

Intentionality and Compound Accounts of the Emotions

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Introduction

Most contemporary philosophers of emotion, in repudiation of both the James-Lange and cognitivist accounts of the emotions,¹ endorse a hybrid or compound account: emotions are wholes made of parts, or as I prefer to put it, emotions are mental states that supervene on other (mental) states.² The parts or members of the subvening base differ depending upon the theory, but most everyone thinks that emotions supervene on some combination of evaluative representation (e.g. belief), sensation, physiological change, and desire.

I shall assume a compound account of the emotions is the right kind of account; I do not think we ought to return to the James-Lange theory or cognitivism. The goal of

¹ See (James 1884, 190). See Prinz (2004) for a defense of a significantly more sophisticated version of the James-Lange theory. One of Prinz's most important emendations to the view is the Dretskean claim that the sensations constitutive of emotions are representational. In connection with this, see Dretske (1986, 1988, 1991) and McLaughlin (1991). For early defenses of cognitivism, see Kenny (1963) and Solomon (1973), and for more recent defenses, see Neu (2000) and Nussbaum (2001).

² Compound accounts are defended by, among others, Warner (1980), Marks (1982), Griffiths (1997), D'Arms and Jacobson (2000b, 2003, 2006), Goldie (2000, 2003), Greenspan (1988), Stocker and Hegeman (1992), and Wollheim (2000).

this paper is to ascertain how the intentionality of these subvening members relates to the intentionality of the emotion. Towards this end, I proceed as follows. First, I discuss the problems with the account Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson offer of the intentionality of the emotions; I argue their account is fundamentally misguided by virtue of being motivated by a misunderstanding of the nature of propositional attitudes. More specifically, they fail to consider propositional attitudes with nonconceptual content, and so wrongly deny that human infants and non-human animals can have evaluative thoughts concerning the intentional object of an emotion. Second, I discuss and critique Peter Goldie's recent claim that an affective component of an emotion contributes to its intentionality. Third, I offer my own compound account of emotions. I argue i) emotions are mental states that supervene on other mental states³, ii) the mental states that constitute the subvenience base of emotion can have nonconceptual and/or conceptual representational content, and iii) an emotion's intentionality supervenes on (but is often not identical to) the intentionality of only one of its subvening members, specifically, the evaluative representation. I conclude with some comments regarding how this picture might impact one's view of the rationality of emotion.

I. Thoughts, Propositions, and Nonconceptual Content

Anti-Cognitivism and Primitive Emotions. D'Arms and Jacobson endorse a compound account of the emotions for at least two reasons. First, they think cognitivists are unable

³ By this I mean the level directly "beneath" the supervening emotion is wholly constituted by mental states; I leave it open as to with what strength those mental states supervene on brain states.

to account for the emotions of human infants and non-human animals, and second, they are impressed by the accounts of emotions offered by evolutionary psychologists like Paul Ekman and Joseph LeDoux.⁴ We need to see a little more about these two motivations of D'Arms and Jacobson so we can understand how they try to account for the intentionality of emotion.

Recall that one of the major attractions of cognitivism is that it readily accounts for the intentionality of emotion; if emotions just are judgments, then they are judgments about something, and that something is the intentional object of the judgment and a fortiori of the emotion. But, echoing a widely-cited article by John Deigh,⁵ D'Arms and Jacobson complain that cognitivism cannot account for the emotions of human infants and non-human animals. That is because “claim[ing] that emotions have constitutive thoughts seems incompatible with attributing them to animals and infants, who lack the requisite concepts.”⁶ Emotions are judgments, cognitivists claim, but judgments are propositional attitudes and propositional attitudes require the creature that has the attitude to possess and deploy the concepts that are the contents of those propositions. Since infants and animals lack concepts they must lack those propositional attitudes, which entails they lack emotion. But, since this is clearly false – infants and animals certainly

⁴ Ekman (1972) and LeDoux (1998).

⁵ Deigh (1994).

⁶ D'Arms and Jacobson (2003), 133.

have emotions – we must have been wrong in claiming that all emotions are judgments; cognitivism is false. That, at least, is the argument Deigh, D’Arms, and Jacobson offer.⁷

The emotions had by infants and animals, and sometimes by adult humans, these philosophers claim, are in a distinct ontological category; they are “basic” or “primitive” or “natural” emotions. It is here that D’Arms and Jacobson offer a sketch of these emotions.

Think of the natural emotion kinds [basic emotions] as products of relatively discrete special-purpose mechanisms that are sensitive to some important aspect of human life...The fear system, for instance, can plausibly be described as monitoring the environment for threats to the organism, even if (as neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux claims) there are distinct pathways into the syndrome know as fear: a syndrome of directed attention, physiological changes, affect, and motivation that can be functionally understood as constituting a kind of appraisal of the circumstances. There may be no better way of articulating that appraisal than by saying that it involves construing oneself to be in imminent danger; but it does not follow that, in order to feel fear, one must deploy this or any other concept.⁸

⁷ Prinz (2004) offers a similar argument, but proceeds to offer the possibility of an emotion having nonconceptual content. He does, however, also think such contents are nonpropositional, a claim with which I shall soon take issue.

⁸ D’Arms and Jacobson (2003), 138-9.

So the basic emotions are, on their view, wholes made of parts, where those parts include one's attention being directed at a particular object, physiological changes, affect, and motivation. What belongs in the category of the basic emotions is a matter of dispute, but D'Arms and Jacobsen, like many others, endorse at least the list of the emotions that psychologist Paul Ekman claims are universal to human beings: joy, sadness, surprise, anger, disgust, and fear.⁹ Whatever the basic emotions, one of the important features of them is that they serve as the foundations for a mature adult human being's emotional repertoire. Indignation, for instance, is anger with the addition of a constitutive thought having to do with being treated *unjustly*, homesickness is the basic emotion of sadness with the addition of a constituent thought including the idea of home, existential angst is the basic emotion of fear with the addition of a constituent thought including the idea of the meaning(lessness) of life, and so on.

