

Emotional Affectivity and the Question of Appraisal, Viewed in the Light of a Phenomenological Account of Pre-Reflective Affective Consciousness

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ABSTRACT The paper considers the problem of various different forms of pre-cognitive affective appraisal and their role in the process of gaining self-knowledge. According to the phenomenological approach, if we are to understand our inner states (our emotional experiences), these cannot be extracted from the context within which they arise. Emotions not only refer to the inner states of the subject, but also to the outer world to which they are a form of response. Brentano, Husserl and Scheler claimed that emotions are directed towards values. It is to this essential feature of emotional experience that I would like to turn. I shall therefore re-examine Sartre's views concerning affectivity (i.e. the capacity to reveal evaluatively significant qualities of one's environment), as well as the dual-aspect theory of (reflective and non-reflective) consciousness. The main argument of this paper is that a plausible account of the essential role of affectivity in the emotions may be provided on the basis of a phenomenological theory of pre-reflective consciousness and its relation to reflexivity. I will focus on three different claims about pre-reflective (affective) consciousness. According to the first of these, a large part of cognition is of a prelinguistic (pre-reflective) nature; I argue that the evaluative content of emotion is not only conceptually determined, but may also take a non-conceptual form (as affective appraisal). The second claim refers to the notion of affect, which ought to be distinguished from (unintentional) bodily sensations. The third conceives of the relation between pre-reflective (affective) consciousness and reflective consciousness (propositional attitudes) as normative (rather than causal). I aim to demonstrate that a plausible view of emotional affectivity must appeal to a phenomenological account of the pre-reflective aspect of consciousness.

KEYWORDS emotional affectivity; feelings, pre-reflective affective consciousness; Sartre, Jean-Paul

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INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF AFFECTIVITY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF EMOTION

The relevance of the cognitive component of emotion to the process of gaining self-knowledge has recently been widely debated in philosophy.¹ However, the suggestion that emotion has a complex nature was already made by Aristotle, in whose analyses we find not only the behavioural aspect of emotion, and the occurrence of physical arousal, but also the cognitive component of emotion, along with its social context.² His claim that emotions can fulfil a cognitive function has given rise to a concept that is key to many contemporary theories of emotion. In recent decades, there have been constant attempts to present a coherent and complete theory that would allow emotional experience to be characterised in the most adequate and comprehensive way possible. The most influential contemporary accounts of the emotions conceive of them either as if they were a form of cognition (“judgment theories”), or as if they included some form of thought, belief, evaluative judgment or appraisal.³ There are differing views among the proponents of cognitive theories of emotion as to how to understand the cognitive element involved in emotional experience, how to represent the connection between cognitive and emotional processes, and, by extension, how to understand emotion itself. One of the main difficulties facing the cognitive approach to emotion is the lack of any theoretical framework within which cognitive theorists might approach the question of the relation between the affective and evaluative elements that constitutes emotional experience. In other words, cognitive theorists of emotion fail to offer a sound explanation of how a set of propositional states (such as wishes, beliefs, thoughts, evaluative judgments or appraisals) and a distinctive affective quality or feeling can be synthesised into an emotional experience (see Salmela 2002, 159). This not only shifts the

1. There are a number of philosophers who advocate the relevance of emotional experience in acquiring self-knowledge. For an extensive discussion on this issue, see M.C. Nussbaum, R.C. Solomon, R. de Sousa, R.C. Roberts and N. Sherman (to mention just a few).

2. Within the philosophical tradition there are two general approaches to emotions: according to the first, they are to be construed as more like desires—i.e. irrational blind forces that we encounter (that have their source either externally or internally) (On this issue, see Dodds 2004). This account mainly stresses the passive aspect of emotional reaction. Emotions, so understood, are states that happen to us. The other approach, meanwhile, conceives of them as states that necessarily contain some form of thought, and consequently perform cognitive functions. Proponents of the cognitive theory of the emotions do not share a single common conception of what, exactly, “cognition” itself amounts to, and some prefer to distance themselves from the label “cognitive theory” (see Solomon 2004).

