Against emotions as feelings: Towards an attitudinal profile of emotion.

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Abstract: Are feelings an essential part or aspect of emotion? Cases of unconscious emotion suggest that this is not the case. However, it has been claimed that unconscious emotions are better understood as either (a) emotions that are phenomenally conscious but not reflectively conscious, or (b) dispositions to have emotions rather than emotions. Here, I argue that these ways of accounting for unconscious emotions are inadequate, and propose a view of emotions as non-phenomenal attitudes that regard their contents as relevant to one's motivations.

Keywords: emotions; feelings; unconscious emotions; emotional dispositions; attitudes; phenomenal consciousness.

1. Introduction

There is a certain feeling, subjective experience, or what it is like to be afraid, sad, angry, etc. Most would agree that feeling is an *important* part or aspect of emotion, one that we shouldn't ignore. But is feeling an *essential* part or aspect of emotion? Should we understand emotions as feelings? Emotion researchers seem to have sometimes assumed either a positive or a negative answer to this question.

Years ago, "emotions are not feelings" was considered the Fundamental Axiom of emotion research (Prinz, 2005). Around that time, Cognitive theories were popular in philosophy. Cognitive theories identify emotions with cognitive states

such as evaluative beliefs or judgments (Bedford, 1957; Greenspan, 1981; Nussbaum, 2001; Pitcher, 1965; Solomon, 1976). Cognitive states are usually taken to be non-phenomenal (but see Hansen, n.d.). Thus, if emotions are beliefs or judgments, emotions are not feelings.[1]

Nowadays, many theories identify emotions with feelings, while differing in the specific type of feeling that they claim emotions to be. For example, it has been claimed that emotions are bodily feelings (James, 1884; Whiting, 2006), evaluative feelings (Helm, 2009), feelings towards value (Mitchell, 2021), felt bodily attitudes (Deonna & Teroni, 2017), or a compound of bodily, cognitive, and conative feelings (Kriegel, 2014). All these theories (see also Cohen, 2020; LeDoux & Brown, 2017; Ortony et al., 1988; Reisenzein, 2012) would endorse the following claim:[2]

(Feelings' Essentiality) Feelings are an essential part or aspect of emotion.

Feelings' Essentiality is challenged by the existence of unconscious emotions. If there are unconscious emotions, and feelings are conscious states, it cannot be the case that feeling is an essential part or aspect of emotion. However, authors who defend Feelings' Essentiality are well aware of this problem and have explained unconscious emotions in a way that is compatible with their views. In this paper, I will argue against Feelings' Essentiality by defusing extant attempts to explain away cases of unconscious emotion.

Talk of unconscious emotions usually refers to short-lived episodes of emotion that the subject undergoes without conscious awareness of them. But subjects can also have long-standing emotional states that are unconscious at least for the most part. For example, you can be angry at someone for multiple days, weeks, or even years, and not feel angry during this whole time. These two phenomena

[1] Note that one doesn't have to endorse Cognitivism to claim that emotions are not feelings (see, e.g., Adolphs & Andler, 2018; Scarantino, 2014). Conversely, some Cognitive theories are theories of *emotion causation*, and posit that emotions are feelings caused by beliefs (Ortony et al., 1988; Reisenzein, 2012).

[2] Other theories provide a more nuanced view. Perceptual theories of emotion claim that emotions are perceptions of bodily changes (Prinz, 2004) or (analogous to) perceptions of values (Roberts, 2003; Tappolet, 2016). It is usually accepted that perceptions can be conscious or unconscious (but see Phillips & Block, 2017). If emotions are perceptions, emotions can be unfelt. But when emotions are felt, the feeling or phenomenology is an aspect of the emotion itself. Thus, unconscious emotions are not feelings, but conscious emotions are feelings (Prinz, 2005).

are different, and those who defend Feelings' Essentiality account for them in different ways. In line with this, I will reserve the term "unconscious emotions" for short unconscious emotional episodes, and talk about "long-standing emotions" to refer to those emotions that continue to exist for a long time and are unconscious for the most part.

Unconscious emotions are typically accommodated by distinguishing between two senses of consciousness: Phenomenal and reflective (see §2.1.). With this distinction in hand, it is claimed that unconscious emotions are phenomenally conscious but reflectively unconscious. I call this the Two Senses strategy.

Long-standing emotions are usually accounted for by denying their status as emotions (see §3.1.). According to a popular view, long-standing emotions are not actually emotions but rather dispositions to experience emotions. I call this the Mere Dispositions strategy.