One of the most curious features of this account, which they concede is “sketchy and incomplete,”¹⁰ is that it tells us nothing about how an emotion gets its intentionality. For cognitivism came to dominate the philosophy of emotion precisely by claiming that a constitutive thought about the object of the emotion is what gives an emotion its intentionality. But if constitutive thoughts were brought into the theory of emotion to account for the intentionality of emotion, and D'Arms and Jacobson deny that infants and humans have these thoughts, how are we to account for the intentionality of their emotions? All D'Arms and Jacobson offer is that an emotion is “a syndrome of directed

⁹ Ekman (1989).

¹⁰ D'Arms and Jacobson (2003), 140.

attention, physiological changes, affect, and motivation that can be functionally understood as constituting a kind of appraisal of the circumstances. There may be no better way of articulating that appraisal than by saying that it involves construing oneself to be in imminent danger.”

I cannot see how this syndrome accounts for the intentionality of emotion for at least three reasons. First, suppose one has one’s attention directed at an object; one is looking at it intently. Suppose also that there are various physiological changes occurring, the sensation of one’s heart beating powerfully, and the desire to run in a direction opposite the object. And then suppose that one looks away so as to see where one is running. At first there was only one’s attention directed at the object, and after one turns away, not even that is directed at the object; now one’s attention is directed towards not tripping, finding a route of escape, etc. But first, supposing this is a case in which one is in a state of fear that is directed at the object – one is afraid of the monster – how does that fear get to be directed at the monster? After all, once one turns to run, no part of that syndrome is directed at the object but one continues to be afraid. We are left then with a whole that is constituted by elements of the syndrome which is allegedly directed at the monster. But we are not told why we ought to think this syndrome has an intentional object or, granted that it has one, how it comes to have it. D’Arms and Jacobson, then, are not telling us anything about an emotion’s intentionality.¹¹

¹¹ It has been suggested to me that, at least in the case of an infant, once attention is withdrawn from the object that inspired the fear, the infant is no longer afraid *of* anything, but is simply afraid; there is no intentional object of the infant’s fear. It is not clear to me that there are such cases. I think, for example, that if one is to be afraid one

Second, the syndrome I have just described looks to be compatible with a scenario in which one is not afraid of the object, but is instead afraid of losing the race (to the finish line, or more primitively, to the almost wholly-eaten prey); it is not a monster one has seen, but a competitor. Any account that leaves out an explanation of how we are to account for the differences between these two cases is an impoverished one, and D'Arms and Jacobson lack the resources to explain just this. Of course, if we allowed for a constitutive thought we could easily account for both of these objections. To the first, we could say that even when one runs away one continues to think of the dangerousness of the approaching monster, and to the second one might think of losing one's life versus losing the race (or the prey).

A third problem with D'Arms' and Jacobson's account is grounded in the fact, to which they bring our attention, that there are at least six different syndromes of directed attention, physiological changes, affect, and motivation, viz. each of the syndromes associated with fear, anger, surprise, joy, sadness, and disgust. The problem is that we _____ must be afraid of something; one cannot be afraid of nothing. For arguments for the claim that all emotions are intentional, see Tye (2008), and for an argument that our commitment to thinking there are objectless emotions should be conditional on the strength of our overall theory of the emotions, see Deigh (1994). But if I am wrong about this, then this paper concerns the intentionality of intentional emotions. If there are emotions that have no intentional object, then there is simply no puzzle to solve about how they get their intentionality, and that is true whether the objectless emotions are compounds or not. (I would like to thank a referee for pushing on this point).

need an *explanation* for why one syndrome is activated while the other five are not. Fear in response to danger is, of course, an appropriate response, but how does the body “know” to activate the fear syndrome and not the joy syndrome? Once again, a constitutive thought regarding the dangerousness of the object would do the trick here, but that is precisely what D’Arms and Jacobson will not allow.

D’Arms and Jacobson may claim, in response, that the intentional object of the emotion is whatever causes the syndrome. But this will be of no help in responding to these objections. For, first, the case in which one begins to run away is a case in which no parts of the syndrome are directed at the object that caused those changes. Second, we are still left wondering why the object causes one syndrome and not another. And lastly, the prospects for grounding the intentionality of emotion in what caused the emotion look grim on other grounds; it might be Laura’s sneering at John that caused John’s fear of rejection, but John is not afraid of her sneering at him; John is afraid of *being rejected*.¹²

¹² I. More generally, there are a variety of reasons for thinking a causal account of intentionality cannot work, including, for example, that we can have thoughts about, but are not in causal contact with, fictional entities. See Tim Crane (2001a) for a particularly clear discussion of this issue. For a view according to which emotions are sensations and those sensations derive their intentionality from a causal connection with what caused them, see Prinz (2004). For a nice review of arguments for and against Dretske-style approaches to mental content, see the introduction to Macdonald and Papineau (2006). Also see Fodor (1990).

So D'Arms and Jacobson leave us with two questions of particular importance. First, how can we reintroduce the intentionality of emotion that was taken out by D'Arms and Jacobson when they denied infants and animals can have thoughts with evaluative content? Second, what are the relations between an emotion and its intentionality, on the one hand, and (the intentionality of) thought, physiological changes, affect/sensations, and motivation on the other?

I presently turn to answer the first of these questions. I think the problems with D'Arms' and Jacobson's sketch arises from denying that infants and animals can have thoughts with evaluative content. That is why their account is fundamentally misguided. I turn now to explaining how it can be that infants and animals can have thoughts with evaluative content even if they do not possess the concepts for those evaluations.

Nonconceptual Content and Perceiving Danger. A creature undergoing fear must, in some way, have a representation as of an object's being dangerous in order for that creature to be in a state of fear. (I use the familiar 'as of' to indicate that the representation may not be veridical). Similarly, to be in a state of anger one must have a representation as of an object having slighted one, disgust requires a representation as of something contaminated or foul, and so on. In short, emotions require the creature having the emotion to have a representation of the object with evaluative content.