3. These theories are usually referred to as “componential theories of emotion.”

focus onto the idea of the evaluative content of emotion, but also appeals to the issue of the nature and role of affectivity in the latter. Proponents of “judgment theories” such as Martha C. Nussbaum and Robert C. Solomon, claim that feeling should not be included in the necessary conditions of having an emotion, for “one can have an emotion without feeling anything, and one can feel anything (including all the ‘symptoms’ of emotionality, for example, flushing, pulsing...) without having any emotion whatever” (Solomon 1993, 99).⁴ Other philosophers and psychologists (such as William Lyons, Aaron Ben-Ze’ev, Keith Oatley and Jennifer Jenkins, and Richard Lazarus) recognise the importance of evaluative judgment, but regard it as merely one of the various components of emotion. On their view, feelings “accompany” the intentional components of cognition and evaluation in emotion—yet the latter are not themselves required for one to have emotional states. These accounts of emotions seem to be consistent with recent experimental findings. The empirical research of Antonio Damasio and Joseph LeDoux has provided good reasons for believing that feelings do not necessarily involve cognitive appraisal of an emotional object (Damasio 1994, 1999; LeDoux 1996).⁵ This, of course, is not an argument against the existence of cognitive-evaluative content where emotion is concerned, but it does suffice to just show that there exist short-lived and largely automated emotional reactions to which cognitive factors make either no contribution or only a negligible one.

These differing approaches to emotion, based on either philosophical or empirical research, testify less to the difficulty of capturing the general characteristics of emotions than they do to our inability to grasp the nature of the relationship between the cognitive-evaluative elements of emotion on the one hand, and emotional feeling, in the sense of a certain affective quality felt by the subject, on the other. Contemporary theories of emotion, as formulated by both philosophers and psychologists, assume a complex, multi-componential nature for the emotions. Thus, they are usually defined as multi-componential intentional states that (1) are characterised by a cognitive-evaluative element, (2) are correlated with physiological and bodily changes, (3) are closely related, as well as, to neurological events, (4) have an affective tinge (subjective feeling), and (5) are accompanied by

4. See also (Nussbaum 2001, 56–64), where she writes that “judgments of the requisite sort are necessary for the emotion; they are not external causes, but constituent parts of what the emotion is; and they are sufficient for emotion, if they have the requisite eudaimonistic evaluative content.”

5. For an interesting discussion of the issue, see (Salmela 2002, 159–82; Nussbaum 2001, 114–9).

a tendency to act and/or (6) manifest themselves through expression (see Dąbrowski 2014, 130). Various approaches to emotion differ in that they emphasise different elements (or aspects) as the most important.⁶ There is a rich discussion on this topic, which I shall not present here, because of the limited scope of this article. Essentially, I wish to draw attention to the fact that cognitive and non-cognitive theorists do not share any common conception of what emotional feeling (or affectivity) amounts to. Thus, they tend to adopt divergent views regarding its place and role within the phenomenal content of emotion.⁷

I myself would agree that the cognitive and affective elements of emotion are different kinds of representation of the formal properties of an emotional object (see Salmela 2002, 160), but would nevertheless argue that feelings have an evaluative content that differs from propositional attitudes. In other words, unlike the cognitive appraisal, which involves a conceptual representation of the formal object of emotion, feelings have an evaluative content in a nonconceptual sense, and thus cannot be reduced to an attitudinal mode of experiencing them. I hold that any rejection of theories that view feelings as a constitutive element within emotions is premature. The issue is not whether thoughts, judgments, beliefs or desires are or are not connected with feeling in emotional experience (in fact they often are), but rather the point that they do not suffice for ascribing feeling to the subject. Here it is worth noting that strong versions of cognitivism have, in recent years, been exposed to increasing criticism of a sort that seems justified. Proponents of a componential form for cognitive theories claim that feelings, along with physiological changes (bodily arousal or facial expressions), need to be regarded as constitutive elements of emotional experience with a propositional content. However, unlike Nussbaum, they do not interpret them in the light of the latter. Thus they provide numerous and diverse accounts of the nature of emotional feeling. Of these, I would like to draw attention to Patricia Greenspan's stance, which introduces the problem of the rationality of emotions—something that needs to be distinguished from the rationality of beliefs. After a short presentation of various approaches to emotional feelings, I shall then turn to the phenomenological approach to emotion, and re-examine Sartre's claim that "feeling aims at an object but it aims in its own manner, which is affective" (Sartre 2004, 69). Following in

6. For example, cognitive theories of emotion (and the strong version of cognitivism, in particular) focus on propositional attitudes.