In this paper, I will argue that Two Senses cannot explain cases in which emotions remain unconscious after subjects reflect on their feelings (§2) and that we lack reasons to accept Mere Dispositions as the best account of long-standing emotions (§3). Finally, I will consider the possibility that feelings are not essential *constituents* of emotion but rather essential *to individuate* emotions. Against this possibility, I will argue that emotions can be individuated by reference to their non-phenomenal attitudinal profile (§4).

2. Unconscious emotions

Proving the existence of unconscious emotions is not an easy task. Unconscious emotions are not reportable, and we commonly rely on people's reports that they are happy, sad, etc. to confirm the presence of emotion. To provide evidence for the existence of unconscious emotions, we need the conjunction of two factors: (1) subjects' reports denying the experience of emotion, and (2) behavioral or physiological indicators that the emotion is present.

Some alleged cases of unconscious emotion do not meet these criteria. For example, many studies have found that subliminally presenting emotional

stimuli (e.g. facial expressions of emotion) induces physiological reactions in participants (Tamietto & de Gelder, 2010). Some of these studies claim to study unconscious emotions (e.g. Tooley et al., 2017). However, these studies do not record subjects' reports of their emotional state. Thus, even if participants' physiological responses are indicative of emotion, we do not know whether those emotions were conscious or unconscious. At best, these studies show evidence of unconscious processing of emotional stimuli, which is sometimes referred to with the misleading expression "unconscious emotional processing." But note that unconscious emotional processing is not unconscious emotion (Öhman, 2005).

It is also important to note that people might deny that they are experiencing emotion because they fail to categorize their emotions as such, and not because they lack consciousness of the emotion (Hatzimoysis, 2007). For example, you might feel uneasy because you are afraid of an approaching work deadline, but categorize this feeling as the effect of drinking too much coffee. In this case, you might be confused about your feelings, but there is no doubt that you are feeling. People vary in their ability to identify their emotions, a personality dimension known as Alexithymia (Bagby et al., 1994). And even those who are usually able to identify their emotions might sometimes be unwilling to do so. For example, you might be unwilling to admit that you are afraid of a work deadline to signal confidence or preserve your self-image as someone who is always on top of things.

So far, I have clarified what unconscious emotions are not. Unconscious emotions are not emotions that are elicited by unconscious stimuli, or emotions that fail to be categorized as such. Furthermore, I have presented two reasons why people might fail to categorize their emotions: Inability or unwillingness. But sometimes we have good reasons to think that people would be able and willing to categorize their emotions as such, and they nevertheless deny experiencing emotion while showing behavioral and physiological indicators to the contrary. These can be considered genuine cases of unconscious emotion.

A much-discussed example of unconscious emotion is presented by Peter Goldie (2000, p. 62). In this example, a driver (the reader) sees that a car out of control is approaching them on the wrong side of the road. The driver quickly takes evasive

action and afterward realizes that they are bathed in cold sweat, their heart is pounding, and they are clenching the steering wheel. Goldie prompts us to assent that the driver was afraid while taking evasive action, even though the case stipulates that the driver was not consciously afraid. After all, the driver was exhibiting many of the behavioral and physiological responses typically associated with fear (cold sweat, heart pounding, muscles clenching).

We can think of many other cases in which someone shows the behavioral and physiological reactions typically associated with a particular emotion, but they sincerely deny experiencing the emotion. For example, you might only become conscious of your anger after someone points out that you have been behaving atrociously for the last few minutes (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, pp. 16-17). During those minutes, you might not have been consciously angry. But, granted that you are usually well-behaved, your atrocious behavior indicates that you were angry. Similarly, you might behave in a way that is indicative of sadness but sincerely deny feeling sad, or show physiological indicators of joy and sincerely deny feeling joyful.

Unconscious emotions might be relatively common. But this does not necessarily threaten the claim that feelings are essential to emotion. This is so because we can distinguish between two different senses of "consciousness", and only one of them refers to feelings.

2.1. Two senses of consciousness: Phenomenal and Reflective

Those who defend Feelings' Essentiality can account for cases of unconscious emotions by distinguishing between two senses of consciousness: Phenomenal consciousness and reflective consciousness. Phenomenal consciousness refers to the feeling or experience of a state, while reflective consciousness refers to a state being the target of another state (Block, 2001; Lambie & Marcel, 2002):

Phenomenal consciousness:	The experience of a state, or what it is like to be in that state, e.g. experiencing fear.
Reflective consciousness:	A particular type of access to a state, which consists in being the object of another state, e.g. noticing that you are experiencing fear.

