plausibly states with affectively-charged evaluative content. As such, the attitude-content distinction cannot be applied between emotions and evaluative intuitions. The RV, therefore, seems to have substantive responses to the critics' worry that both doxastic and non-doxastic evaluative states could share the same content as emotion.

However, Goldie hedges on this issue. He writes that, 'it always seems possible for an opponent to force all the difference into the attitude, so that the debate degenerates into a matter of competing intuitions'.<sup>42</sup> This sells the RV short. To force all the difference into the attitude is to misunderstand that the presence of feeling towards in emotional experience, understood alongside VAP, makes it such that attitude infuses the content. As such Goldie's hedged position overlooks the kind of affectively charged evaluative content that emotions arguably possess. Of course, someone could reject the notion of feeling towards (as reconstructed in 2.2) as characteristic of emotions.<sup>43</sup> They could also argue against the VAP view. But it is not a matter of competing intuitions whether the attitude-(e)content distinction applies. Rather it is a matter of substantive arguments. We now have a coherent argument for the RV.<sup>44</sup>

However, as a final point, the critic might suggest that even if the argument for the RV goes through all it putatively shows is that the attitude-(e)content distinction does not hold between emotions and other intentional evaluative states. As such, it leaves open the possibility that the distinction is nonetheless applicable within the class of emotions, such that different emotions can have the same affectively motivating evaluative content. Consider the following case. Say two subjects have a common friend Jane, whom they both recognize to be beautiful. Yet they respond with different emotions; A admires Jane's beauty, whereas B is envious of it. Moreover, say Jane's beauty is perceptually present to both, as they stand in conversation with her at a social gathering. In such a case, it seems plausible to claim that they share the same evaluative intentional content, namely 'Jane's beauty'. The difference would only be in the attitudinal component.

This view cannot be quite right. B's envy also includes various reflexive (self-related) features, which present Jane's beauty under specific aspects. More specifically, the content of subject B's envy involves a presentation of Jane's beauty as that which B lacks. There is, of course, an overlapping of evaluative content between A and B's emotions – Jane's beauty is a part of both. Yet their overall affective-evaluative content is different. This is at least partly because Jane's beauty is experienced by the different subjects as intelligibly motivating, and so having the power to bring about, different affectively valenced responses. Framed in terms of the arguments of this section, they have different affectively motivating evaluative content in virtue of involving different feelings towards. According to the RV, since evaluative content cannot be separated from its power to motivate a specific felt valenced attitude without failing to capture that content, they cannot share exactly the same evaluative content.

### 3. Further Challenges for the RV

The previous section reconstructed an argument for the RV. I now consider two further challenges, and argue for some possible responses, although in both cases more needs to be said than is possible here.

The first epistemological challenge goes as follows. Recent philosophers of emotion argue that in favourable circumstances emotional experiences can play a rationalizing role by providing reasons for evaluative beliefs formed on their basis. How they do so is contentious, with competing theories explaining this epistemic role in different ways.<sup>45</sup> However, the challenge for someone who holds the RV is not merely providing an account of how emotions provide reasons for evaluative belief. Rather, it is explaining how they could do so at all, given that emotions do not admit of the attitude-(e)content distinction. This is because according to the RV the content of an evaluative belief could never be exactly the same as the content of an emotional experience. Evaluative belief is a non-emotional intentional attitude, and so its evaluative content is not affectively charged, whereas the content of emotion is.

What responses are available to the RV? One would be to concede that since emotions do not admit of the attitude-(e)content distinction, then the epistemic role of emotions envisaged by much contemporary theory is mistaken (or at least in need of significant qualification). However, this response need not abandon all epistemic import for emotions. One could shift to concerns such as self-deception and emotional authenticity, which can be addressed within the domain of emotional experience and its putatively affectively charged evaluative content.<sup>46</sup>

A less radical response goes as follows. One could accept that there is a difference between the evaluative content which characterises affective experience and evaluative beliefs about the same particular objects, but argue that exact mirroring of content is not always required for propositional justification.<sup>47</sup> Reflecting this, such evaluative beliefs should not claim to fully capture the emotional content as experienced. Nonetheless, the relevant content of evaluative belief is a sufficiently close approximation to the relevant part of emotional content for questions of justification to be relevant.