II. One might claim instead that it was John's belief that he was going to be rejected, which he (non-inferentially) inferred from Laura's sneer, that caused his fear. But even if that is true it is no better, since John is certainly not afraid of his belief that he will be rejected.

Traditionally, cognitivists about emotions have characterized these representations as i) beliefs or judgments with ii) conceptual content, or put differently, emotions just are judgments, judgments are relations to propositions, and propositions are a structure with concepts as their constituents. Some have objected to this version of cognitivism that a person may have an emotion even if one does not assent to the proposition, and if that is true, then neither the believing nor the judging relation is the only relation one may stand in to a proposition such that one has an emotion; Greenspan and Stocker, for instance, highlight the entertaining and imagining relations.¹³ But we saw a different kind of objection by Deigh, D'Arms, and Jacobson. The problem, they claim, is not in the kind of relation borne to a proposition, but in the claim that there is any sort of relation to a proposition a non-linguistic creature can bear. For non-linguistic creatures lack concepts, and if they lack concepts, the thought goes, they cannot have propositional attitudes. That is why Deigh, D'Arms and Jacobson draw the line between basic and non-basic emotions along the propositional/nonpropositional divide; infants and animals have basic emotions, where the content of the emotion is nonpropositional, while adults (typically) have non-basic emotions, where the content is propositional.

The general problem with this line of argument is that it assumes propositional attitudes must have conceptual content when in fact there are very strong reasons for thinking that at least some mental states have propositional but nonconceptual content.¹⁴

¹³ See Greenspan (1988) and Stocker (1992).

¹⁴ For arguments in favor of there being nonconceptual content see Evans (1982), Peacocke (1992), Tye (1995), Crane (1998), and Heck (2000), and for a critical overview of these arguments and more, see Speaks (2005).

So, while we should certainly allow that an evaluative representation of an agent may be both a belief and have conceptual content, we just as certainly should not require that i) the representation be a belief or ii) that it has conceptual content. As for (i), perceptual representations are, of course, representations; one has a visual representation as of a flower's being red, an olfactory representation as of the flower smelling sweet, a tactile representation as of the petals of the flower being smooth, and so on. As for (ii), the contents of a representation may be nonconceptual. This is a point the vast majority of philosophers of emotion have overlooked; they have confused the propositional/nonpropositional distinction with the conceptual/nonconceptual distinction, assuming that if a mental state has propositional content it must have conceptual content. Once we see that the former does not require the latter, we can see that emotions can have propositional but nonconceptual content, and that the division between basic and non-basic emotions should be drawn along the nonconceptual/conceptual divide, not the nonpropositional/propositional one.¹⁵

¹⁵ I. There is a vast literature on nonconceptual content and it is well outside the scope of this paper to discuss it in any detail. It is worth noting here that there are a number of theses for which nonconceptualists argue, and it is not obvious they are all always arguing for the same theses (see Speaks (2005) for disambiguation of the various theses and arguments for those theses). On one view, the debate between conceptualists and nonconceptualists concerns the contents of all mental states, in particular, whether those contents are propositions conceived of as structured Fregean senses, or concepts, on the one hand, or if, on the other hand, they are propositions conceived of as Russelian structures of properties, relations, and objects, or perhaps as sets of possible worlds. On

this understanding of the debate, Fregeans count as conceptualists and Russellians and possible world semanticists count as nonconceptualists. On another understanding, the debate is about whether the contents of beliefs are different in kind from the contents of perception. One way this would be possible is if beliefs have Fregean senses as their contents while perceptions have Russelian contents; this is (roughly) the view Heck (2000) calls “content nonconceptualism” and what Speaks (2005) calls “absolute nonconceptualism.” On yet another view, the debate is not about the contents of the mental states, but rather about whether the creature who has a particular mental state must have concepts in order to have that mental state; some argue that one can have a mental state with content one cannot grasp; this is (roughly) the view Heck calls “state nonconceptualism” and Speaks “relative nonconceptualism.” (For a denial that there is a genuine difference between content/absolute nonconceptualism and state/relative nonconceptualism, see Bermudez (2007)). For my purposes, any of these ways of thinking about nonconceptual content will suffice, since the argument I attack falls no matter which understanding of nonconceptual content one accepts.

II. It is widely assumed in the literature on nonconceptual content that the contents of mental states are always propositional. The discussion about nonconceptual content is, after all, largely discussed in terms of those contents being Russelian contents (structured representational entities whose constituents are objects, properties, and relations) or possible worlds, and these, of course, are propositions. Only a handful of philosophers have entertained the possibility of there being content that is both nonconceptual and nonpropositional; see Crane (2009) and Heck (2007). Both argue that we should think of

There is much more to be said about this issue, most of which cannot be said here.¹⁶ What is important for our purposes is to recognize the possibility of an evaluative representation had by a creature that i) is not a belief, and ii) has nonconceptual content. In particular, we are allowing for the possibility of a perceptual state with evaluative, nonconceptual content.¹⁷

Like D'Arms and Jacobson, I think the work of neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux is helpful here, who demonstrated that fear can be the result of the activation of two neural pathways.¹⁸ The first, which is characteristic of non-basic emotions, goes like this: a subject sees an object, the information contained in the perceptual experience is relayed _____ nonconceptual content along the lines of the content of a picture or a map, which they think is nonpropositional. Since this is not the place to engage with these arguments, I have assumed that the contents of mental states are propositions, but this is not essential to my view. If it turns out that the contents of the mental states of at least non-human animals and infant humans is nonpropositional in addition to being nonconceptual, that is compatible with my account, so long as these nonconceptual nonpropositional mental states still manage to represent evaluative features of objects towards which the emotions are directed.

¹⁶ See footnote 15.

¹⁷ In fact, I think it is not inappropriate to attribute beliefs to at least some non-human animals that lack concepts. But I do not need that controversial premise as a part of my argument; that perceptual representations can be nonconceptual is sufficient for my purposes.