If we accept the distinction between phenomenal and reflective consciousness,[3] it can be argued that unconscious emotions are phenomenally conscious states that are not reflectively conscious, or feelings that are not reflected upon (Deonna & Teroni, 2020; Goldie, 2000; Lambie & Marcel, 2002; Whiting, 2018). We will call this the Two Senses strategy to explain unconscious emotions.

(Two Senses) Unconscious emotions are phenomenally conscious but reflectively unconscious emotions.

But even if we accept that states can be phenomenally conscious and not accessed, we should accept that phenomenally conscious states are at least in principle accessible. Indeed, a dissociation between phenomenal consciousness and reflective consciousness seems to require the presence of some obstructing factor that prevents access to our phenomenally conscious states.

Ned Block (1995, 2007) has famously argued that, in some cases, phenomenally conscious states are not accessible.[4] But he is concerned with cases in which phenomenal states are *temporally* inaccessible because our attention is captured by something else. In one case, Block asks the reader to imagine that "you are engaged in intense conversation when suddenly at noon you realize that right outside your window there is - and has been for some time - a deafening pneumatic drill digging up the street." (Block, 1995, p. 234). Here, our engagement in an intense conversation (which can very well capture all our attention) is supposed to explain why the noise remains temporarily inaccessible to us. Can attentional capture or distraction explain unconscious emotions as well?

[3] It is important to note that not everyone accepts the distinction between phenomenal consciousness and reflective consciousness (Rosenthal, 2002). Most notably, higher-order theories of consciousness understand phenomenal consciousness in terms of a state being the object of a higher-order state (D. Rosenthal, 2004). According to these theories, phenomenal consciousness is reflective. Other theories of consciousness, such as Jesse Prinz's AIR theory, give a central role to attention, and thus seem to not allow for unassessed conscious states either (see Prinz, 2005, p. 23). For an in-depth discussion of the unconscious emotions according to different theories of consciousness, see Arnaud (n.d.).

[4] Accessibility refers to a third sense of consciousness: Access consciousness, which is understood as the accessibility of a state, or a state being "broadcasted" for reasoning and rational control of action (including reporting, see Block, 1995, 2001). But note that some theories of consciousness such as global workspace theory (Baars, 1997) equate phenomenality and accessibility, and there is empirical evidence against the claim that phenomenal consciousness overflows access consciousness (Cova et al., 2020).

Attentional capture seems like a good explanation of Goldie's driver case. In this case, all of the driver's attentional resources might be recruited by the need to take evasive action, and this would explain why the driver is not conscious of her fear. Other cases, such as the one regarding unconscious anger presented at the beginning of this section, could also be explained in these terms. But can attentional capture explain *every* case of unconscious emotion?

2.2. Unconscious emotions without attentional capture

There seem to be some cases in which our emotions remain unconscious even when our attention is directed to our feelings. Imagine that you are engaged in a philosophical discussion with a friend, and they make a hurtful comment. They realize the twist in your facial expression and apologize: "I didn't mean it that way." You believe them, and calm down. The conversation continues, and you go back and forth considering different claims and arguments. You find the conversation relaxed and fun. But at some point, your friend stops and notes that, since the incident, your behavior has changed. You have been attacking their claims too often and forcefully, even by analytic philosophers' standards. "Are you sure you are not hurt by my previous comment?" they ask. You pause and think about this. You do not find negative feelings in you. You were truly enjoying the conversation. But your friend rehearses all the things that you have said during this time and you have to admit that, indeed, you probably were a bit angry.

This case is meant to show that emotions might be unconscious despite attempting to reflectively access our feelings. However, some might not find the case plausible. So let's make the discussion more productive by considering some experimental evidence on the same phenomenon.

In a seminal study, Winkielman and colleagues (2005) showed that subliminally presenting emotional stimuli (facial expressions of emotion) influenced participants' behavior (pouring and consuming a drink) but not their emotion reports (valence and arousal ratings). In comparison to those presented with neutral faces, participants presented with happy faces poured and drank more beverage, while participants presented with angry faces poured and drank less

beverage. Crucially, there were no significant differences in participants' self-reported feelings across groups.

As in Goldie's driver case, the presence of behaviors typically associated with emotion (in Winkelman and colleagues' study: approach tendencies typically associated with positive emotions and avoidance tendencies typically associated with negative emotions) prompts us to accept that participants in the study underwent emotions despite not being conscious of them (as shown by their subjective reports). However, in contrast to Goldie's case, participants in Winkelman and colleagues' study did not have their attention captured by something else. Indeed, participants were explicitly asked how they were feeling and didn't have to complete another task while responding to this question. In this case, there is no reason to think that phenomenal and reflective consciousness would go apart.

