INTENTIONALITY, KNOWLEDGE AND FORMAL OBJECTS

Kevin Mulligan (Geneva)

§1 Intentionality

Any philosophy of intentionality, of the property peculiar to mental acts, states and activities of being "directed" towards or about something, should contain many chapters. It should provide a taxonomy and an account of mental acts, states and activities. It should provide an analysis of the relations and other ties hiding behind the metaphor of directedness. And it should provide an account of the sorts of things mental acts, states and activities are directed towards. A philosophy of intentionality should, further, tell us about the intentionality of all the main types of mental states, acts and activities. It should tell us, at the very least, about the intentionality of

1

acquaintance, admiration, attention, belief that, belief in, certainty, choice, deliberation, desire, doubt, expectation, hate, hope, imagination, judgement, knowledge, love, meaning that p, memory, perception, preference, regret, shame, sympathy, striving, supposition, time-consciousness, trust, uncertainty, understanding, willing and wishes

and not limit itself to, say, the intentionality of belief and desire. A philosophy of intentionality should provide an account of the difference between collective or shared intentionality, for example that of shared shame or shared certainties, and solitary intentionality, such as that of judgement. It should also tell us how the intentionality of different acts and states hang together, how, for example, the intentionality of emotions is related to the intentionality of perception and belief, how the intentionality of visual imagination is related to that of vision, a desideratum which cannot be met by philosophies of intentionality which consider only a handful of types of mental states and acts.

One feature of many mental states, acts and activities is that they can miss their target. Beliefs, for example, may be false. Mental states which can go wrong contrast strikingly with states and acts such as knowledge and perception which cannot go wrong. In what follows, I explore the relations between states and acts which can go wrong, on the one hand, and knowledge, on the other hand. I consider two accounts of states and acts which can go wrong, the theory of satisfaction conditions and the theory of correctness conditions (§2). I then consider two objections to the theory of correctness

conditions. First, that correctness conditions are not truth-evaluable. Second, that one central type of correctness condition, for judgement and belief, is superfluous. I then argue that one plausible account of the intentionality of knowledge gives us some reason to reject the objections to the very idea of correctness conditions. The preferred account comes in two parts, an account of knowledge of facts (§3) and an account of knowledge of value (§4). Finally, I argue that the intentionality of knowledge, understood in the preferred way, is more fundamental than the intentionality of acts and states which can go wrong (§5).

§2 Correctness Conditions vs Satisfaction Conditions

Consider those states and acts which may go wrong. One account of what it is for states and acts to go wrong or miss their target, is the theory of satisfaction conditions. This theory is part of an account of what it is for such states and acts to enjoy the property of intentionality. A simplified version of Searle's account of the satisfaction conditions for belief is that the satisfaction condition for a belief that p is: p. Similarly, a simplified version of the satisfaction condition for x's desire to F is:

Cause (x's desire that Fx, Fx)[1]

Another account of what it is for states and acts to go wrong is the theory

---

[1] Cf. Searle 1983 p. 13 (belief), ch. 3 (desire).

of correctness conditions, a theory associated with Husserl. In the following table, the sentences on the right express putative correctness conditions for the psychological reports on the left:

x desires to F	x ought to F ("Tunsollen")
x wishes that p	It ought to be the case that Fx ("Seinsollen")
x values y	y is valuable
x admires y etc	y is admirable etc
x "values" that p	That p is valuable, is a "Wertverhalt"
x regrets that p etc	It is regrettable that p etc
x is ashamed that p	It is shameful that p
x prefers y to z	y is better than z
x judges (believes) that p	The state of affairs that p obtains
	The proposition that p is true
x conjectures that p	It is probable that p
x has an interrogative attitude wrt p	It is questionable whether p
x doubts whether p	It is doubtful whether p
x is certain that p	It is certain that p

Kenny distinguishes between the material and formal objects of mental attitudes and argues that emotional and other attitudes have formal objects[2]. He attributes to the medieval schoolmen the view that the formal object of fear is a future evil, of envy another's good. Similarly, one might say that propositions, states of affairs, truth and obtaining, values, norms and probabilities are the formal objects of different attitudes, states and acts. Then fear will have, for example, a dog as its material or proper object and a future evil or disvalue as its formal object. A conjecture that the dog will attack has as its material object the dog and the probability that it will attack as its formal object.

It is a peculiarity of judgement (and belief, convictions and certainty) that it seems to have two correctness conditions: the truth of propositions and the obtaining of states of affairs or the existence of facts. We shall return to this feature of judgement and belief.