¹⁸ LeDoux (1998).

to the prefrontal cortex (an evolutionarily young part of the brain that is responsible for things like conceptual understanding), which recognizes it under the concept ‘dangerous’. That information gets relayed to the amygdale, which is responsible for various physiological changes, including those that match the physiological profile of fear as determined by neuroscientists: the release of adrenaline, widening of the eyes, and so on. This process, roughly, is what occurs when one sees a much larger number than one expected at the bottom of one’s credit card statement. But there is another, significantly less sophisticated process that results in the physiological profile of fear: information from the perceptual system goes directly to the amygdale, which enacts the aforementioned physiological changes. The prefrontal cortex – the part responsible for conceptual understanding – gets no say in the matter, at least not initially; the creature has the physiological changes characteristic of fear before it gets to have any nonperceptual representations of it. This strongly suggests that the creature’s perceptual representation includes a representation of the object of its sight as dangerous, where that representation is nonconceptual. That it is evaluative is evidenced by its information going directly to the amygdale and beginning the “affect program” for fear and not, say, joy, sadness, or anger, and that it is nonconceptual is evidenced by its skipping the part of the brain responsible for conceptual representations.¹⁹

¹⁹ The property of being dangerous might be one to which we are directly perceptually sensitive; it is something we can literally see. Alternatively, one might follow Dretske and say that the mental state that is fear represents its object as dangerous, that is, it comes to have that content, by virtue of the perceptual state having the biological function to cause the physiological changes associated with fear. The account of the

I earlier pointed out that D'Arms and Jacobson, by denying that infants and animals have thoughts about danger, subtracted the very thing that seemed to give an emotion its intentionality. In its place they offered a rather vague description of a set of physiological changes that allegedly constitute a functional appraisal. But going down that path is misguided; we now see we can have infants and animals who have nonconceptual evaluative representations. Further, this account *explains* the sorts of changes in which D'Arms and Jacobson are interested, which they could not do. A compound account of the emotions, then, ought to include the claim that one of the parts of an emotion is a thought with propositional, evaluative content, where that content can be nonconceptual. That is compatible, of course, with thinking that the emotions of indignation, homesickness, and existential angst have conceptual content. In fact, an adult human is capable of having the very same emotion with nonconceptual content in one instance (fear when he confronts a bear in the wilderness) and conceptual content in another (fear when he sees his credit card statement).

So D'Arms and Jacobson took out the intentionality of emotion when they took out its constitutive thought along with an explanation of why one syndrome gets activated while the others do not. I have brought the thought back in. But there are others – Peter Goldie, Michael Stocker, and Patricia Greenspan – who think that the affective component of an emotion *also* contributes to the intentionality of emotion. I agree with these philosophers that sensations are, at least in part, representational mental states, but I

intentionality of emotions I offer is compatible with whatever the right philosophical story is about how a mental state gets its content. (I would like to thank a referee of this paper for asking me to clarify this point).

disagree with their claims about what those sensations represent and with their more general claim that they contribute to the intentionality of emotion. I presently turn to the most recent articulation and defense of the claims to which I object.

“Feeling Towards”. Goldie thinks an essential feature of a theory of the emotions must include an account of the feelings of an emotion, and that is because, he claims, the feelings of an emotion contribute to an emotion’s intentionality. The feelings of which Goldie speaks, however, are not those of which the James-Lange theory makes much: the sensations that accompany bodily changes. In fact, Goldie explicitly contrasts the feelings he is thinking of with those of the bodily changes, claiming that the former are essentially intentional while the latter have a “borrowed intentionality.” Those without borrowed intentionality are directed at objects in the world, viz. the intentional object of the emotion. To indicate that these feelings are essentially intentional he calls them *feelings towards*.

Goldie’s view, if right, may answer some of the questions compound accounts of the emotions face. That is because, on his view, at least in typical cases, the parts of the emotion (the evaluative representation, feelings towards, and physiological sensation) all have the same intentional object, and it is perhaps *prima facie* plausible to claim that if each of the parts of the whole are intentional and have the same intentional object then the whole is an intentional state that has a single intentional object identical with the intentional objects of its parts.²⁰ But Goldie’s articulation of the nature of a feeling towards is less than perspicuous. He offers some examples to demonstrate what he

²⁰ As demonstrated below, however, that inference is illegitimate; see footnote 40.

means, and provides a few abstract characterizations of the mental state that is feeling towards, but none are particularly helpful.

One example he provides is taken from Michael Stocker.²¹ The example is of someone who judges that the ice he is skating on is dangerous but who does not fear it until he comes to slip and fall. Goldie offers the following.

I only thought of the ice as dangerous; now I feel fear towards the ice. Coming to think of it in this new way is not to be understood as consisting of thinking of it in the old way, plus some added-on phenomenal ingredient—feeling, perhaps; rather, the whole way of experiencing, or being conscious of, the world is now new...The difference between 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, although it might be that this difference cannot be captured in words.²²

So on Goldie's view, one does not (merely) believe that the ice is dangerous, but one now "feels fear towards" it, where the feelings are not "added-on phenomenal ingredient[s]." But what is the additional content of which he speaks? Goldie says, "[E]motional feeling towards an object...is a feeling towards that thing as being a particular way or as having

²¹ For a critique of Stocker in particular, see Griffiths (1997), 36-38.

²² Goldie (2000), 60.

certain properties or features.²³ But then Goldie says nothing about what those properties or features are, and even says that we might not be able to capture them in words. But we should certainly be able to, or at least we are owed an explanation for why we cannot. After all, we have words for various properties and features – why not these ones? No answer is forthcoming from Goldie. To make things more unintelligible, Goldie adds that “in feeling towards, the feeling is essentially related to the content so there could not be some other psychological episode, say belief or thinking of, with the same content but with no feeling.”²⁴ So, unlike belief and desire, which can have identical contents by virtue of being relations to the same proposition, the content of a feeling towards is special; no other attitude can be had in relation to its content; it must be, then, that the content of a feeling towards is not propositional. This is not an objection in itself, but we are certainly owed an explanation of what kind of content it does have. Further, whether a particular type of feeling has a characteristic representational content is a claim that is vindicated by actually specifying that content.²⁵ As things stand, we are left with the rather mysterious notion of a content whose name we cannot speak or believe or desire, and though it lacks propositional content it still manages to be intentional. And further, they are feelings that are not bodily feelings, and bodily feelings “borrow” their intentionality.