If the Two Senses strategy cannot explain Winkelman and colleagues' results, those who defend Feelings' Essentiality have to look for other explanations. Here, I will consider two possibilities and argue that none of them is tenable.

First, one could argue that the effect of subliminal stimuli on participants' behavior was not mediated by emotion. For example, the subliminal presentation of faces could have influenced participants' behavior via semantic priming (Blaison et al., 2012). Happy and angry faces are semantically associated with approval and disapproval, respectively, and this could have influenced participants' behavior without inducing emotion in them. There is, however, experimental evidence that speaks against this hypothesis. If the effects found by Winkielman and colleagues were due to semantic priming, we would expect that stimuli with similar semantic content (e.g., a picture of a gun and the word "gun") would yield the same effects on participants' behavior. But recent studies did not find support for this prediction (Winkielman & Gogolushko, 2018).

Second, one could argue participants experienced changes in their feelings, but those changes were too weak to be reported (Whiting, 2018, p. 318). Winkelman and colleagues consider this possibility but note that the priming had a strong effect on participants' behavior, which suggests that the induced emotions were not particularly weak. However, future studies could test this hypothesis by

replicating the experiment using a scale that allows participants to report more fine-grained changes in their feelings. Note that, in order to distinguish between (weakly) felt emotions and unfelt emotions, we have to grant subjects' ability to access their own experiences and identify them as positive or negative at least when they have no countervailing motivation to do so (see §2 and §2.1.).

2.3. Further evidence of unconscious emotions

In the previous section, we focused on the results of one experiment conducted on a sample of thirty-nine undergraduates. This is a larger sample size than the one in most philosophical thought experiments (N=1). Nevertheless, one can rightly argue that we shouldn't base our claims on such thin grounds. Aren't there other studies testing unconscious emotions?

Many studies have reported dissociations between participants' subjective reports and behavioral indicators of emotion (see Lambie and Marcel, 2002, for a comprehensive review). But Winkielman and colleagues' studies are, to my knowledge, the only ones that aim at testing the existence of unconscious emotions.[5] Because other studies do not aim at testing unconscious emotions, the evidence they provide tends to be weaker, but it might nevertheless be worth noting.

One case of dissociation between subjective and objective measures of emotion is provided by so-called "repressors". Repressors are individuals who report less state anxiety than highly anxious individuals but show physiological responses similar to them (Derakshan et al., 2007; Derakshan & Eysenck, 1997; Myers, 2009). Derakshan & Eysenck (2005) found that, when asked to focus on their feelings, repressors report as much state anxiety and negative thoughts as non-repressors, which suggests that inattention can explain the dissociation between repressors' subjective reports and physiological responses. However, repressors performed better than non-repressors in behavioral tasks that could be influenced by anxiety (in particular, solving negative anagrams), suggesting that they might genuinely not experience anxiety.

[5] It seems like cognitive scientists and philosophers have either assumed that unconscious emotions are possible or that they are impossible (see §1).

Further evidence comes from informal reports on particular cases. For example, Fenz & Epstein (1967) briefly describe the case of a novice parachutist who "reported that he was amazed at how calm he was before his first jump, until he looked down and saw his knees knocking together" (p. 34). And Grinker & Spiegel (1945) present the case of an air force bombardier who (after an incident in one of his flights) fainted whenever the plane reached an altitude of 100,000. This patient denied experiencing fear in several psychiatric interviews, but showed signs of fear before fainting during flights (trembling, paleness, rapid breathing). Finally, Fischman & Foltin (1992) note that participants in a study on addiction reported that they were choosing randomly between two options that, unbeknownst to them, were a low dose of cocaine and a placebo, but their behavior shows that they were consistently choosing the low cocaine option. This suggests that unconscious emotions were influencing their behavior.

These results, together with the ones presented in the previous section, further challenge Feelings' Essentiality.

3. Long-standing emotions

Long-standing emotions are, as the name suggests, emotions that continue to exist for a long time. Emotions can exist for several days, weeks, or even years. For example, you might admire Pau Gasol since 2001, or still be sad that Spain's lost against the USA in the men's basketball finals of the 2008 Olympics. This admiration and sadness are different from the occasional and short-lived admiration you feel when you watch Pau Gasol's career highlights, or the sadness you experience while rewatching the men's basketball final of the 2008 Olympics.