How should the theory of correctness conditions be formulated? Presumably, as follows:

x desires to F $\rightarrow$ (x correctly (rightly) desires to F iff x ought to F).

x wishes that p $\rightarrow$ (x correctly (rightly) wishes that p iff it ought to be the case that p).

---

[2] Kenny 1963, ch. 9. On the formal objects of emotions, cf. Teroni 2007.

x conjectures that p → (x correctly (rightly) conjectures that p iff it is probable that p).

And so on. But the theory of correctness conditions contains an extra type of claim, an explanatory claim:

If x correctly judges that p, then (x correctly judges that p *because* the state of affairs that p obtains).

If x correctly judges that p, then (x correctly judges that p *because* the proposition that p is true).

If x correctly conjectures that p, then (x correctly conjectures that p *because* it is probable that p).

And so on.

What are the relations between correctness and satisfaction conditions?

First, "correct" ("right", "richtig"), unlike "satisfied", is a normative predicate. Correctness (right) and incorrectness (wrong) constitute one of the three main families of normative or non-theoretical predicates along with the family of deontic predicates and the family of value predicates.

Second, the fit of satisfaction is either mind-to-world fit (belief) or world-to-mind fit (desire). But the fit of correctness is always mind-to-world fit. Attitudes, states and acts are correct, if they are correct, *because* the world is the way the correctness conditions say it is.

6

Third, correctness conditions, unlike satisfaction conditions, refer to formal objects (propositions, states of affairs) or are dominated by formal predicates or functors (truth, obtaining, value, probability).

Fourth, mental states and acts or their contents, it is claimed, represent their satisfaction conditions. Do mental states and acts represent their correctness conditions ? This is a question which needs to be posed and answered for each type of mental act and state which is supposed to have correctness conditions. I shall briefly consider three cases in order to make plausible the view that mental states and attitudes do not represent their correctness conditions.

Consider emotions. Many philosophers have thought that

If x favours y, then x believes that y is valuable,
If x disfavours y, then x believes that y is disvaluable.

Thus Kenny says:

It is not, of course, correct to say e.g. that the formal object of envy is another's good *tout court*: one must say that it is something *believed to* be good…(Kenny 1963 p. 193).

But is it not possible to have a pro-attitude towards an object, to admire a gesture or an ankle, for example, without believing it to be valuable, for example, graceful? Might a creature not undergo certain emotions and lack

any value concepts? Might a creature not have emotions based on simple seeing and lack beliefs entirely? In §4 I shall put forward a view of emotions according to which to undergo an emotion is indeed to stand in an intentional relation to value. But this relation, as we shall see, is not belief nor does it involve any representation of value.

Consider desire. Is it a condition on desire that whoever desires employs a deontic concept? Considerations very like those adduced against the claim that emotions involve axiological beliefs suggest that desires do not constitutively involve deontic beliefs.

Judgements and beliefs, it is often claimed, aim at truth or make a claim to be true. Does this mean that if one judges that p, then one judges that p is true? But the ensuing regress would not be harmless. Suppose that "It is raining" and "That it is raining is true" express the very same thought or proposition or are synonymous. Then to judge that is raining is just to judge that that it is raining is true. But since

That it is raining is true because it is raining

our two sentences cannot express the very same thought or be synonymous.

Are the theory of satisfaction conditions and the theory of correctness conditions rival accounts of intentionality? It is obvious that the thesis that beliefs have satisfaction conditions and the thesis that they have correctness conditions are not incompatible. And the same is true of desires. Nevertheless it seems that emotions and preferences have correctness conditions but no

satisfaction conditions. It is true that, if emotions and preferences were definable in terms of beliefs and desires[3], then it might be possible to show that emotions and preferences do indeed have satisfaction conditions, combinations of the satisfactions conditions of the belief-desire combinations which constitute them. But if, as seems plausible, emotions and preferences are a *sui generis* category of mental states and acts, then it is difficult to see what their satisfactions conditions might look like. If this is right, then the theory of intentionality in terms of correctness conditions enjoys the advantage of greater generality over the theory of intentionality in terms of satisfaction conditions.

There is one final striking difference between correctness and satisfaction conditions. The former but not the latter are widely held to be problematic. Correctness conditions refer to entities the existence of which has been roundly rejected by naturalists and by nominalists – propositions and states of affairs. Correctness conditions employ predicates to ascribe properties which have often been considered suspect – value, oughtness. Indeed much twentieth century philosophy has been marked by scepticism about formal objects, properties and relations. Thus philosophers have argued not only that there are no propositions or facts (obtaining states of affairs) but also that "It is raining" and "The proposition that it is raining is true" say the very same thing. It has been argued that value-ascriptions and norm-ascriptions have no truth-values, that probability talk can be dispensed with in favour of frequency talk. And so on.