²³ *Ibid*, 58.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 72.

²⁵ Greenspan (1988) holds a similar position, though on her view the object of the feeling is the evaluative proposition that is partly constitutive of the emotion.

In recent work, Goldie has attempted to clarify what he is trying to get at with his notion of ‘feeling towards’ by way of a discussion of a kind of response to Frank Jackson’s Knowledge Argument.²⁶ In that well known thought experiment, Mary knows all of the physical facts about redness, but when she experiences redness for the first time, she allegedly learns a new fact, viz. what it is like to see red. Jackson took his argument to indicate that Mary learns a non-physical fact but physicalists have responded in a variety of ways, one of which Goldie repurposes for his view. The physicalist response with which Goldie is concerned claims that Mary does not learn a new fact, but rather acquires a new kind of concept, a *phenomenal concept* (as opposed to a *physical concept*, or what Goldie prefers to call a *theoretical concept*), and thus *a new way of thinking* about red.²⁷ Goldie takes this line of thought and applies it to the case of emotion. He thinks that the person who falls on the ice but who was previously unafraid only had a theoretical concept of danger before the accident and afterwards possesses a phenomenal concept of danger. The phenomenal concept of danger now figures in the contents of the person’s thoughts, and so the person has a new way of thinking about the dangers of the ice; he “feels fear towards the ice.”

But Goldie’s attempt to repurpose the (controversial) distinction between phenomenal and physical concepts is deeply problematic for at least two reasons.²⁸ First,

²⁶ See Goldie (2002) and (2009). I am grateful to a referee of this paper for bringing these articles to my attention.

²⁷ Goldie is a bit cagier about the distinction between phenomenal and physical concepts, claiming that they are not so much distinct as that one is a further refinement of the other.

²⁸ For arguments against the distinction, see Tye (2009) and Ball (2009).

Goldie claims that the contents of “feelings towards” are special, in that no other attitude can be taken towards them, e.g. belief and desire. That is because, he claims, the contents of “feelings towards” is nonpropositional.²⁹ But when one employs a phenomenal concept in thought, those thoughts *are* propositional; Mary can now have beliefs about redness deploying her phenomenal concept of red. Second, and perhaps even more problematic for Goldie, is that phenomenal concepts are just that: they are concepts, and neither they nor the thoughts that contain them as contents must have a phenomenological character. Phenomenal concepts are concepts that require a certain kind of experience in order to be acquired, but thoughts that deploy those concepts do not themselves have the phenomenological character of those experiences. Mary can go back to her black and white room and have thoughts about redness, where those thoughts contain a phenomenal concept of red, without having an experience as of something’s being red. So Goldie’s appeal to phenomenal concepts in an attempt to elucidate “feeling towards” is a non-starter; even if one can deploy a new way of thinking about the dangerousness of the ice – thinking about it with phenomenal concepts – that simply does not say anything about the phenomenology of emotion.

One wonders what would make Goldie think he is referring to anything at all when he tells us of these feeling towards. It seems he is moved by what he takes to be the account of the phenomenology of emotion. Here is another example he offers.

You are sitting at your desk, struggling with a particularly intractable philosophical problem and getting more and more frustrated at your

²⁹ Goldie (2009).

inability to find your way out of it. This is an emotional feeling of frustration towards the object of your emotion—the philosophical problem. Then, perhaps quite suddenly, you come to have a confined feeling in your chest, so that it is hard to take a deep breath. This is a bodily feeling. But not just that, because the two feelings are immediately combined in consciousness: we might say that you feel physically hemmed in by the philosophical problem; the room suddenly seems so *stuffy*, and you feel you just have to get up and get some fresh air—to ‘clear my head’, you might say, as if getting fresh air *is* clearing up the philosophical problem. So the bodily feeling is thoroughly infused with the intentionality of the emotion; and, in turn, the feelings towards is infused with a bodily characterization.³⁰

This example is of little help. For one, it is unclear what the object of the frustration is, as he describes it. In the first sentence the reader is told the object of his frustration is his inability to solve the problem, and in the second sentence the reader is told the object of his frustration is the problem itself. But which is it – a state of oneself or the problem? Second, it seems a mischaracterization to say that one feels physically hemmed in by the problem itself. One may very well feel hemmed in, and one may recognize that one’s feeling is caused by a (mis)perception of the walls of the room being very close to one’s body, but one need not feel “being hemmed in” *at* the walls. Similarly, one may feel frustration because or as a result of one’s inability to solve the

³⁰ Goldie (2000), 57.

problem, and understand one's frustration as being caused by the recognition of one's inability, but one need not feel frustration towards one's inability. Third, what one is doing when one says one wants to "clear one's head" is that one's thinking is getting muddled and one needs to step back so the torrent of thoughts and confusion can subside. I cannot see any reason for thinking – in fact, I cannot make any sense of the thought – that one's bodily feelings are "infused with the intentionality" of the emotion.

After his discussion of feelings towards Goldie says, "As for what I have called feelings towards, I hope to have gone some way to showing that this notion is not suspect in respect of its essentially combining feeling and intentionality."³¹ Not only is this not the case, but one wonders why he would have thought *that* was something that would strike readers as suspect. For the idea that a mental state can be both a feeling and intentional is an idea that is familiar and widespread among philosophers of mind. Indeed, in light of all the attention the idea has received by such philosophers, Goldie's introduction of the jargon "feeling towards" is rather odd; there is a very familiar way of putting the point: that feelings can have representational content.

As I indicated immediately prior to our discussion of Goldie, I agree that the sensations characteristic of emotion are constituents of emotion and that they have representational content. But the sensations of which I speak *are* the bodily sensations, and they do not represent the object of the emotion but instead states of one's body. Thus, insofar as they represent changes of one's body, and emotions do not (typically) have states of one's body as their objects, I *do not* think sensations contribute to the intentionality of emotion. In the next section I explain how I am conceiving of the

³¹ *Ibid*, 83.

sensations, and my discussion of the emotions of infants and humans is of help here as well; sensations are (at least in part, if not entirely) mental states with nonconceptual representational content.