7. The concept of the phenomenal content of emotion refers to both propositional and non-propositional attitudes.

the wake of the claim of Brentano, Husserl and Scheler that emotions are directed towards values, I shall attempt to answer the question of whether the Sartrean view of affectivity (as an ability to disclose evaluative properties of one's surroundings) can overcome the problem of how to provide an adequate account of the essential role of affectivity that cognitive theories find themselves confronted by.

DIVERGENT ACCOUNTS OF EMOTIONAL AFFECTIVITY IN COGNITIVE AND NON-COGNITIVE THEORIES OF EMOTION

The neat argument for viewing emotions as cognitive and not as irrational is that they not only refer to the inner states of the subject, but also to the outer world, to which they are a form of response (interpretation). Owing to this, some treat them as tantamount to an instance of perception.⁸ Brentano and Husserl emphasise that the subject (*qua* mental agent) is correlated with its environment, and this correlation is established not only in respect of sensory content, but also as regards the intentionality of the agent. By appealing to the concept of intentionality, we may say that all emotions are both about the world and about the subject who undergoes them. This idea of relational meanings that underlie the emotions demonstrates that they arise from a synthesis of environmental conditions and subjective characteristics (Salmela 2008, 35–51). Nussbaum recognises that emotions are intentional not just in the sense of simply exhibiting “aboutness” (i.e. “being directed” at an object, like an arrow released towards a target) (see Nussbaum 2001, 27–8). The intentionality of emotion embodies the subject's way of looking at the object and at himself or herself, so it has its origin in active modes of interpretation. Solomon seems to share common ground with this when he claims that:

emotions are not just *about* (or “directed to”) the world but actively entangled in it. So I now want to improve my analysis by making this point central, that *emotions are subjective engagements in the world...* As engagements (as opposed to things that happen to us), emotions would certainly seem to be good candidates for the role of “existentialia” through which we define ourselves.... I still favor the use of “judgment” to make this point, but I now

8. William James claimed that “an emotion is the feeling of bodily changes that follow directly the perception of the exciting fact” (James 1884, 189). Although his approach to emotion has been strongly criticized, because the bare perception of facts (without any evaluation of them) is not sufficient to arouse emotion, Solomon interprets the Jamesian view of emotions as perceptions that are not “mere triggers for emotion but are already shot through with the concepts and perspectives that constitute the emotion itself” (Solomon 2004, 77).

want to stress even more than I have before the idea that a judgment is not a detached intellectual act but a way of cognitively *grappling* with the world. It has at its very basis and as background a complex set of aspirations, expectations, evaluations (“appraisals”), needs, demands, and desires (which says something about why the reigning “belief-desire” analysis of emotions and intentions is so hopelessly impoverished). (Solomon 2004, 77)

The point here is that emotions are identified as intense evaluative judgments which involve the self. The judgments and objects that constitute emotions are those that are particularly meaningful to the agent (Solomon 2003). In this respect, emotions are not an isolated form of activity, but are determined by one’s normative involvement in one’s attitudes, beliefs and life projects. However, Solomon emphasises that not all judgments are reflective, deliberative, or articulated. Not all emotions are explicit, and every day we produce thousands of judgments—perceptual, aesthetic, even moral—that are not premeditated or “thoughtful.” Emotions are, precisely, such spontaneous, nonreflective judgments. They can be articulated (when we express them with words), and often do not lose their intensity when we do so: in fact, they become more intense. Emotions can also become reflective: we may become aware of them, their goals and their objects (e.g., the feeling of hate may become a consciousness of hate). We experience this when unfounded anger subsides in the light of reflection (see Solomon 1993, 131). Solomon holds that his conception of the nonreflective character of emotion appeals to Kant’s notion of *Urteil* as the pre-reflective component of experience. He believes that the idea of constitutive judgments that can also be of a non-propositional (pre-linguistic) kind offers a new direction where cognitive theories of emotion are concerned. Now, though, we come to the most ambiguous point of his reasoning. According to his view, non-propositional (pre-linguistic) evaluative judgments manifest themselves as feelings, which he characterizes as “judgments of the body.” Feelings, then, are not just certain impressions or mysterious affects, but a way of expressing our emotional engagement with the world. Feelings thus defined, as “judgments of the body” (rather than mere effects of bodily processes), constitute, in Solomon’s view, the affective dimension of emotion. Hence, they do not just merely represent the inherent affective quality of the formal object of emotion, but are first and foremost to be conceived of as a pre-linguistic form of evaluation that originates in the corporeality through which our primordial pre-conceptual relationship with the world is established. On this point, Solomon’s stance seems to coincide with the phenomenological conception of corporeality.