---

[3] Cf. Searle 1983 pp. 31-36.

There is also an objection to one particular type of correctness condition, the conditions for judgement (belief, conviction, certainty). Mention of propositions or states of affairs in the correctness conditions for judgements, the objection goes, is superfluous. The only correctness condition we need is:

x judges that p → (x judges correctly that p iff p)[4].

How should a friend of correctness conditions react to the many different objections I lumped together under the claim that correctness conditions are problematic? To the objections that there are no propositions or states of affairs, no values and no norms? To the objection that some or all correctness conditions have no truth values? To the claim that correctness conditions for judgment and belief can be given without mentioning states of affairs or propositions ?

A philosopher who intends to provide a philosophy of intentionality and thinks that an account of the intentionality of attitudes, acts and states which can go wrong can be given in terms of correctness conditions must in any case provide a complementary account of the intentionality of knowledge. Suppose that a plausible account of the intentionality of knowledge could be shown to entail that there are facts, values, norms, probabilities etc.. Were that the case our philosopher would be able to kill two birds with one stone. He would have an account of the two main types of intentionality and his account of the

---

[4] Cf. Searle 1983 p. 13 and p. 23.

intentionality of knowledge would give him the very best of reasons for holding that correctness conditions are unproblematic.

What would such an account of the intentionality of knowledge look like? Is such an account plausible? In §3 I argue that knowledge that p is knowledge of facts. In §4 I identify the most plausible version of the view that there is knowledge of values.

§3 Knowledge & Facts

Is knowledge knowledge of facts?

Is *knowledge that p* knowledge of facts? Russell, Vendler (1967), Angelika Kratzer (2000) and Keith Hossack (forthcoming) give an affirmative question to this question. The perhaps more popular, negative, answer is given by Ramsey (1931) and Timothy Williamson (2000). The conception of facts which is shared by friends and enemies of the view that knowledge that p is knowledge of facts is not the view that facts are true truth-bearers, for example, propositions. The shared conception is one of two more robust accounts of facts. According to the first robust account a fact is just an obtaining state of affairs. According to the second robust account, a fact is just a *sui generis* type of entity in which objects exemplify properties or stand in relations. Each of the two robust accounts claims that facts contain objects and properties whereas propositions contain only concepts.

As far as I can tell, reflection on the concept of knowledge that p has not come up with any decisive argument in favour of the view that knowledge that p is knowledge of facts. There is nevertheless the possibility that types of knowledge other than knowledge that p amount to knowledge of facts and the possibility that reflection on the relations between knowledge that p and other types of knowledge might lead us to the conclusion that knowledge that p is, after all, knowledge of facts.

Is knowledge that p the only type of knowledge? No. We can distinguish at least four distinct kinds of knowledge. Knowledge is propositional or non-propositional, episodic or non-episodic. In distinguishing between propositional and non-propositional knowledge I have in mind only the distinction between what makes true knowledge ascriptions of the form "x knows that p" and what makes true ascriptions of the form "x knows y". Knowledge that p is propositional and non-episodic; it is either a relational state[5] or a disposition. Knowledge that p is the type of knowledge which dominates contemporary epistemology. But there are three other types of knowledge.

> There is coming to know that p or apprehending that p (*erkennen, dass p*),

which is propositional and episodic. There is no established or happy English translation of "erkennen" unless, like some anglophone epistemologists long

---

[5] Cf. Williamson 2000, Mulligan & Smith 1986, Smith 1984.

ago, we talk of an "act of knowing that". There is acquaintance, which is non-propositional and non-episodic ("I have known her for years"). And there is coming to be acquainted with (*Kenntnisnahme*) someone or something, which is non-propositional and episodic ("I made her acquaintance yesterday"). This is what might be called making the non-social acquaintance of something or someone.

How do the four types of knowledge hang together? One very plausible view is that apprehension typically marks the beginning of the state or disposition which is knowledge that p. And that coming to be acquainted with someone or something typically marks the beginning of the state or disposition of being acquainted with that person or thing. On this view, epistemic episodes are more fundamental than epistemic states or dispositions. The view is supported by the observation that we can always ask with respect to any claim to know that p or any claim to know someone "*How* do you know that p?", "*How* do you know her?" Questions of this type[6] make little sense with respect to belief claims:

*How does she believe that p?

It is perhaps the case in English that the following exchange is acceptable:

How does she believe that gender studies and cultural studies deserve more support than ancient philology and philosophy?