Sensations. The James-Lange theory of the emotions, I noted at the outset, places feelings or sensations – mental states with a phenomenological character – at the core of its account. And philosophers of emotion rejected it, in part, because while emotions are intentional, sensations are not, and so we cannot identify the former with the latter. And this conception of sensations as nonintentional (and so nonrepresentational) has been maintained in the contemporary literature in the philosophy of emotion. John Deigh says that such sensations “lack thought content” and are “not directed at objects.” Goldie claims that “[e]motions are not brute feelings like toothache, which we cannot make sense of; all we can do is give toothaches a causal explanation.”³² But research in the philosophy of mind demonstrates that this is a mistake. We ought to treat sensations as having (at least in part) representational content.³³ This point should not be belabored

³² Goldie seems to have changed his view about this in his (2009).

³³ Representationalists about consciousness (e.g. Tye (1995)) think this is all the content a sensation has while non-representationalists deny this and claim instead that sensations have intrinsic properties, viz. qualia. But even many non-representationalists think that sensations *also* have representational content. Christopher Peacocke, for example, thinks that though “every perceptual experience has sensational properties [viz. nonrepresentational properties having to do with “what it’s like”]...representational content is (for me) also part of what it's like to have the experience” (2001b), 612.

either but it is important in an attempt to determine what the intentional object of an emotion is if one endorses a conception of emotions according to which emotions supervene on other mental states. For suppose one reduces an emotion to the members of its subvenience base, and sensations have an intentional object distinct from the intentional object of the evaluative representation; it will turn out that emotions have (at least) two intentional objects, and this would constitute an important departure from both dominant accounts of the emotions and common sense.

A particularly clear account of an example of a sensation with nonconceptual representational content is Michael Tye's treatment of pain; if any mental state is one with a phenomenal character, then pain is surely one of them. Tye claims an experience of pain is a representation as of tissue damage in a certain region of the body. The experience of feeling pain in one's leg is a mental representation as of tissue damage in one's leg. And since pains are representations, they can be misrepresentations. One may experience a pain that represents tissue damage in one's arm when really the damage is in the heart. That explains why, when one goes to the doctor, one informs her that something is wrong with one's arm. What is more, pain does not only represent damaged tissue, but represents it as being damaged in a particular way.

A twinge of pain is a pain that represents a mild, brief disturbance. A throbbing pain is one that represents a rapidly pulsing disturbance. Aches represent disorders that occur *inside* the body, rather than on the surface. These disorders are represented as having volume, as gradually beginning and ending, as increasing in severity and then slowly fading away...A

stabbing pain is one that represents sudden damage over a particular well-defined body region [and so on].³⁴

So pain is, on a widespread view, at least partly representational. And it is nonconceptual as well. For, while animals and infants lack concepts, they do experience pain, and it is overwhelmingly plausible that their pains also represent tissue damage; a dog may lick its arm in an attempt to nurse it when in fact the damaged tissue is in its heart. Just as adult humans can get it wrong, so too can less mentally sophisticated animals. But if such animals have representational states with phenomenal content, where the representation is as of tissue damage in a limb, and those animals do not have concepts, then the contents of those mental states must be nonconceptual.

This leads us to reject Deigh's and Goldie's view of the sensations characteristic of emotion; those sensations have nonconceptual representational content. What do the sensations characteristic of emotion represent? Most plausibly, the very changes that cause them; the feeling of thumping in one's chest, for example, which often accompanies fear, is a representation as of one's heart beating powerfully, the feeling of the muscles of one's eyelids flexing and more air hitting one's eyes represent one's eyes widening, as in cases of surprise, and so on. That there can be mental states with nonconceptual representational content, then, turns out to be a significant fact for anyone who wants to understand the emotions. Both the evaluative representations and sensations that are partly constitutive of emotions can have nonconceptual representational content, *but they represent different things*. The evaluative

³⁴ Tye (1997), 269.

representation represents an object as having an evaluative property, while the sensations represent changes in one's body.

Summary and Transition. We have so far learned i) that one part of an emotion is an evaluative representation that may have conceptual or nonconceptual content, ii) that another part of an emotion is a sensation with nonconceptual representational content, and iii) to ask, given these parts (and others), how ought we to understand the relation between a) the emotion and its parts and b) the intentionality of an emotion and the intentionality of its parts? I now turn to answering these last questions with my own compound account of the emotions. That account, in a sentence, is this: emotions are mental states that supervene, most immediately, on other mental states (viz. evaluative representation, sensation, and desire), with token-token but not type-type identity, and their intentionality supervenes on the intentionality of the evaluative representation that serve as part of the subvenience base of an emotion.

II. Emotions as Supervening Mental States with a Single Intentional Object

Compounds. I think most philosophers are right in claiming that an evaluative representation must be a member of the subvenience base.³⁵ Anger without a representation as of someone's having slighted one, fear without a representation as of something dangerous, etc. is simply not possible. Similarly, I think those philosophers who claim that sensation is a necessary feature of emotion are right as well; if there is not

³⁵ This is a view shared not only by all cognitivists, but also by Prinz (2004), who sees his account as a descendant of the James-Lange theory.

something it is like for the person to have the mental state they are in, they are not in an emotional state. And I think desire, or more generally, a motivational state, must be a part of emotion. If we deny that desire is essential we would have to grant as possible a person who has emotions but no desires, or at least no desires that are related to those emotions. We would have to allow, for instance, a case of someone in a state of fear who has no desire to fight or flee, or any other desire that is related to fear in the appropriate way, disgust with no accompanying desire to be (metaphorically) distanced or isolated from the object of disgust, and anger with no desire to retaliate.³⁶ But these cases strike me as impossible; it is a conceptual truth that a mental state that is not essentially connected to a desire to fight or flee is not the mental state of fear, a mental state that is not essentially connected to a desire to be isolated from the object of that mental state is not disgust, and a mental state that is not essentially connected to a desire to retaliate is not anger.³⁷ But I do not think that physiological changes are constitutive of emotion,

³⁶ There are cases in which one is frozen with fear, but I take those to be cases in which one very deeply wants to run but finds oneself unable to; that is part of what is so terrifying about such situations.