Long-standing emotions differ from short-lived emotions in their relation to time. Long-standing emotions *remain* or continue to exist (like people or shapes), while short-lived emotions *occur* or happen at some point (like births or earthquakes). At least in principle, emotions can stand or remain only for a short period (e.g. you could develop a fear of dogs and erase it on the same day after a therapy session). Conversely, emotions can occur and go on for a

long time (e.g. you might become sad about someone's death and continue to be sad for several days and sleepless nights). Going beyond mere duration, we can make the following distinction:[6]

(Long-)Standing emotions:	Emotions that continue to exist for a (usually long) time, e.g. admiring Pau Gasol since 2001.
Occurrent emotions:	Emotions that happen and go on for a (usually short) time, e.g. admiring Pau Gasol when watching his career highlights.

Another difference between standing emotions and occurrent emotions concerns feeling. Occurrent emotions are typically felt (but see §2), while standing emotions, and surely long-standing emotions, are not felt for their whole duration. You might admire Pau Gasol since 2001, but you have not felt admiration every moment since. Between 2001 and today, you hopefully have felt many other emotions and have peacefully slept for a third of the time. It would be weird to say that those other emotions and sleeping were just distracting your attention away from your constant feeling of admiration for Pau Gasol. The Two Senses strategy (see §2.2) cannot explain why long-standing emotions are unfelt.

If feelings are an essential part or aspect of emotion, how is it possible that long-standing emotions are unfelt? The most popular response is quite crude: Long-standing emotions are not emotions but dispositions to experience emotions (Ben-Ze'ev, 2010, p. 14; Colombetti, 2013, p. 65; Deonna & Teroni, 2012, p. 13; Döring, 2003, p. 223; Lazarus, 1991, p. 46; Prinz, 2004, p. 180; Rossi & Tappolet, 2018, p. 2; Shargel, 2014, p. 64). I will examine this claim in the next section.

3.1. Long-standing emotions as mere dispositions

If long-standing admiration, sadness, etc. are emotions, and they are unfelt, then feelings cannot be an essential part or aspect of emotion. To avoid this conclusion,

[6] In the literature, it is usual to find a distinction between dispositional and occurrent emotions or between emotion dispositions and emotional episodes/events. But, as we will see, these distinctions assume a particular view of (long-)standing emotions as mere dispositions (see §3.1).

proponents of Feelings' Essentiality can deny the first premise, and claim that long-standing emotions are not emotions but rather dispositions to experience emotions. For example, your admiration for Pau Gasol since 2001 is not, strictly speaking, admiration, but a disposition to feel admiration when you perceive or remember Pau Gasol's great achievements. We will call this the Mere Dispositions strategy to account for long-standing emotions.

(Mere Dispositions) Long-standing emotions are not emotions but rather dispositions to experience emotions.

Together with the distinction between (long-)standing and occurrent emotions, Mere Dispositions leads to a distinction between emotional dispositions on the one hand, and emotions on the other:

(Long-)standing emotions: Dispositions to have emotions / emotional dispositions[7]

Occurrent emotions: Emotions.

The distinction between emotions and emotional dispositions is often taken as a given in the literature on emotions. But, as we have seen, it assumes Mere Dispositions, which is a substantive theoretical claim about the nature of long-standing emotions. The fact that an emotion stands or continues to exist for a (usually long) time does not entail that it is a disposition to have emotions rather than an emotion. Furthermore, we use emotion terms such as "admiration" or "sadness" to refer to both standing and occurrent emotions. Thus, proponents of Feelings' Essentiality have to give us reasons to believe Mere Dispositions.

The fact that long-standing emotions are mostly unfelt cannot be the reason to deny that they are emotions, as this would beg the question. But those who want to salvage Feelings' Essentiality can claim that commonsense understanding of emotion regards emotions as feelings, or that the distinction between long-standing and occurrent emotions is best understood as a distinction between emotions and emotional dispositions. In the following, I will argue that commonsense understanding of emotion does not provide reasons to believe that

[7] Note that emotional dispositions are not the same as dispositional emotions. The former are dispositions to have emotions, the latter are emotions with dispositional profiles.

long-term emotions are mere dispositions, and that we lack reasons to believe that the contrast between emotions and emotional dispositions is the best way of understanding the distinction between occurrent and long-standing emotions.

3.2. Commonsense understanding of emotion and feeling

If commonsense understanding of emotion does not allow for unfelt emotions, this could be a reason to reject the idea that long-standing emotions are genuine emotions. However, we do not seem to have any problem saying that we admire or fear something for years. Furthermore, empirical studies on folk understanding of emotion suggest that most people do not consider feelings an essential part or aspect of emotion.