Nevertheless, a dilemma ensues once we reflect on the very idea of a pre-reflective (pre-linguistic) form of emotional judgment of the kind Solomon identifies with “judgment of the body.” He characterises the pre-reflective aspect of affective consciousness by detaching judging from any grammatical structure expressed in propositional form (i.e. from concepts). This separation has two significant consequences. First, it results in a broader account of judgment, where this is taken to also be a physical form of evaluation of bodily sensations. Secondly, such a broadened account in turn entails the claim that bodily sensations can be intentional (i.e. capable of representing their objects). Solomon does not address this controversial issue, and neither does he acknowledge that mere propositional content is not a sufficient condition for distinguishing emotional judgments from non-emotional ones, as one must also specify the attitudinal mode of inducing (or making) such judgments. He emphasises that emotion is a set of self-involved, intense judgments that have “an essential link with desire and action.” Given this belief, he holds that the evaluative judgments constituting the essential part of emotions should not be thought of as identified in terms of cognition understood as propositional knowledge. Yet on this view he still runs into difficulties providing an apt description for an affective form of evaluation that is pre-reflective, and thus pre-cognitive and pre-linguistic (i.e. without any conceptual representation). I would argue, though, that this difficulty might be overcome, were we to try to relate feelings or emotional affectivity to the concept of pre-cognitive affective appraisal, which differs from both intellectual cognition and the physical form of appraisal of such bodily sensations (see Kępiński 2013, 5–54) as a toothache or “putting a nail into one’s stomach” (to quote Nussbaum)—these being unintentional (because they are incapable of representing their objects). The latter may accompany feelings, but are not essential for them. **Mental qualities** may manifest themselves through physical sensation.

The problem of the nature of emotional feeling and the related issue of pre-cognitive affective appraisal have been critically discussed by opponents of the cognitive theory. Patricia Greenspan recognizes the intentionality of emotional feelings as affective states of pleasure or unpleasantness that are “directed towards the corresponding evaluative proposition, which may be held in mind without assent” (Greenspan 1988, 7).⁹ Therefore, she

9. Greenspan has formulated an interesting argument showing that emotions cannot be conceived of as judgments or beliefs because they have different criteria of rationality. In other words, she argues that emotions have different formal logical properties to judgments or beliefs. I endorse Greenspan’s claim that the analogy between cognitive processes and emotional reactions is not complete, in that the cognitive element is not the only element of

would agree that there is an evaluative component to emotions, but would hold that the corresponding propositional attitude is not necessarily a belief (or judgment). When I am in a certain emotional state, I am forced to consider the relevant claim, but I do not have to acknowledge it or assent to it. Greenspan says that she has had a slip-phobic fear ever since a certain memorable car accident in a thunderstorm. As a result, even the slightest slip in perfectly safe conditions on a dry road makes her breathless with fear. She interprets this situation as a case of unconsciously assessing something as a danger without being forewarned or consciously thinking one is in danger. This example is thus an instance of what we would call “irrational fear.” It is not obvious that there is any act of deliberation going on here, in the strict sense of that term: the emotional response seems to be as sudden as an automatic reaction.¹⁰ Greenspan emphasises that affect and evaluation are not components of emotion in the sense of separate parts. The two aspects are intrinsically linked, as emotional affect has evaluation as its content. She argues that emotional affect is itself evaluative—and the result of this evaluation can be captured in the form of an assertion. Since the evaluative content of emotion is what is registered or expressed by feeling (and so need not be an object of belief or judgment, but merely be present in one’s mind), her view can be interpreted as amounting to a version of the “affective” account of cognitive theories.

