Are Emotions Perceptions of Value (and Why this Matters)?

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Christine Tappolet's *Emotions, Values, and Agency* provides a rich, provocative, and highly accessible defense of a perceptual theory of emotion. On her account, emotions are perceptual experiences of evaluative properties: to be disgusted by the maggot infested meat is, quite literally, to perceive the meat as disgusting—to see it as something to be rejected or avoided. While Tappolet's core argument for her Perceptual Theory comes through the significant parallels she identifies between emotions and sensory perceptions, the proposal gets further development and support from her efforts to draw out the implications that it has for our understanding of a wide range of issues in value theory. For instance, she argues that her Perceptual Theory not only enriches our understanding of emotions' tendency to prompt motivation and action, but also pushes us toward a novel, broadly sentimentalist account of value and moral responsibility. To this she adds a nuanced account of how emotions contribute positively to human agency. Tappolet also argues that understanding emotions as perceptions has important epistemological consequences: just as sensory perceptions can help us become aware of the external world and justify our associated beliefs about it, emotions can be sources of awareness and justification within the evaluative realm. The end result is a powerful defense of a perceptual theory of emotions and its philosophical significance.

In what follows, we begin with a chapter-level overview of *Emotions, Values, and Agency*, focusing in particular on what we see as its most significant claims and arguments (§1). We then move to raise three worries that focus on: Tappolet's defense of her Perceptual Theory (§2), her argument that emotions have only a contingent tie to motivation (§3), and the Sentimental Realism she develops as an alternative to existing neo-sentimentalist accounts of value (§4). We conclude our

discussion with some more general observations about the significance of Tappolet's proposal for existing debates in the philosophy of emotion and ethical theory (§5).

1. Tappolet's Neo-Sentimentalist Perceptual Theory of Emotion

Chapter 1 presents Tappolet's core defense of her Perceptual Theory. In taking emotions to be perceptions, her proposal contrasts with theories that understand emotions as a type of feeling (e.g., James 1884), a form of judgment (e.g., Nussbaum 2001), or a type of motivation (e.g., Scarantino 2015). Her proposal also contrasts with other perceptual theories both in taking emotions to be, in the first place, perceptions of evaluative properties rather than, say, perceptions of changes in bodily states (e.g., Prinz 2004) and in understanding the content of emotions to be non-conceptual rather than conceptually-laden construals (e.g., Roberts 2013).

As Tappolet notes, her formulation of a perceptual account makes for a strong analogy with sensory perceptions. In fact, she sees the robustness of these affinities as the principal support for her move to identify emotions with perceptions (19-24). To develop this, Tappolet highlights key parallels between emotions and sensory perceptions. For instance, both are conscious states with phenomenal properties—just as there's a way it is like to see something as blue, there's a way it is like to experience fear or disgust. Both types of experience are automatic (e.g., you cannot decide to fear a dog just as you cannot decide to see the sky as blue) and it's difficult to directly change what you see or feel. Sensory perceptions and emotions are also both "world-guided" in the sense that they're caused by things in the world and both have content that can be evaluated as incorrect— things that aren't blue can nonetheless look blue and things that aren't funny can elicit amusement. Finally, both display a high degree of informational encapsulation and both are inferentially isolated in the sense that neither is involved in inferential networks.

But as Tappolet acknowledges, the analogy is imperfect in various ways. (i) Emotions, but not sensory perceptions, are causally dependent on their cognitive bases: in order to be afraid, you must see, hear, remember, or imagine the target of your fear (these causal sources being the 'cognitive bases' of your fear). (ii) Unlike sensory perceptions, emotions are both more intimately tied to motivation and typically come with a positive or negative valence. (iii) Emotions also have a richer phenomenology (e.g., fear involves a cascade of physiological changes that do not occur in response to, for example, simply seeing a clock). And (iv) while sensory perceptions are transparent, emotions are not. Tappolet's response to these disanalogies is two-fold. First, she maintains that "there is nothing conceptually wrong" with identifying emotions as perceptions in the face of differences like (i)-(iv). To this she adds that the disanalogies seem troubling only if one takes sensory perceptions to be the paradigm of what a perception is. But here she argues that we do better if we adopt a more liberal account—one that sees perception "as a kind of awareness of things and qualities…a form of openness to the world" (29; c.f., McDowell 1994).