In a famous argument for the claim that feelings (in particular, bodily feelings) are essential for emotion, William James claimed that subtracting bodily feelings from the experience of emotion makes the emotion disappear. This thought experiment is known as the Subtraction Argument. Díaz (2022) conducted a study testing people's intuitions regarding the Subtraction Argument and found that most participants consider that their emotions would persist in the absence of bodily feelings. In other words, people consider that bodily feelings are not essential for emotion. Importantly, participants' responses did not depend on their level of reflection or interoception, and were virtually the same for both imagined or experimentally induced emotions.

Bodily feelings, however, are not the only type of feelings that could constitute emotions. In another set of studies, Díaz (2022a) tested how the presence or absence of bodily feelings, felt urges (e.g. the urge to escape), and cognitive evaluations (e.g. seeing something as dangerous), influence people's use of emotion concepts such as fear or anger. Results showed that none of the three tested features is strictly necessary for people to consider something a case of emotion, but the presence or absence of cognitive evaluations (e.g. seeing something as dangerous or offensive) has the biggest impact on people's use of emotion concepts, and other features are considered to depend on them. However, as we have seen in §1, those evaluations are not necessarily felt.

Finally, one could claim that (positive or negative) hedonic tone is essential to people's understanding of emotion. But studies have found that most people accept the possibility of unfelt pains (Reuter & Sytsma, 2020) and unfelt emotions (Kurth et al., n.d.), suggesting that this is not the case. Overall, the evidence suggests that commonsense understanding does not regard feeling as an essential part or aspect of emotion. Thus, commonsense understanding of emotion cannot be a reason to support the Mere Dispositions account of long-standing emotions.

3.3. Distinguishing long-standing and occurrent emotions

If there is a real difference between long-standing and occurrent cases of emotion, and this difference must be understood as a distinction between emotions and emotional dispositions, we should accept the Mere Dispositions account of long-standing emotions. However, a contrast between emotions and emotional dispositions might not be the best way of understanding the distinction between occurrent and long-standing emotions.

In a recent article, Gary Bartlett (2018) evaluates different accounts of the distinction between standing and occurrent mental states, as applied to emotions but also other mental states such as beliefs or desires. One of such accounts is similar to the one we find in the emotions literature, and posits that standing states are dispositional and occurrent states are non-dispositional.[8] Bartlett argues that this account cannot capture the differences between standing and occurrent states. The reason is simple: Occurrent states can be dispositional, and standing states can be manifestations of dispositions. Thus, dispositionality vs. non-dispositionality cannot be what divides standing and occurrent mental states. For example, your occurrent states of fear dispose you to have other cognitive and conative states such as negative thoughts and urges to escape

[8] Bartlett also argues against another account, which defines occurrent states as conscious, and standing states as non-conscious. The problem with this account is that there is extensive evidence that unconscious states can influence behavior (Wilson, 2002), and only occurrent states can influence behavior. For example, you might have a *standing* belief that you should bow if you meet the queen, but fail to bow when you meet the queen because your belief doesn't become *occurrent* (Bartlett, 2018, p. 3). If there are unconscious occurrent states, consciousness cannot help us distinguish between standing and occurrent states. This resembles our discussion in §2.

(Barlett, 2018, p. 10), and your standing belief that you are never going to be loved again might be a manifestation of your post-breakup experience of grief.

Note that the point here is not to deny that long-standing emotions dispose us to feel in certain ways, but to deny that this point is enough to account for the differences between long-standing and occurrent emotions. Occurrent emotions also dispose us to feel urges to escape and have other experiences, and we don't claim that they are dispositional urges rather than emotions. Against this, one might argue that these experiences are not manifestations of the emotion, but rather the emotion itself. For example, some might want to say that felt urges are an essential part or aspect of emotion (Frijda, 1986; Scarantino, 2014). But it seems highly unlikely that all the different states that can be involved in an episode of emotion are essential parts of the emotion, as those are highly variable across instances of the same emotion type.

The difference between standing and occurrent states that Bartlett vindicates posits that occurrent states are active, and standing states are inactive, where activity is understood as a change in the states' properties. In the same way that volcanos can be said to be active or inactive depending on whether their properties are changing or not, we can say that mental states are active or inactive depending on whether their properties are stable or fluctuating. A similar proposal concerning emotions is made by Rowland Stout (2022), who argues for a distinction between dormant and active emotional states, where both are understood as dispositional, but active states are in the process of being manifested (even if the process is counteracted by deliberate or automatic efforts to control it).

Note, however, that Stout considers the phrase "occurrent states" an oxymoron, as states are the type of thing that remain rather than occur (see §3.1). A similar point is made by Naar (2022), who suggests dropping the dichotomy between occurrent and dispositional emotions and substituting it for a distinction between long-term and short-term emotional states. But we might still salvage the phrase "occurrent states" if we understand it as referring to a state that is manifesting, as manifestations are occurrences. Emotional manifestations could be understood as the manifestation of the emotion itself in consciousness, or the

manifestation of states that are a consequence of the emotion and can be either conscious or unconscious (e.g. behaviors or physiological reactions, see §2.3.).