Let me now invoke the opposite view, as represented by Aaron Ben-Ze’ev. The latter conceives of feeling as “a primitive mode of consciousness” (Ben-Ze’ev 2000, 67–8) connected with the intentional dimension, consisting of three components: the cognitive (knowledge or information about the circumstances in question), the evaluative (the evaluation of the personal meaning of that information), and the motivational (desire or readiness to act on those circumstances). Feeling itself is, then, of a nonintentional nature. Ben-Ze’ev holds that “the homogenous and basic nature of feelings makes it difficult, though not perhaps impossible, to describe them” (Ben-Ze’ev 2000, 49–67). Elsewhere, he emphasizes that feelings are not propositional attitudes: they involve intensity, duration, and a quality of pleasantness or unpleasantness, but lack full intentionality (having causes, but not intentional objects) (Ben-Ze’ev 1993). Ben-Ze’ev, like William Lyons

the emotional reaction. The rationality of emotions is a much more complex issue than the rationality of beliefs, so any criterion for assessing the rationality of emotions must correspond to a proper understanding of this.

10. In William Lyons’ terminology, such an experience furnishes us with an illustrative example of “Pavlovian emotions” (see Lyons 1980, 76–7).

and Richard Lazarus, does not distinguish between feelings and physiological changes or bodily sensations. Feelings are conceived of as a component of emotions merely by virtue of their high intensity and short duration, along with their accompanying cognitive and evaluative elements.

As we see, there is no one approach to the nature of emotional feelings. Even if we attempt to provide a detailed description of feeling as the awareness of being in an emotional state, defined as a sort of “combination of an appraisal process and physiological changes”¹¹ we still will have to deal with the question of why, and how, emotional affectivity complements evaluative processes. Pursuing the latter, I shall attempt to elucidate below the issue of the constitution of the formal object of emotion in pre-reflective consciousness, and in doing so will re-examine Sartre’s claim that while the works of Brentano, Husserl and Scheler have established a certain conception of feeling, the real nature of it remains hidden. I argue that a phenomenological perspective may help us to see the intentionality of feeling in a different light. I propose to conceive of feeling not as a state that accompanies evaluative content, but as an affective form of pre-reflective consciousness that is intrinsically evaluative. This evaluation (which I shall call “affective appraisal”) differs from both intellectual cognition and the physical form of appraisal of bodily sensations, even though mental qualities may manifest themselves through these.

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO AFFECTIVITY: A SARTREAN ACCOUNT OF AFFECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

If we focus on the phenomenological approach as it pertains to emotional experience and different types of affectivity, we find that interest in affective phenomena found its full expression only in Husserl’s later work, and that soon thereafter it became one of the crucial topics in the thought of Scheler, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas.¹² For phenomenologists, the issue of affectivity opens up both the question of the form of emotional acts’ intentionality, and the problem of the cognition of values. Husserl demonstrates that affectivity is inextricably related to the pre-reflective sphere of consciousness. In the following passage, he acknowledges pre-reflective consciousness by introducing the expression “affective ray”:

By affection we understand the allure given to consciousness, the peculiar pull that an object given to consciousness exercises on the ego; it is a pull that is

11. The phrase comes from Salmela (2002, 162). See, e.g., (Power and Dalgleish 1997, 169–70).

12. For more on this issue, see (Pokropski 2013, 75–87).

relaxed when the ego turns toward it attentively, and progresses from here, striving toward self-giving intuition, disclosing more and more of the self of the object, thus, striving toward an acquisition of knowledge, toward a more precise view of the object.... Sensible data (and thus data in general) send, as it were, affective rays of force toward the ego pole, but in their weakness do not reach the ego pole, they do not actually become for it an allure that awakens. (Husserl 2001, 196)

In *The Appendix*, he notes that affectivity initially appears in pre-reflective consciousness:

In the sphere of the present: Distinction between affective ... background and foreground. In the affective foreground: Distinction between the thematic sphere—what the ego has grasped and has held onto (possibly still holds onto)—and the unthematic sphere. The “foreground” is determined in such a way that the affective ray that has reached the ego excites [the ego]; it... already knocks on its door to awaken the ego, but [does so] still before the ego follows with (or has to follow with) a “Yes.” (Husserl 2001, 512)