What, however, is the relevant part? It might be argued that what propositional justification by way of correct evaluative judgements is interested in is whether the particular object of the emotion really has the relevant represented value property. Naturally, there are

complex issues that arise in the metaphysics of value in determining whether evaluative properties are really instantiated in particular instances (or ever). But at the strategic level the defender of the RV might claim that it does not matter if the content of emotional experience is more complex than the content which approximates it in judgements and beliefs. As long as the evaluative judgement can hone in on the relevant evaluative properties, then an epistemology of emotions is a live project.

Yet, how persuasive is this response to the epistemological challenge? Given the emphasis the RV places on the supposedly distinctive content of emotional experience a critic might wonder whether an epistemology of emotions which somehow more closely reflects that content is required. And this could be the case even if that content was not exactly the same, given that mirroring of content is ruled out by the RV. These are complex issues, and while the defender of the RV has resources to draw on, more needs to be said if the view is to meet the epistemological challenge. At the very least, defenders of the RV should cognizant of this challenge.

The second challenge for the RV concerns issues of non-conceptual content. More specifically, the worry is that emotional content turns out to be necessarily non-conceptual. Some framing is required in order to adequately set up this challenge. First, it is worth noting the following point. If all that is meant by calling emotional content non-conceptual is signaling the distinction between the manifest content of experience and the (usually) symbolically mediated, linguistic or discursive content of propositional attitudes (e.g. judgment and belief) then emotional experiences, as theorized along the lines of the RV, would be non-conceptual in this sense.<sup>48</sup> The worry, however, with this criterion of non-conceptual content is that conceptualists will agree there is a phenomenological difference between the manifest content of 'lived experience' and the discursive content of judgements and belief. For example, consider the difference between fine-grained phenomenal-blue as it figures in a visual experience of an object as instantiating that colour, and BLUE, the symbolically mediated predicate, as it figures in the judgement 'O is BLUE'. What is arguably required to justify talk of non-conceptual content is a persuasive argument to the effect that,

for example, 'phenomenal-blue' as it figures in a visual experience does not involve the deployment of specific kinds of non-linguistic conceptual capacities (e.g. recognitional or discriminatory capacities).<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, what is sometimes thought to be at issue between the conceptualist and the non-conceptualist is what the content of the relevant intentional experiences has to be like if it is to play a specific kind of epistemic, reason-giving, role. Conceptualists maintain it can only do so if those experiences involve the deployment of specific conceptual capacities (this draws us back into the epistemological challenge considered above).<sup>50</sup>

Turning back to the RV we can now say the following. First, note that if it is a condition on possessing conceptual capacities that subjects who deploy them should be able to (amongst other things) make the attitude-content distinction for those contents, then ex hypothesi, emotional experience will have non-conceptual content on the RV. And it is worth noting in this context that some philosophers explicitly include an ability to make the attitude-content distinction in their specifications of conceptual content.<sup>51</sup> Given that the debate surrounding specific conditions on conceptual vs. non-conceptual content is contentious it is difficult to draw firm conclusions here. However, it should be noted that it would be a controversial entailment of the RV if emotional content was necessarily non-conceptual (rather than in just some cases).

I now consider whether there are any further senses of non-conceptual content connected to the specific way in which the attitude-content distinction does not apply to emotional experience according to the RV. One thought runs as follows. We might think – building on the comments on systematicity and productivity of thought and language in the introduction – that there is a cognitive power attendant to being able to make the attitude-content distinction. This is evident in the way the distinction figures across a range of similar, but subtly different, cognitive attitudes, some of which allow for a conditional structure. For example, I can believe 'that God exists', or suspend judgement 'that God exists'. But I can also hypothesize 'that God exists', or entertain 'that God exists' for the sake of argument. In the latter cases I do not commit to the semantic value of the content. Being able to shift

attitude towards the same content ostensibly at will is a powerful tool when attempting to understand what is entailed or implied by certain propositions. In other words, we have the potential for a significant degree of independence from an object and its properties by individuating the relevant content separately from the attitude. This is borne out in the way we are not compelled into taking any particular attitude toward it.