While this is progress, a further difference still threatens the Perceptual Theory. Although both emotion and sensory perceptions can be assessed for incorrectness, only emotions allow for assessments of *irrationality*. Tappolet's response is clever. As she sees it, this difference doesn't show that emotions are not perceptions, but rather that emotion systems are *more plastic* than sensory systems. While there's nothing we can do to keep from seeing the Müller-Lyer lines as different lengths, it is possible for us to overcome a recalcitrant fear of flying. As she puts it, "in contrast to the case of [an incorrect] sensory perception, there is some hope we can get rid of inappropriate emotions"—and this explains why only emotions can be irrational (38).

The larger result of Tappolet's examination of these disanalogies is a richer understanding of the sense in which she takes emotions to be perceptions: emotions are malleable systems that help open us to the evaluative features of the world. The balance of the book further develops this idea.

In her second chapter, Tappolet investigates the connection between emotion and motivation in of order to both lay foundation for her account of how emotions can contribute positively to human agency (Chapter 5) and address concerns that emotions' robust tie to motivation undermines her Perceptual Theory. While the discussion takes the form of an extended examination of fear, the chapter ends by arguing that the lessons gleaned about fear extend to other emotions.

Tappolet begins by arguing against the thought—common among philosophers (e.g., Griffith 1997) and psychologists (e.g., Frijda 1986)—that fear is modular in the sense that it automatically generates a rigid set of fight-or-flight behaviors. If that thought—a view Tappolet dubs the Thesis of Motivational Modularity—is correct, then one might reasonably worry that the narrowness of the response will undermine fear's ability to facilitate agency (at least outside of a small range of cases). But the Modularity Thesis is implausible: whatever truth it has as a claim about the danger-behavior of rodents and other non-human animals, it's deeply inadequate as an account about our fear responses. While we sometimes engage in fight/flight behaviors in the face of danger, we also do much more—scared about being trapped in a burning building, one might run towards an exit; but one might be just as likely to look for a fire extinguisher or use one's cell phone to call for help (57).

While the problems with the Modularity Thesis indicate that human fears display a flexible connection to a range of motivations, they do not rule out the possibility that the two are necessarily connected. Along these lines psychologists like Gerald Clore and philosophers like Jesse Prinz have endorsed what Tappolet calls the Desire Theory—an account that grants emotions lack the kind of

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rigid action tendencies presumed by the Modularity Thesis, but nonetheless sees emotions as *necessarily* involving a motivational element—namely, a desire that exerts an emotion-specific influence on the individual's subsequent decision making. Fear, for instance, necessarily involves a desire that inclines one to avoid harm and loss (59).

But the possibility of such a connection sits uncomfortably with the Perceptual Theory: not only do sensory perceptions fail to display this sort of essential connection to motivation, but the possibility of such a tie also suggests—troublingly—that fear is mental state that's at once motivational and representational—a "besire-like" state with both world-to-mind and mind-to-world directions of fit.[1] To rebut this proposal, Tappolet makes a case for what she calls "contemplative emotions"—emotions that do not involve any desire (47). Building from Kendall Walton's (1978) discussion of fearing fictions, Tappolet takes up the example of Charles who seems terrorized by the green slime monster in a horror movie but who nonetheless doesn't flee or try to escape. On Tappolet's analysis, Charles' behavior is best explained as a case of contemplative fear—a situation where he feels fear but has no fear-related desire (say, to escape the slime). To think otherwise, she argues, would require us to assume Charles was either irrational (e.g., he desires to escape the dangerous slime even though he believes it doesn't exist) or experiencing conflicting desires (e.g., to escape and to stay) despite showing no signs of being torn between these options (64-5). But if contemplative fears like Charles' are possible, then "it is clear that desires are not essential ingredients, or parts, of the emotion of fear as such" (66).