---

[6] Cf. Wittgenstein 1969 §550; Austin 1961 p. 46; Reiner 1934 p. 39.

Passionately.

But if this is possible, it is a peculiarity of English. The "how" in the "How do you know that p?" question translates into German as "woher", that is, "whence" (cf. Latin "unde"). And "Woher glaubt sie, dass p?" is not acceptable.

Answers to the "How does x know that p?" question specify the putative *source* of x's knowledge that p. And this source is the episode of coming to know that p. Answers to the "How does x know y?" question specify the putative source of x's knowledge of y. And this source is the episode of coming to be acquainted with y.

Is apprehension knowledge of facts? In order to introduce one of the main components of the answer I shall give to this question, I first consider the nature of making the acquaintance of something or someone, episodic knowledge by acquaintance.

Is seeing someone or something enough to constitute episodic acquaintance? Answers to this question will depend on the account of seeing employed. Suppose, with Dretske, that

x simply sees y iff y is visually differentiated for x

and that if x simply sees y and y = z, then x simply sees z. Does simple seeing so conceived suffice for making the acquaintance of someone or something?

Suppose a young child glimpses out of the corner of her eye a fat man, who is in fact the President. She has then seen the President. Has she become acquainted (in a non-social way) with the President? Does she enjoy epistemic contact with the President? Most of us, I suspect, would give a negative answer to this question. What further condition, then, must be satisfied by simple seeing if it is to count as coming to be acquainted with?

The relevant condition, I suggest, is

> If x comes to be visually acquainted with y, then x sees y at t1 and then at t2 and sees y at t2 *as the same object*.

Seeing things and people as the same, identification, is a phenomenon investigated in psychology under the name of "object constancy". Object constancy typically occurs in visual perception along with different types of property constancy, colour constancy, shape constancy etc..

Let us now return to our question: is apprehending that p knowledge of facts? What are the main rival answers to our question?

The nature of coming to know or apprehending that p is not a question at the heart of current epistemology. But if we bear in mind the main answers to the question "What is knowledge that p?" we can distinguish the following answers to the distinct question: "What is apprehending that p?".

Coming to know that p is either a simple mental episode or a complex mental episode. The most familiar version of the view that it is complex is

15

presumably the view that to come to know that p is to judge truly that p and for the judgement to be justified.

The nature of learning and the complexity of the ways in which we satisfy our desires to know make it unlikely that coming to know that p is always a simple type of act. But one apparently plausible illustration of the view that coming to know that p is not always complex is provided by instances of seeing that p. Suppose Sam sees that Maria is sad. Is this not a form of unanalysable epistemic contact? "See that" is factive, just as "see" is veridical. But just as the fact that Sam sees Maria does not make it true that he thereby makes her acquaintance, so seeing that Maria is sad is not the same as apprehending that she is sad. The missing ingredient, as before, is identification – a suggestion we shall return to shortly.

Is to come to know or apprehend that p just to judge truly that p and for the judgement to be justified? A number of impressive arguments have recently been marshalled against the parallel claim that knowledge that p is true, justified belief (Williamson 2000). Here is another argument to the same conclusion. If knowledge that p were a type of belief, however qualified, it would be possible to ask, with respect to any knowledge claim: "Why do you know that p"? But, as we have seen, this is not possible. This argument is not conclusive since it might be argued that it is the qualifications of belief which are supposed to constitute knowledge which make it inappropriate to ask the why question. A similar less than conclusive objection might be advanced against the view that to apprehend that p is just to judge, truly and for good reasons, that p.

Here is a better objection to the view that knowledge is a type of belief. Belief is either positive or negative. Negative belief is not the same thing as belief that not-p. Negative belief is disbelief. Belief and disbelief are polar opposites. Any characterisation of knowledge that p in terms of belief, however qualified, entails that knowledge that p itself comes in two kinds, positive and negative. But knowledge that p does not have this property. Knowledge has a contradictory opposite, ignorance, and a contrary opposite, error or illusion. But, unlike belief, knowledge does not come in two kinds, positive and negative.

Similarly, coming to know that p should not be understood as judging truly and for good reason that p for judging, too, comes in two polarly opposed kinds: positive judging or acceptance and denial or rejection[7].

The view that belief is not a component of knowledge that p and the view that judging is not a component of apprehending that p will become more intelligible if they can be combined with a plausible positive alternative account of the relation between knowledge that p and apprehending that p, on the one hand, and belief that p, on the other hand. I shall give such an alternative account below.