³⁷ A referee for this paper has pointed out that even if these emotions are conceptually connected to some motivational aspect, perhaps not all emotions are. For example, aesthetic emotions – e.g. awe and wonder – might not have motivational components. I am not sure of this. It is difficult to conceive of someone who is in awe of an object but who has no desire, for instance, to protect it against assault, or to praise it in the presence of others. (Those desires may not actually motivate, of course, as when the object is not under assault, but if desires are conceived of as dispositions to action, then it is sufficient

and I think this even though I think that the sensations of emotion represent (some of) these physiological changes.

The following case demonstrates the non-essentiality of physiological changes to emotion: one has an evaluative representation as of a bear being nearby and dangerous, one has a sensation as of one's heart thumping, eyes widening, and hair raising, and one has a desire to flee, but, while the evaluative representation is veridical, the sensations are not; one does not actually undergo the physiological changes characteristic of fear but one is led to have sensations that represent those changes by, say, a neuroscientist manipulating the signals sent to one's brain. The heart is beating at its usual pace, the eyes have not actually widened, and the hair is not raised, even though it feels like anything but that. But such a person seems quite obviously afraid of the bear. So we ought not to regard the physiological changes as constituents of an emotion even if they

to ascribe a desire to protect an object if, in relevant counterfactual conditions, that person were motivated to protect the object). But it is equally difficult to see whose intuitions on questions like these are to be preferred, and perhaps I am wrong about these emotions containing a motivational element. In the case that there are emotions (awe and wonder might be two of them) that do not essentially involve a motivational element, I think those emotions are simply constituted by fewer parts, or rather, those emotions have one fewer member of their respective subvenience bases. That is compatible with the view I am defending concerning the intentionality of emotion when emotions are understood as wholes made of parts, or as mental states that supervene on other mental states.

are, typically, the cause of one of the members of the subvenience base of an emotion.³⁸

Emotions are mental states that supervene, most immediately, on other mental states.

So let us move forward with the claim that emotions have as members of their subvenience base an evaluative representation, sensation(s), and desire(s). What are the relations that obtain between an emotion and the members of its subvenience base?

Just as mental states that supervene on neural states are multiply realizable, in the sense that a given type of mental state might be tokened by a variety of neural states, so too are emotions; a given emotion type can be tokened by a variety of mental states. Thus, on a given occasion, it might be that the emotion supervenes on R(epresentation)₁, D(esire)₁, and S(ensation)₁, while on another occasion it supervenes on R₂, D₂, and S₂; one's fear may supervene on the belief that the bear is dangerous, the desire to flee, and the sensation of one's heart thumping powerfully, while on another occasion one's fear supervenes on the (unendorsed) seeming that the spider is dangerous (a perceptual representation as of the spider being dangerous), the desire to fight, and the feeling of the hair on the back of one's neck raising. So a type-type theory with regards to the emotions is not tenable; a given type of emotion is not identical to a given type of compound of R, D, and S, just as (I do not think) a given type of mental state is identical to a given type of neural state. But a token-token theory is tenable. A token emotion is identical to a token

³⁸ This is the view neuroscientist Damasio (1994) defends as well. Emotions, he claims, can be the result of actual physiological changes or an "as-if loop", the latter of which results in effects that are typical of the former without those changes actually occurring.

compound of R, D, and S, just as a token belief or desire is identical to a token neural state.³⁹

I have thus far been speaking as though emotions are things one either has or does not, as though it were not a matter of degree. But, of course, one can have an emotion to varying degrees, and the position I am defending readily accounts for that fact. The intensity of an emotion is a function of the intensity of the sensations and the strength of desires that serve as the subvenience base – the degree to which they are felt – and/or the degree of motivational power the desire has (relative to other desires the person has). Albert may fear more intensely than Beth if, despite their having evaluative representations with the same content, the sensations he has are more intense and/or the desires he has are more powerful. Greater intensity does not entail a greater probability to act, however, since the greater intensity may be constituted by a greater degree of sensation and not desire (assuming that there may be fluctuations in the intensity of the sensations while the strength of the desire remains constant). Further, greater intensity of both sensations and desire in Albert as compared to Beth does not entail that if Beth acts fearfully then so will Albert, and that is because whether one acts is a function of the strength of one's desires relative to one's other desires. In fact, Albert and Beth can have

³⁹ One might attempt to maintain a type-type theory in the familiar way such theories are usually maintained; just as one might claim there is pain_{human} and pain_{octopus}, one might claim that there are types of emotions that are identical to types of compounds of R, D, and S. But even if one finds this plausible in the case of pain, it seems much more implausible in the case of emotion, since such type variations will occur within a single individual throughout that individual's lifetime.

the identical degree of a given emotion but, since the rest of their desiderative constitution is not identical, one may be led to act from the desire constitutive of the emotion while the other is not.

Given this understanding of the structure of emotion, what ought we to say about the intentionality of emotion and its relation to the intentionality of the members of its subvenience base? I turn to that question presently.