Details aside, one thing is clear: We lack reasons to believe that the distinction between long-standing and occurring emotions should be understood as a distinction between emotions and emotional dispositions. As we have seen, this account faces important criticisms, and there are alternative (and perhaps more adequate) accounts of the distinction that don't deny that long-standing emotions are emotions. But even if all the different ways of casting out the distinction are on par, the only reason to favor the one that posit that long-standing emotions are mere dispositions would be to preserve Feelings' Essentiality, which is precisely the claim that is challenged by the existence of long-standing emotions.

4. How to individuate emotions

In the previous sections, I have argued that both occurrent and standing emotions can be phenomenally unconscious, and thus feelings are not an essential part or aspect of emotion. However, one might claim that, even though feelings are not necessary constituents of emotions, they are still necessary to individuate emotions. Thus, we should nevertheless understand emotions as feelings.

In the following, I will argue that emotions can be individuated by referring to their non-phenomenal attitudinal profile. If we can individuate emotions in these terms, then feelings are also not essential to individuate emotions either.

4.1. Feelings as essential to individuate emotions

Some have suggested that phenomenally unconscious emotions are nevertheless feelings (Lacewing, 2013; Tullmann, 2020).[9] If taken as a claim about what constitutes emotions, this claim is contradictory. But we can also

[9] Lacewig and Tulman seem to defend that, if phenomenally unconscious emotions have behavioral effects, and the behavioral effects of emotions are driven by their felt aspect, we have to accept the existence of phenomenally unconscious feelings. But we can turn the argument around, and argue that the behavioral effects of unconscious emotions are a reason to reject the claim that the function of emotions depend on their feeling aspect. When having to choose between keeping a theoretical claim or the logical principle of no-contradiction, we can (and probably should) choose the latter.

understand it as a claim about what individuates emotions. This way, it can be said that emotions are not constituted by feelings but are individuated by feelings. What is constitutive of something and what individuates it can be different. Consider sunburns. What distinguishes sunburns from other types of burns is that they are caused by the sun. But the sun is not a constitutive part or aspect of sunburns. Perhaps a similar dissociation between constitution and individuation is true for emotions and feelings.

Burge (1997) has argued that some phenomenally unconscious states, e.g. unconscious pains, are nevertheless individuated by their phenomenal properties.[10] This again seems to be a contradiction. Saying that a state has phenomenal properties but is not phenomenally conscious is like saying that a state is felt but unfelt. However, Burge seems to understand phenomenal properties as dispositional properties or properties that are potentially felt. Indeed, he says that "What it is like to feel pain, pain's phenomenal quality, is essential to the type and token individuation of pains. […] But pains and other sensations can be phenomenally unconscious – not *actually* felt by their possessor at a given time" (Burge, 1997, p. 432, emphasis added).

Following Burge, one could claim that feeling is essential to states that (1) are potentially felt and (2) cannot be individuated without reference to how they feel.[11] Both of these features would be necessary. If a state is not even potentially felt, it does not make sense to consider it a phenomenal state. But the same is true for a state that can be individuated without reference to how it feels. For example, we can consider a view under which desires are potentially felt but we separate between desires from other mental states (e.g. beliefs) without referring to how they feel. Under this view, feelings are not essential to individuate desires.

Do emotions meet the abovementioned two conditions? The first condition seems to apply to emotion, as arguably no one would deny that emotions are

[10] Rosenthal (1991) makes a similar claim, but he talks about sensory qualities instead of phenomenal properties, and claims that "the properties of being conscious and having sensory are independent of one another, and a satisfactory account of each property requires us to investigate them separately" (Rosental, 1991, p. 23). Thus, states with sensory qualities do not depend on phenomenal consciousness.

[11] "Unfelt sensations remain sensations (phenomenal states) because there is a way that it is like to feel them, and they are individuated in terms of their qualitative features" (Burge, 1997, p. 432)

(at least) potentially felt. The key question is thus whether individuating emotions requires referring to how they feel. Some have argued that this is the case. For example, it has been argued that only feeling can distinguish between emotional and non-emotional actions, judgments, and physiological reactions (Arnaud, n.d.). But in the next section, I will argue that emotions can be individuated by their referring to their attitudinal profile.