If coming to know that p is not a complex mental episode consisting of judging truly and for good reason that p, the question arises whether there is an alternative account of its complexity. The identification theory of coming

[7] Cf. Rumfitt 2000.

to know that p is just such an alternative. The identification theory is an alternative to the view that apprehension is simple. It takes apprehension to be a synthetic or complex act. But it also rejects the claim that to apprehend is to judge truly and for good reason. Let us consider again Sam's seeing that Maria is sad. If Sam sees that Maria is sad, then she is sad. But does Sam thereby come to know that she is sad ? No. A further condition needs to be satisfied:

Sam sees that Maria is sad at t1 and then at t2 and identifies what he sees at t1 and at t2

But how should this be understood? One bad answer is

*Sam identifies what he sees at t1, that Maria is sad, and what he sees at t2, that Maria is sad

This is a bad answer because

*That Maria is sad = that Maria is sad,

like all instances of

*That p = that q,

is unacceptable. All instances of

The fact that p = the fact that q,

18

on the other hand, are well-formed. This suggests that identification should be understood as follows:

> Sam identifies the fact that Maria is sad, which he sees at t1, and the fact that Maria is sad, which he sees at t2

Identification is a mental act, unlike the identity predicate or concept. To identify is not to make an identity judgement although identification typically provides us with good reason to form identity judgements. Similarly, one can identify facts without identifying them *as* facts.

Suppose Sam is asked whether Maria is sad. Motivated by the desire to reply to the question and the desire to know whether she is sad, he observes her. As before, the identification theory will not claim that

> *Sam identifies that Maria is sad, what Sam sees, and that Maria is sad, what Sam represents.

But rather that

> Sam identifies the fact that Maria is sad, which he sees, and the fact that Maria is sad, which he represents

As before, the identification theory does not require that Sam identifies facts *as* facts. But what does "represent" mean? I take it to mean that Sam is conceptually but not propositionally aware of the fact that Maria is sad.

19

The identification theory of coming to know that p or apprehension might be called the theory of "fact constancy" by analogy with the theory of object constancy in the area of simple seeing of things and persons. The identification theory of coming to know that p has implications which not all philosophers will find equally acceptable. For example that to come to know that p by inferring validly from known premises to p involves going through the inference at least twice. And, another example, that coming to know that p through testimony requires a double-take.

If knowledge that p is not a type of belief (does not contain belief) and if coming to know that p is not a type of judgement (does not contain judgement), how do these two types of epistemic contact with the world relate to judgment and to belief? Consider

If x apprehends that p, then x believes that p.

This is clearly false. Belief is a *reaction* to apprehending that p or to apparently apprehending that p[8]. That it is a reaction follows from the fact that belief comes in two varieties, positive belief and negative belief (disbelief). Reactions to phenomena of different sorts may be more or less well entrenched, likely or typical. But it is always a contingent matter whether or not a reaction of a certain kind to phenomena of certain kinds occurs.

---

[8] To believe, Augustine says, is "cum assensione cogitare" (de praed. sanct. 2 5).

Often, but not always, we react doxastically to coming to know that p or to apparently coming to know that p.

That we do so react is essential to the state of knowing that p. That is why

If x knows that p, then x believes that p.

What should we say about

If x comes to know that p, then x judges that p?

Judgement has often been held to be essentially characterised by an element of spontaneity denied to belief. But if we think of judgement as more or less silent assertion or denial, then it is plausible to say that we may but need not react assertively to coming to know that p or to seeming to come to know that p.

If the foregoing is correct, then knowledge that p has its source in coming to know that p. To come to know that p is to be aware of facts and to identify a fact given in one way with the same fact given in another way. Knowledge that p is, after all, knowledge of facts. But that this is so will only be apparent to us if we trace knowledge that p back to its roots, if we ask how we know that p. Thus the identification theory of coming to know that p seems to give the friend of correctness conditions three things he needs: the beginnings of an account of the intentionality of knowledge; reason to think that the reference to obtaining states of affairs or facts in the correctness conditions for belief

and judgement is neither superfluous nor problematic; an account of the way the intentionality of belief/judgement and that of knowledge that p hang together.

§4 Knowledge & Values

Perhaps the most problematic family of correctness conditions in §2 is the group of correctness conditions for emotions, wishes, preferences and desires. For these conditions are dominated by axiological and deontic predicates and functors. And sentences dominated by such predicates and functors are widely held to have no truth-values. Even philosophers who are prepared to allow that such sentences have truth values often reject one claim made by the friend of correctness conditions. Thus consider again

1   x regrets that p $\rightarrow$ (x correctly regrets that p iff it is regrettable that p)

2   If x correctly regrets that p, then (x correctly regrets that p *because* it is regrettable that p).

A friend of correctness conditions who thinks that these provide a partial account of the intentionality of one type of state or attitude endorses both (1) and (2). But (1) might be combined with the denial of (2) and endorsement of

3   If it is regrettable that p, then (it is regrettable that p *because* (x regrets that p $\rightarrow$ x correctly regrets that p)).