Intentionality. If the intentionality of emotion is reducible to the intentionality of each of the members of its subvenience base a given emotion would have many intentional objects, for it would not only have as its object whatever the intentional object of the evaluative representation is, but also all those physiological changes that result in sensations that in turn represent the changes that caused them. The objects of one's fear, then, would be all these things (and more). But this picture of things seems wrong, and we should not think we are forced to it by the nature of supervenience. That is, we should not think that because the emotion supervenes on some mental states, each with their own intentional object, that the emotion must share in their intentionality. In general, there may be a supervening property that is had by a whole that does not share in the intentionality of its parts. One may, for example, create a monument to fallen soldiers out of biographies about Andy Warhol. The books are about Andy Warhol but the statue is not about him at all; the statue is about fallen soldiers. So we should not be led by a general conception of supervenience to endorse the claim that the intentional object of an

emotion must be identical to any, all, or a subset of, the intentional objects of the mental states that constitute the emotion's subvenience base.⁴⁰

Similarly, we should not let the fact that emotions are experienced – that there is something it is like to have an emotion – lead us to think that emotions are about the person having the emotion. This amounts to saying that just because sensations are essential constituents of emotion, these sensations, despite their having intentional objects, may not (and I think they do not) do anything to fix the intentional object of the emotion. This is not peculiar to emotions. Perceptual representations, after all, have a phenomenological character, but the perceptual representation is about what one is perceiving and not about oneself.⁴¹ That is, even if certain sensations are intrinsic to perceptual representations, the representation to which they are intrinsic is not about the person having the representation. Similarly, even though there are sensations intrinsic to emotions, emotions need not be about the person having the emotions. Indeed, even granting, as some do, that beliefs have a phenomenological character, beliefs are certainly not about the person having the belief.⁴² We no more mean to imply that emotions are about or directed at the person having the emotion than we mean to imply that John's

⁴⁰ This example constitutes a counterexample to the possible inference Goldie may have in mind from all of the parts of a whole having identical intentional objects with the whole having the same intentional object.

⁴¹ For a view that denies this, see Searle (1992).

⁴² For the view that beliefs have a phenomenological character, see Searle (1992), Strawson (1994), Chalmers (1996), Horgan and Tienson (2002), and Pitt (2004).

belief that Napoleon lost in Russia is about John, even if there is something it is like for John to have that belief.

So neither considerations having to do with supervenience nor the nature of mental states with a phenomenological character should lead us to think that the set of intentional objects of an emotion must be identical to the set of intentional objects that constitute the subvenience base of an emotion. But what is more, we have reason for thinking that, at least sometimes, the intentional object of an emotion is not identical to the intentional object of any of the members of its subvenience base. That is because, in part, the evaluative representations, sensations, and desires that constitute the subvenience bases of emotions are propositional attitudes; they are attitudes that are constituted by standing in a certain relation to a proposition, or put differently, the intentional object of these attitudes is a proposition. But emotions are not, as many have noted, relations to propositions; people fear bears, get angry at their friends, get homesick, etc. This distinction is even captured in our natural language; we say people believe *that* such-and-such, think *that* such-and-such, indicating that the such-and-such is to be filled in by a proposition, but we say people are afraid *of* something, angry *at* so-and-so, and so on. Thus, the intentional object of emotion is not identical to the intentional object of any of the members of its subvenience base; it has an intentionality all its own.

There are two caveats to this claim, however. The first is that this is not to say that the intentionality of an emotion comes from nowhere. It is no coincidence, after all, that the fear is about the bear and the evaluative representation constitutive of the emotion is about the bear. So what we ought to say is that an emotion is a mental state

whose intentionality supervenes on the intentionality of the evaluative representation; one cannot have a change in the intentional object of the emotion without a change in the intentional object of the evaluative representation. The second caveat is related to the first. It is that, while sometimes we are afraid of the bear, where the bear is the concrete individual that is the intentional object of the emotion, we are sometimes afraid that the bear will attack us; that *does* look like an emotion that has a proposition as its object. If some cases truly are like this, then in those cases the intentional object of the emotion is identical to the intentional object of the evaluative representation.⁴³ That does not undermine the claim that the intentionality of an emotion supervenes on the intentionality of the evaluative representation, of course, since it is trivially true that everything supervenes on itself.

Concluding Thoughts Concerning the Rationality of Emotion

Though I have not discussed issues relating to the rationality of emotion, I take it that the argumentation I have provided about the intentionality of emotion bears on how we ought to conceive of the rationality of emotion. For supposing that there are reasons for emotion, we may ask whether a reason to have an emotion just is reducible to the set of reasons for having each of the members of its subvenience base, a reason to have a

⁴³ Note that one may treat all cases of emotion like this, claiming that one never is afraid directly of the bear but rather afraid that the bear will do such-and-such. I am skeptical of that view, but I will not argue against it here. For a defense of the view that there are two types of fear, see King (2002). For others who share our skepticism, see Crane (2001) and Montague (2007). For a non-skeptic, see Bealer (1982).

subset of those members, or a reason all its own. I cannot answer this question satisfactorily here, but I would like to close with some interesting questions that point in the direction of research on the rationality of emotions that I think is thus far underdeveloped.

It is *prima facie* implausible that a necessary condition for having a reason for an emotion is that one has a reason to have each of the members of the subvenience base since one of those members – the sensations – are not reasons-responsive mental states; they are not the kinds of things for which one can have a reason. Thus, if a condition for having a reason for an emotion is that one have a reason for each of the members of its subvenience base, that condition would never be met, and we would have to deny the claim that there are reasons for emotion. I take this to be an unhappy, because false, conclusion.

The natural thing to do here is to claim about reasons for emotion what was claimed about the intentionality of emotion; if emotions are not, as such, about the person having the emotion, but are instead about whatever the content of the evaluative representation is about, then we have *prima facie* reason to think the rationality of the emotions is akin to the rationality of the evaluative representation. That is some reason, at least, for thinking that reasons for emotion are akin to epistemic reasons. On the other hand, another member of the subvenience base, desires, are reasons-responsive states, and reasons for desires are typically taken to be practical reasons; one might, then, think of reasons for emotion as akin to practical reasons. How reasons for emotion can be akin to both epistemic and practical reasons, however, is unclear, and calls for further investigation.

I do not have the space here to offer an account of the rationality of emotion. I hope, however, to have provided a persuasive account of the emotions so that when we are told we have a reason to have one, we know what it is we are being told to have. I also hope to have done something to encourage philosophers of emotion to avail themselves of some of the important work their colleagues have undertaken in the neighboring field of the philosophy of mind; that research, coupled with the relatively recent burst of interest and progress in theories of epistemic and practical reason and rationality, is sure to yield fruitful results in the research on the emotions.⁴⁴

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