This dual aspect of consciousness (pre-reflective and reflective) entails a more complex concept of intentionality. It is not only the object-intentionality that Husserl has in mind while he describes the intentionality of consciousness but intentionality which is a dynamic structure (thus it may take different forms). At the pre-reflectif level of consciousness the content of the affective state is pre-determined but not mediated by concepts. As Sartre puts it, reflective consciousness is not the primary form of emotion. Anger does not begin as consciousness of being angry (the feeling of love is not consciousness of love) (see Sartre 2004, 69). Our primordial relationships with the world is of pre-conceptual nature. Affective experience plays an essential role in the way we relate to the world evaluatively. The contemporary theories of emotion seem to embrace the Schelerian insight regarding the world-directedness of emotional feelings (see Deonna and Teroni 2012; Montague 2009, 171–92; 2014, 32–51). Moreover, on Scheler’s and Sartre’s approach to emotional experience (affectivity),¹³ it is through

13. See Sartre’s account of affectivity (Sartre 2004, 68–73). He inherits the concept of affectivity from Scheler. This concept ought to be distinguished from Sartre’s theory of the emotions which he presents in *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* (Sartre 2002). According to the latter, he considers emotions as an active mechanism of self-defence against existential difficulties. Emotions helps us to transform the “deterministic world” into a “magical world.”

feelings that reference to values takes place. This is the issue I shall be dealing with in the remaining part of this paper.

Inspired by Scheler, Sartre directs our attention to two features of the phenomenology of value. He holds that values are typically experienced as properties of objects rather than properties of affective experiences that we then project onto the world. In *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, he writes: “So it is that all at once hatred, love, fear, sympathy ... are merely ways of discovering the world. It is things which abruptly unveil themselves as hateful, sympathetic, horrible, lovable” (Sartre 2002, 383; 2003, 62). At the same time, though, he adopts a view about the objectivity of value according to which it is essentially linked to a subjective perspective: “human reality is that by which value comes to the world” (Sartre 2003, 117).¹⁴ Therefore, we cannot make sense of the existence of value independently of responses like those that characterize our experience of it (Vanello 2019, 79–99). According to Sartre, there is an essential *disanalogy* between our experience of value and our experience of sensory properties such as colour or hardness, and he provides various accounts of the affective experience of value that confirm this. In order to appreciate the specific nature of the intentionality of feelings (and thus the nature of affective appraisal), we must focus on the structure of the affective disclosure of value. Let us turn, then, to the account of our affective response to an object that we find in *The Imaginary*:

To hate Paul is to intend Paul as a transcendent object of a consciousness. But we must not commit the intellectualist error and believe that Paul is present as the object of an intellectual representation. Feeling aims at an object but it aims in its own manner, which is affective. Classical psychology ... holds that feeling appears in consciousness as a certain subjective tonality. This is to confuse the reflective consciousness and the unreflective consciousness. Feeling is given as such to the reflective consciousness, the meaning of which is precisely to be consciousness of this feeling. (a) But the feeling of hate is not consciousness *of* hate. It is consciousness *of* Paul as hateful; love is not, primarily, consciousness of itself: it is consciousness of the charms of the

By contrast, in *The Imaginary* we find a view of affectivity that does not involve any sort of self-deception—nor does it in the Schelerian approach. There is no reason to assume that Sartre is referring to the same intentional act in both the *Sketch* and *The Imaginary* (see Vanello 2019, 96). For Scheler’s theory of affectivity, see (Scheler 1973). See also the thorough discussion of this topic in (Hatzimoysis 2014; Richmond 2014).