(1) and (3) yield one version of what are sometimes called "neo-sentimentalist" or "buck-passing" accounts of what it is to be valuable. It is not the most popular version of such theories. The more popular versions do not appeal to the correctness of emotions but rather to appropriate emotions, to justified emotions, to emotions one may have or to what we have undefeated reasons to feel[9].

A friend of (1) and (2) owes us an account of the intentionality of knowledge of values. Is there any plausible such account which will enable him to claim that the correctness conditions for emotions, desires, wishes and preferences have truth-values? And to claim against the neo-sentimentalist that (2) is to be preferred to (3)? And to specify the nature of the relation between knowledge of values, on the one hand, and desires, emotions, wishes and preferences, on the other hand ?

As far as I can see, the main theories of what it is to have knowledge of values are the following. There is a type of intuitionism which claims that we have intuitive knowledge of values but which says nothing about the nature of this type of intuition. Moore sometimes endorses such a position. Then there is the view which combines the following three claims: (a) we are acquainted with values and know that certain objects are valuable; (b) such acquaintance and knowledge are merely special cases of perceptual acquaintance or intellectual knowledge differing from the more familiar cases only in having

---

[9] Cf. Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen 2004, Scanlon 1998, Mulligan 1998.

unusual objects; (c) acquaintance and knowledge of these kinds are the *only* form of epistemic contact we have with values[10]. A third type of theory has it that we have affective knowledge of values. A fourth that it is desires rather than affective phenomena which may constitute knowledge of values. Clearly, a philosopher who thinks that we have affective or "volitive" knowledge of values may also hold that we have intellectual axiological knowledge that.

One version of the view that there is affective knowledge of values is the view that affects may "disclose" values. Such a view has been put forward by Mark Johnston. Another version of the view has it that emotions may disclose values. Such a view has been defended by Christine Tappolet. The view that desires may constitute knowledge of values has been defended by Graham Oddie[11].

I shall first formulate what I take to be the general form of these or related claims. I shall then formulate some objections to such claims and put forward an alternative. Consider first the view that emotions or affects – favouring - can amount to knowledge of values:

4   x is affectively acquainted with the value of y iff Val(y) & x appropriately favours y

---

[10] Cf. Thomas 2006 p. 215, p. 51.

[11] Johnston 2001, Tappolet 2000, Oddie 2005.

5   x affectively knows that it is valuable that p iff Val(p) & x appropriately favours that p

Similarly, we may formulate the view that desires can give us knowledge of values as follows:

6   x "desideratively" knows that it is valuable that p iff Val(p) & x appropriately desires that p

The first thing to notice about (4)-(6) is their similarity to

7   x knows that p iff p & x justifiably believes that p

Thus appropriate favouring or desire plays the same role in (4)-(6) as justifiable belief in (7). And the first clause on the right hand side of (7) plays the same role as the first clause on the right hand side of (4), (5) and (6).

Perhaps, then, there are objections to (4)-(6) which resemble the objections to (7) above.

One striking feature of affects and emotions is that they often have positive or negative valence. Another is that if an emotion or an affect has a valence, there is often an emotion or affect which is its polar opposite. Being pleased (respect, liking, happiness) has positive valence and a polar opposite, being displeased (scorn, disliking, unhappiness). But surprise has no valence and so can have no polar opposite and enjoyment has a positive valence but no polar opposite. Now knowledge in all its most familiar manifestations has no

valence and no polar opposite. That is one reason for thinking that emotions and affects cannot constitute knowledge.

There is a second reason for rejecting the view that emotions and affects can yield knowledge. Emotions and affects are *reactions*, affective reactions. Indeed having a valence suffices to make a state a reaction. States of opposed valence or "sign" constitute opposed reactions. That is why so many psychological theories consider an action-tendency to be essential to many types of emotions and affects. But knowledge is no reaction. So emotions and affects can never yield knowledge.

Very similar reasons can be advanced against the view that desires may constitute knowledge. Desires (like wishing, wanting, willing and striving) come in two kinds, positive and negative. There is the positive desire that p and the striving to realise p but there is also negative desire, negative willing, aversion, shunning (and *Widerstreben*). Knowledge is not like that.