4.2. An attitudinal profile of emotion

Emotions are usually characterized as having two main features: Phenomenology and intentionality (Deonna et al., 2015). In this article, I have argued that phenomenology is not essential to what emotions are. Intentionality thus comes as a clear candidate to individuate emotions.

By saying that emotions are intentional, we mean that emotions are about something, or directed at something. This "something" is usually known as the object or content of the emotion. Emotions can be directed at people, situations, physical objects, or events. For example, we can admire Pau Gasol, his placement in the rankings, his titles, or his wins. But saying that emotions are intentional is not enough to individuate emotions. After all, other mental states such as beliefs and desires are also directed at people, situations, physical objects, or events.

Emotions, beliefs, and desires, are all intentional *attitudes*. One can have different attitudes towards the very same content. For example, I can *admire* Pau Gasol's placement in the rankings, *believe* Pau Gasol's placement in the rankings, or *desire* Pau Gasol's placement in the rankings. It is usually claimed that the difference between belief and desire is that belief regards its content as true, while desire regards its content as a goal. We can call these the attitudinal profiles of belief and desire, respectively. What is the attitudinal profile of emotion?

According to extant Attitudinal theories of emotion (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, 2015) each emotion type is a different attitude that regards its content as having certain value or evaluative property (e.g. admirable in admiration, loss in sadness, offense in anger, etc.). This way, to admire something is to regard it as admirable, and to be sad about something is to regard it as a loss. This general description individuates emotion types without reference to how they feel.

Deonna & Teroni's proposal further specifies that "an emotion type is a type of felt bodily attitude towards objects" (2012, p. 82). Thus, emotions seem to be ultimately individuated in terms of how they feel in their account. But we can accept the idea that emotion are attitudes without accepting the claim that those attitudes are felt.

Another potential problem with Deonna & Teroni's proposal is that there is no attitudinal profile for emotion in general. Instead, each emotion type (e.g. admiration, sadness) has their own attitudinal profile. Thus, it might not allow to distinguish emotions as a class from other mental states. But we can build on the core insight of Attitudinalism (that emotions are specific intentional attitudes) to postulate an attitudinal profile of emotion in general.

Here, I would like to suggest that emotions can be identified as attitudes that regard their content as relevant, where relevance is understood as relative to one's desires and other motivational states. This attitudinal profile can distinguish the class of emotions (which concern relevance) from other intentional mental states such as beliefs (which concern truth) and desires (which concern goals). Furthermore, it accommodates the widely agreed idea that emotions have motivational bases, i.e. that the emotions we experience are shaped by our pre-existing desires, preferences, cares, concerns, and other motivational states (Deonna & Teroni, 2012; Helm, 2001; Moors et al., 2017; Roberts, 2003; Schroeder, 2004). For example, our emotions during a basketball game depend on which team we are rooting for. And if we don't care about basketball, the game will most likely leave us cold, or bored if we would prefer doing something else.

The idea that emotions regard their content as relevant to one's motivations distinguishes emotions from other mental states, but can also distinguish emotion types by referring to their particular content and motivational bases. In the same way in which we distinguish between different types of beliefs by their content (e.g. religious beliefs, scientific beliefs, political beliefs, etc.) we can distinguish emotion types by their content as well. For example, fear is about the possibility of something happening, while sadness is about certainties; admiration is about things external to our self, while pride is about things internal to our self. Motivational bases can also contribute to further individuate emotion

types. For example, core disgust might regard things as relevant to our care for health/hygiene, while outrage might regard things as relevant to our desire for justice.

It is important to note that understanding emotions as attitudes concerning relevance do not commit us to a particular theory of emotion, the same way that understanding beliefs as attitudes concerning truth does not commit us to a particular theory of belief, although it sets some constraints. Nevertheless, the attitudinal profile presented here might have explanatory power beyond the issue of individuation.[12]

For our purposes here, it is enough to show that emotions can be individuated without referring to how they feel. Independently of questions regarding which attitudinal profile better captures the intentionality of emotion (types), I have shown that attitudinal profiles allow us to individuate emotions without referring to how they feel. Thus, we don't need to consider feelings as essential to the individuation of emotions.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that emotions can be phenomenally unconscious (§2), that long-standing emotions are genuine emotions (§3), and that we can individuate emotions without reference to how they feel (§4). All these suggest that feelings are not essential parts or aspects of emotion. If this is the case, research that focus on felt emotions might be missing what emotions are, and instead studying a subclass or consequence of emotions.

6. References

[12] The account can also explain why emotions guide action (by telling us how the environment relate to our motivations), and when emotions are "correct" (when their content is indeed relevant to our motivations), which are usually consider core desiderata for emotion theories (Tappolet, 2022).

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