14. However, this is not to say that I am attributing to Sartre some form of realism about value.

loved person. To become conscious of Paul as hateful, irritable, sympathetic, disturbing, attractive, repulsive, etc., is to confer on him a new quality, to constitute him along a new dimension. (b) In a sense these qualities are not properties of the object and, at bottom, the very term ‘quality’ is improper. It would be better to say that they make the sense of the object, that they are the *affective* structure: they entirely permeate the object; when they disappear ... perception remains intact, things are not touched, and yet the world is singularly impoverished. (Sartre 2004, 69)

In (a) Sartre holds that the primary form of our affective response to an object is of a pre-reflective nature. It is not necessary for consciousness to assure me of the fact that here and now I am feeling hate, because it is I who feel it. I do not need to return to myself and insert, between the action and the emotion, a form of reflexive consciousness. Emotion is a certain “quality in itself” that acts without the addition of reflection and, (b) does so by directing itself towards the object. It is in virtue of having an affective response to the object that I experience it as constituted in a new dimension. It is the object of the affective consciousness, with its evaluative features, that affects us in such a way. Here, Sartre is expressing the idea of a relevant *disanalogy* between the constitution of the (emotional) object in the affective consciousness and the disclosure of just the form or colour of an object. Let me invoke other example from *The Imaginary*:

If I love the long, white, fine hands of that person, this love, which is directed on the hands, could be considered as one of the ways that they have appeared to my consciousness. It is indeed a feeling that aims at their *finesse*, their *whiteness*, the vivacity of their movements: ... It is therefore a certain way that *finesse*, *whiteness*, *vivacity* have of appearing to me. (Sartre 2004, 69)

One might be tempted to construe this passage as if it were suggesting that the evaluative content of feeling (the affective appraisal) that we experience in emotional states could be analysed in terms of intellectual knowledge (*connaissance*). Yet the following fragment denies the analogy between an affective experience and an experience of sensory properties:

To love fine hands is a certain way, one might say, *of loving finesse* on these hands. Still love does not intend the *finesse* of the fingers, which is a representative quality: it projects on the object a certain tonality that one could call the affective sense of that *finesse*, of that *whiteness* [A.W.]. (Sartre 2004, 69)

The affective appraisal, in contrast to the intellectually evaluative content of emotion, is animated by intentionality of a peculiar kind, which differs from that referring to non-emotional experience. As Sartre puts it:

This feeling is not a pure, subjective content, it does not escape the law of all consciousness: it transcends itself; one finds there, on analysis, a primary content that comes to animate intentionalities of a very particular type; briefly, it is an affective consciousness *of* those hands. Only, this consciousness does not posit the hands that it aims at, *as hands*, which is to say as a synthesis of representations. Knowledge and sensible representations are lacking (by hypothesis). It is rather consciousness of something fine, graceful, pure, with a strictly individual nuance of finesse and purity. No doubt what is unique for me in those hands—and which cannot be expressed in knowledge, even imaging—the tint of the skin at the fingertips, the shape of the fingernails, the small wrinkles around the phalanx, all these *appear to me*. But these details do not deliver themselves in their representative aspect: I become conscious of them as an undifferentiated mass not amenable to any description. And this affective mass has a character that is lacking in clear and complete knowledge: it is *present*. In fact, the feeling is present and the affective structure of the objects is constituted in correlation with a determinate affective consciousness. A feeling is therefore not an empty consciousness: it is already possession. These hands are given to me *in their affective form*. (Sartre 2004, 70–1)

It is in this sense that the essence of feeling's affective appraisal is given. The latter does not merely complement affective consciousness (as one of the various factors involved there), but is an essential feature of its structure. Otherwise, it would be impossible to see how an affective consciousness could confer new meaning on emotional objects, and in so doing “constitute their deepest reality” (Sartre 2004, 70). This Sartrean insight into the affective casts a different light on the nature of the evaluative content of feeling and, as such, may be regarded as making a significant contribution to contemporary debates.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The relationship between affective and evaluative elements which constitutes emotional experience seems to be one of the crucial difficulties confronting the cognitive approach to emotion. Apart from being centred on the concept of the evaluative content of emotion, this problem also raises the issue of the nature and role of affectivity in emotion. I have argued here that this difficulty might be overcome by relating emotional affectivity

(or feelings) to the concept of pre-cognitive affective appraisal, which differs from both intellectual cognition and the physical form of appraisal of bodily sensations. In doing so, I have re-examined the Sartrean account of affective consciousness that is taken to be pre-reflective, and thus pre-cognitive and pre-linguistic. I have argued that Sartre provides us with a conception of affectivity conceived as an ability to disclose evaluative properties of one's surroundings. This affective appraisal, in contrast to the intellectually evaluative content of emotional experience, is animated by intentionality of a peculiar kind, which differs from that referring to non-emotional experience.

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