Contrastingly, emotional experience has a decidedly immersive or involuntary quality. One cannot in any genuine sense be conditionally angry at someone, or jealous for the sake of argument. Rather, insofar as we are sincerely moved by values in emotional experience we do not seem to have requisite independence from the object and its properties. More specifically, we can't switch attitude at will in the way that is paradigmatic of cognitive attitudes towards independently specifiable contents. Indeed, we might say that the 'lived content' of emotional experience typically forces us into taking that content in a certain way. According to the RV, this is to be explained in terms of the relevant attitude infusing the content. The RV might, therefore, provide the resources to explain this distinctive feature of emotional experience (as involving a kind of phenomenology of 'commitment'). Whether in light of this it makes sense to talk of emotional experience as non-conceptual would require more to be said about the precise structure of the posited emotional content. Nonetheless, the RV serves to highlight important differences between emotional experience and judgements and beliefs (even in their evaluative modes), which are after all the most paradigmatically conceptual intentional attitudes.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

This article has argued for the RV on the basis of the claim that emotional experience involves affectively charged evaluative content. It is in this sense that the attitude is an indissoluble aspect of emotional content. I have also explained what challenges face someone who accepts the RV, and articulated ways it can respond. Although, as seen in that discussion, more needs to be said about these issues.

As a final consideration, I provide some remarks on the connection between the view of emotional content argued for here, and what is distinctive about emotions in connection with evaluative understanding. Goldie suggests that without feeling towards our evaluative apprehension of a particular object is not merely cold or non-affective but evaluatively impoverished. Putatively, we do not fully understand what it is for something to be dangerous, beautiful, or disgusting, without experiencing those values as having the power to intelligibly motivate the affective responses they do. Deonna and Teroni suggest something similar:

[W]hile these [evaluative] properties can in principle be accessed by the subject independently of his emotion, it often proves difficult to see how he could access them without the relevant emotional sensitivity...Categorizing an object as funny or shameful is indeed hardly detachable from the understanding that its properties give one reasons to favour or reject it. And we might wonder what sort of understanding of there being reasons to favour or reject an object we would preserve, were we deprived of the relevant emotion. (Deonna and Teroni 2012: 121-2)

Recognizing that emotions have affectively charged evaluative content, and so do not admit of the attitude-(e)content distinction, provides one explanation of what is distinctive about the emotional sensitivity Deonna and Teroni (and Goldie) refer to. This emotional sensitivity could be understood as a sensitivity to the value properties of objects as having the power to intelligibly motivate affective attitudes towards them. Insofar as these affective attitudes are inseparable from the content of those experiences we have an explanation of the distinctive way emotional experience makes values manifest. Moreover, we also have some of the materials for showing why (as it has seemed to many authors)<sup>53</sup> emotions constitute our primary acquaintance with value.

When emotions are overlooked we do not merely lose one way of representing value. Rather we lose something important, some claim essential, to the idea of something being of

value, namely its power to motivate affectivity. Non-emotional evaluative representation is therefore not merely a different, but significantly degraded form of value-representation. While suggestive, these final considerations point toward a positive conclusion. By seeing how emotions do not admit of the attitude-(e)content distinction we can begin to make better sense of their distinctiveness and connection to value.

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<sup>1</sup> This article concerns personal level intentional states. I do not put forward any view about the attitude-content distinction for subpersonal intentional states. For the distinction see Dennett (1969) 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Arguments for admitting of non-propositional intentional attitudes are found in Montague 2007: 503–18, and Grzankowski 2014: 314-28. For the view that perceptual experience has non-propositional content see Crane 2009: 452-469 (cf. Tye 1995). I draw attention to this distinction to stress the ubiquity of the attitude-content distinction for intentional states, regardless of one's theory of content.

<sup>3</sup> See Fodor 1978: 501-23, Davidson 1984: 3-15, and Schiffer 2003, for further discussion. One could question whether systematicity and productivity motivate the attitude-content distinction if there were instances where the distinction holds but we fail to have systematicity and productivity. For example, if contents were simples that had no parts or structure (see Bealer 1998: 1-32, cf. Duncan forthcoming), then someone who believes that a is F and b is G would stand in a relation to distinct simples. Yet, on such a view, that wouldn't help to explain why such a thinker could thereby believe that a is G and b is F. Rather, what seems needed for systematicity and productivity is further structure in the content. This would be a view where there is an attitude-content distinction, but no forthcoming explanation of productivity or systematicity. Settling such issues will not be necessary here. It suffices to note that the attitude-content distinction seems importantly connected to systematicity and productivity, even if – given one were to think of contents as simples – the former does not entail the latter. Although, it is hard to see how one would not also have the attitude-content distinction if one had secured the relevant structure and recombinable nature to contents (or their vehicles), and so systematicity and productivity.