I suggested in §3 that belief is a reaction, that reactions which are intentional states are reactions to something, and that belief is a reaction to what we apprehend or apparently apprehend. If emotions, desires and affects are reactions and states or attitudes which enjoy intentionality, then we might expect that they, too, are reactions to what is known or apprehended or apparently known or apprehended. But what kind of knowledge is such that emotions, desires and affects are reactions to its (apparent) deliverances?

An ideal candidate for the role of affective knowledge of values, it is now clear, should satisfy five desiderata. It should not be any sort of reaction and

should have no valence and so should not be any sort of emotion, affect or desire. But it should be an affective state or episode. Finally, it should make true a psychological ascription which is veridical or factive. Is there any such thing?

Suppose that Maria is walking down the street and observes a scene in which bread is being distributed unequally to equally needy children. She is struck, as we say, by the injustice of the situation. She has felt the injustice of the situation Perhaps she reacts with indignation. Perhaps she is suffering from indignation fatigue and feels no emotion whatsoever. We are often struck in similar ways by the elegance of a gesture or the grace of someone's gait, by the rudeness of a remark, by the beauty of a building. Typically experience of value prompts affective reactions, admiration, annoyance, pleasure. That is one reason why it is a mistake to think that experience of value, feeling value, is an affective reaction. Another reason is that although feeling value is an affective phenomenon it has no valence and hence no polar opposite.

Experience of value seems to be very common. Of course, if axiological nihilism is correct, if nothing is a value and nothing has value, then there is no experience of value, only experience *as of* value. But if ordinary language is to be taken at face value we are all the time experiencing (dis)value. Non-cognitivism – axiological and deontic sentences have no truth-values - is difficult to reconcile with many entrenched assumptions. But the claim that what seem to be affective experiences of value are always merely experiences as of value is even more difficult to swallow. The theory of value has suffered from over-concentration on the arguments for and against cognitivism and on

27

the arguments for and against unnatural values and value-properties. Indeed the different semantic and metaphysical options can come to look very different if we bear in mind the phenomenon of experience of or as of value. Consider, for example, the possibility that only affective value-experience can explain how value-predicates can have any meaning. Neglect of value-experience also has consequences for substantive ethical and political questions. Consider the justification of tolerance. It is one thing to appeal to the fact that different people hold different and often incompatible axiological beliefs. It is quite another to appeal also to the fact that we are all in different ways value-blind or, more exactly, insensitive to different types of value; and to the fact that sensitivity to one type of value often makes one insensitive to other types of value.

"Feel" in the sentence "Maria felt the injustice of the situation" is factive. If Maria felt the injustice of the situation, then the situation was unjust. If she feels the beauty of the building, it is beautiful. Maria's indignation is a reaction either to a felt disvalue, the injustice of the situation or to a merely apparently felt value. In the latter case she is the victim of an illusion. Her admiration of the elegance of Giorgio's gait is a reaction to a felt, positive value or it is a reaction to an apparently felt value. Above I objected to the claim that

If x favours y, then x believes that y is valuable.

We now have a more plausible alternative:

If x favours y, then x feels the value of y or x merely seems to feel the value of y or x believes y to be valuable.

Is feeling value an exception to the principle that all knowledge involves identification? No. Values are felt more or less clearly, more or less fully and transitions along these two dimensions involve identification. Aesthetic experience is perhaps the clearest example of the phenomenon of continuously feeling the same value as the same under different modes of presentation.

The claim that affective knowledge consists at bottom of feeling values and disvalues is, I have argued, superior to theories according to which emotions, affects or desires can yield knowledge. If axiological nihilism is false, this claim is, I suggest, the best available approach in the epistemology of values. For it is not only preferable to other theories of affective knowledge and to the idea that desires yield knowledge, it is also preferable to any epistemology the neo-sentimentalist can come up with.

Suppose with the neo-sentimentalist that being valuable is understood in terms of appropriate emotions or good, undefeated reasons to feel emotions. What, then, would knowledge of the value of an object amount to? Knowledge of the appropriateness of an emotion could only be knowledge *that* an emotion is appropriate, *that* there are undefeated reasons to feel an emotion. But if we have knowledge of values it is extremely implausible to think that such knowledge consists *only* of knowledge that, a knowledge by description which has no anchorage in any knowledge by acquaintance. On one common and plausible view, knowledge that p cannot motivate; even

axiological knowledge that p is an intellectual state and, like all such states, cannot motivate. Feeling (dis)values, however, is no intellectual state and can motivate[12]. Finally, neo-sentimentalism cannot do justice to the fact that the very best reason one could have for feeling an emotion is knowledge of the value of the object of the emotion.