<sup>4</sup> See Searle 1983: 1-4; Dennett 1978: 3; Lyons 1995: 3; Tye 1995: 93, 126-7; Fodor 2000: 139; Grzankowski 2014: 314; King 2002: 341-71.

<sup>5</sup> See Deonna and Teroni 2012: Ch.1; Lyons 1980: Ch. 7.

<sup>6</sup> See Wringe 2015: 275-97.

<sup>7</sup> Goldie 2000; 2002: 235-54; Gunther 2003: 279-88; 2004: 43-55; Stocker 1983: 21; Poellner 2016: 14-5, fn.13.

<sup>8</sup> See Lyons 1980: 104-6 and Teroni 2007: 395-415. Ronald de Sousa introduces the notion of a 'target' to refer to the particular objects of emotions (de Sousa 1987: 116).

<sup>9</sup> In what follows I drop the qualification. Claims about emotions should be understood as concerning intentional emotions.

<sup>10</sup> See Searle 1983: 18-20.

<sup>11</sup> See Grzankowski 2014: 314-6. The suggestion that emotions are directed at propositions is criticised by Deigh 1994: 824-54.



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<sup>12</sup> See section 2 for more on emotional phenomenology. The discussion of emotions pertains to occurrent emotions, as emotional experiences had by individuals at particular times, rather than emotional or affective dispositions (see Lyons 1980: 53-57).

<sup>13</sup> There are arguments against framing emotional phenomenology in exclusively somatic terms, specifically in relation to issues of type-individuation within the class of emotions. Bodily feelings are insufficient to individuate different emotions since there are arguably not qualitatively distinct somatic states for different emotions (see Cobos et al 2002: 251-69; Stocker 2010: 401-423 and Poellner 2016: 13; James 1884: 191, cf. *Ibid*: 201-2).

<sup>14</sup> See Kenny 1963: 132.

<sup>15</sup> This is accepted by evaluative judgement (Nussbaum 2001) and perceptual theories (Poellner 2016: 1-28; Tappolet 2016: Ch.1; Döring 2007: 363-94). Cf. Deonna and Teroni 2012: 76-89.

<sup>16</sup> For further discussion see Teroni 2007: 395-415.

<sup>17</sup> Deonna and Teroni 2012 locate the evaluative dimension of emotions at the attitudinal level (see also Dancy 2014: 787-812). See Dokic and Lemaire 2015: 271-92 for critical discussion.

<sup>18</sup> Is 'fearing that p' obviously an emotion? Cognitivists and neo-cognitivists tend to focus on cases such as fearing the dog or being angry with one's partner. They then argue that those emotions are more complex representational states such as judging that the dog is dangerous or perceiving that one's partner has wronged one. But 'Mary fears that p' could be read as a report of something akin to timidly believing, analogous to 'Mary sees that the answer is 7', where this has nothing much to do with actually using one's eyes. Those unconvinced that 'fearing that p' is an occurrent emotion can replace this with 'fear of P' (e.g. Mary is afraid of the precipice).

<sup>19</sup> See Deonna and Teroni 2012: 77.

<sup>20</sup> See Searle 1994: 131.

<sup>21</sup> Goldie distinguishes between emotions proper and episodic emotional experience (see Goldie 2000: 13-14) – my focus is on the latter.

<sup>22</sup> Goldie 2000: 60-1.

<sup>23</sup> Poellner 2016: 13-4 and Montague 2009: 187-188 make similar claims about the valenced attitudes involved in emotions. See also Johnston 2001: 182 on the view of 'affect' as disclosing value.

<sup>24</sup> Prinz 2004: 68, 78 and Deonna and Teroni 2017: 55-63.

<sup>25</sup> Authors who think of emotions in terms of affective intentionality have often construed many cases of feelings towards as involving affective perceptions of value – the perceptual model of the emotions (on some versions). Nothing, in my Goldie-inspired reconstruction of feelings towards, forces one into thinking of this kind of affective intentionality as a kind of perception in any literal sense, although perception may often furnish the relevant non-evaluative content (the cognitive base) that is then taken up in emotional experience.