§5 Knowledge vs Reactions to (Apparent) Knowledge

How, then, do the intentionality of knowledge and the intentionality of states and attitudes which can go wrong hang together?

Our answer runs as follows: beliefs, judgments and emotions have correctness conditions and they are reactions. Part of what it means to say that belief, judgement and emotions are intentional states and attitudes is given by specifying their correctness conditions. Another part of what it means to say that they are intentional is given by an account of their material or proper objects, an account about which I have said nothing. Correctness conditions for judgements and beliefs mention states of affairs and predicate the formal property of obtaining of states of affairs. Correctness conditions for emotions mention the material objects of these emotions and predicate formal value properties of these.

---

[12] Closely related to the distinction between emotions and feeling value is the distinction in neuro- and affective science between emotions and motivational saliency; cf. Berridge & Robinson 2003.

The intentionality of judgements, beliefs and emotions is triply dependent on the intentionality of knowledge. First, judgements, beliefs and emotions are reactions to what is known or to what merely seems to be known. Secondly, the correctness conditions of judgements, beliefs and emotions tell us what would be known if these states and acts were reactions to knowledge of the right kind. Finally, if we had no knowledge of facts and of values, we would have no right to mention states of affairs or predicate value in correctness conditions or, indeed, anywhere else.

One interesting consequence of the theory of intentionality sketched here is that although the intentionality of many states is explained in part in normative terms ("correctness"), the intentionality of knowledge has no normative component. Since the intentionality of knowledge is more fundamental than the intentionality of states and attitudes which have correctness conditions and since no type of intentionality is more fundamental than that of knowledge, the mind's relation to the world is at bottom not normative[13].

References

Austin, J. L. 1961 "Other Minds", *Philosophical Papers*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 44-84.

Berridge, K. C. & Robinson, T. E. 2003 "Parsing Reward", *Trends in Neuroscience*, 26, 9, 507-513.

Hossack, K. *Facts*, forthcoming.

Johnston, Mark 2001 "The Authority of Affect", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*

Kenny, Anthony (1963): *Action, Emotion, and Will*, London: Routledge

Kratzer, A. 2001 "Facts: Particulars or Information Units", *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 25, 5-6, 655-670.

Mulligan, K. 1998 "From Appropriate Emotions to Values", *Secondary Qualities Generalized*, ed. P. Menzies, *The Monist*, 84, 1, 161-188.
      2004 "Essence and Modality. The Quintessence of Husserl's Theory", in M. Siebel & M. Textor (eds.) *Semantik und Ontologie. Beiträge zur philosophischen Forschung*, Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 387-418.

32

2004a "Husserl on the "logics" of valuing, values and norms", *Fenomenologia della Ragion Pratica. L'Etica di Edmund Husserl*, (eds.) B. Centi & G. Gigliotti, 177-225, Naples: Bibliopolis

2006 "Facts, Formal Objects and Ontology", *Modes of Existence. Papers in Ontology and Philosophical Logic*, eds. Andrea Bottani & Richard Davies, Frankfurt: ontos verlag, 31-46

Mulligan, K. & Smith, B. 1986 "A Relational Theory of the Act", *Topoi,* 5/2, 115-130.

Oddie, Graham 2005 *Value, Desire and Reality*, Oxford University Press.

Rabinowicz, W. & Rønnow-Rasmussen, T. 2004 "The Strike of the Demon: On Fitting Pro-Attitudes and Value", *Ethics*, 114, 391-423.

Ramsey, F. 1931. "Facts and Propositions", in *The Foundations of Mathematics*, London: Kegan Paul.

Reiner, H. 1934 *Das Phänomen des Glaubens*, Halle: Niemeyer.

Rumfitt, I. 2000 "Yes and No", *Mind*, 109, 781-823

Scanlon, T. M. 1998 *What we owe to each other*, Harvard University Press

Searle, J. 1983. *Intentionality. An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, B. 1984 "Acta cum fundamentis in re", *Dialectica*, 38, 157-178.

Tappolet, C. 2000 *Emotions et Valeurs*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France

Teroni, F. 2007 "On the Formal Objects of Emotions", forthcoming.

Thomas, A. 2006 Value and Context. The Nature of Moral and Political Knowledge, Oxford: Clarendon Press

Vendler, Z. 1967 *Linguistics in Philosophy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Williamson, T. 2000. *Knowledge and its Limits*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wittgenstein, L. 1969 *On Certainty*, New York: Harper