<sup>26</sup> Stocker 1983: 5-26.

<sup>27</sup> See [Redacted] for an attempt to provide such a defence.

<sup>28</sup> Wiggins 1998: 199-201.

<sup>29</sup> See Tappolet 2016: Ch.3; D'Arms and Jacobson 2003; Deonna and Teroni 2012: Ch.8.

<sup>30</sup> Frijda, 1987: 252-3.

<sup>31</sup> See Searle 1983: 112-140 on intentional causality, cf. Soteriou 2000: 173-189.

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<sup>32</sup> Searle 1983: 74. Elijah Chudnoff (2013) also argues that intuitional content is self-referential. In fact, he thinks that the content of experiences which have a presentational phenomenology are self-referential (and intuitions are one type of experience which has presentational phenomenology). As with Searle's position though, the specific details of the kind of self-referential content posited in emotional experience by VAP differ. On the Goldie-inspired view, it is not clear that emotions have a presentational phenomenology, or at least not simply or entirely. Emotions, on this picture, also involve the phenomenology of valenced response, and it is the presence of this response (of affect as the intelligibly motivated experienced effect of value), that underwrites the kind of self-referential content central to VAP.

<sup>33</sup> I thank an anonymous referee at Pacific Philosophical Quarterly for suggesting further clarification of these points.

<sup>34</sup> See Damasio 1994: Ch.2 and 3.

<sup>35</sup> See Goldie 2000: 72.

<sup>36</sup> See Gunther 2004: 43.

<sup>37</sup> McDowell 1985; Wiggins 1998.

<sup>38</sup> See Kauppinen 2013: 11. See Chudnoff 2013 for a sui generis approach to intellectual intuitions as forms of intellectual perception, whose content is (contrasting with sensory perception) abstract.

<sup>39</sup> See Chudnoff 2013: 25. It is unlikely that emotional experience involves intellectual intuitions, as Chudnoff thinks of them, namely as non-doxastic presentations that abstract matters are a certain way.

<sup>40</sup> Kauppinen does not use this term and frames his discussion in terms of moral intuitions being constituted by emotions.

<sup>41</sup> See fn.32.

<sup>42</sup> Goldie 2000: 60.

<sup>43</sup> See Blackman 2013: 76-80. Blackman criticises Goldie's later attempts to cash out feelings towards in terms of the acquisition of phenomenal concepts (see Goldie 2002: 235-54; 2009: 232-9). I have not relied on this way of articulating feelings towards in my account of the RV.

<sup>44</sup> When so framed, the difference in content in the emotional case is not equivalent to the contrast between content characterizing an experiential presentation and a mere belief with the same content (see Hopp 2011: Ch.4.), analogous to the contrast between the intuitive content of typical sense-perceptual experience and symbolically mediated judgements which take up that content. If that were the point one might think all states which have a phenomenal character and are intentional do not admit of the attitude-content distinction (see Gunther 2004: 43).

<sup>45</sup> Deonna and Teroni 2012: Ch.8; Cowan 2016: 59-81; Cf. Brady 2011: 135-49.

<sup>46</sup> See De Sousa 2002: Ch.4.

<sup>47</sup> For an analogous argument in the case of sense perception see Calderon 2011: 219-244.

<sup>48</sup> This seems to be the primary motivation Christine Tappolet has in claiming that emotions have non-conceptual content (see Tappolet 2016: Ch.1).

<sup>49</sup> See McDowell 1994. It is plausible that emotional experiences, even on the RV, often involve certain kind of recognitional or identificatory capacities. Although detailed consideration of the way in which they do is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid: Ch.4: 46-65, cf. Peacocke 2001: 239-64.

<sup>51</sup> See McDowell 1994: 46-65; Husserl 1973: Section 13; Poellner 2015: 222-3.

<sup>52</sup> For discussion see Gunther 2003: 279-288 and Wringe 2015: 288-290.

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<sup>53</sup> See Goldie 2000: Ch.3; Deonna and Teroni 2012: Ch.10; Prinz 2006: 29-43; Poellner 2016: 1-28; Stocker 1983: 5-26.

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