Tappolet's resulting theory of motivation, then, is one on which emotions are very closely, but not essentially, tied to motivation—a conclusion that aids the defense of her Perceptual Theory: if emotions are only contingently tied to motivation, then we needn't be concerned either that they

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[1] For concerns along these lines, see Smith 1994 and Roberts 2013; for a contrary view, see Scarantino 2015.

are problematically disanalogous to sensory perceptions or that they require us to countenance besire-like mental states.

In Chapter 3, Tappolet defends a neo-sentimentalist account of the connection between emotion and value. But, sensitive to familiar worries about the viability of existing neo-sentimentalist proposals, she offers a novel alternative—what she calls Sentimental Realism. Much of the chapter thus aims to draw out the superiority of Sentimental Realism as an account of value and to show how it follows naturally from her Perceptual Theory.

Neo-sentimentalist proposals offer response-dependent accounts of value that analyze values in terms of the appropriateness of the associated emotional responses. The core proposal takes the form of biconditionals like:

(S) x is shameful (disgusting, amusing…) iff it is appropriate to feel shame (disgust, amusement…) toward x.

As often developed, neo-sentimentalists elaborate (S) in two ways. First, they endorse a *normative* understanding of 'appropriate' where (roughly) if x is shameful, then one has (some) reason to feel shame toward it. Second, they propose (S) as an account for *both* value concepts (the shameful) and value properties (being shameful).

But as Tappolet notes, these elaborations bring trouble, the most significant of which is the familiar Wrong Kind of Reasons Problem. If one's shameful behavior entails that one has a reason to feel shame, then we need an account of the kind of reason this is. In particular, we need a rendering of (S) on which the reasons one has to feel shame result from the *shamefulness* of the behavior, not (say) its moral or prudential features. But existing neo-sentimentalist proposals seem unable to do this (95-8). Moreover, since (S) is standardly taken to be an account of both value concepts and properties, advocates of the normative rendering of (S) have little to work with beyond

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appeals to the emotional response itself; thus they appear unequipped to give a substantive, non-circular explanation of the relevant kind of reason (D'Arms & Jacobson 2000).

Much of the appeal of Tappolet's alternative lies in its ability to avoid problems like these. Her Sentimental Realism differs from standard neo-sentimentalist proposals in two ways. First, it rejects the normative reading of 'appropriate' in (S). On her "representational" alternative, for you to judge that your behavior is shameful is not to make a claim about the reasons you have to feel shame. Rather, it's to claim that the evaluative content of the emotion "is correct, or accurate, from an epistemic point of view" (87): your behavior is as your shame presents it to be. Second, Tappolet's proposal is "realist" in the sense that while it takes value *concepts* to be response-dependent, the associated *properties* are not—they are "fully objective" (xiii, 116). Put another way, Sentimental Realism entails that while we cannot think or make judgments about shameful things unless we have experienced shame, things can be shameful regardless of our ability to experience shame.[2]

With these distinguishing features in hand, Tappolet argues that the representational aspect of her Sentimental Realism allows her to easily avoid the Wrong Kinds of Reason Problem: because 'appropriateness' is not normative on her account, the shamefulness of your behavior doesn't generate reasons, much less wrong reasons (95-6). Tappolet also argues that the realist aspect of her theory allows her to avoid the circularity issues that threaten other forms of sentimentalism. As we noted above, if judgments about what's shameful are to be assessed in terms of the appropriateness of feelings of shame (as (S) states), then—if we're to avoid circularity—we need a way of understanding when shame is appropriate that doesn't appeal to *judgments about what's shameful*. But notice: since value properties are *not* response-dependent on Tappolet's account, she has more

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[2] While Tappolet's preferred account of this "objectivity" is robust realism, she allows that her basic proposal is compatible with error theoretic and constructivist renderings (116-7).

resources to draw on to avoid circularity. In particular, she argues that since shamefulness (the property) is response-*independent*, we can make the defeasible assumption that shame (the emotion) aims to track this objective value property.[3] Then, taking a cue from Philip Pettit (1991: 600-3), she adds that we can identify the appropriate instances of shame as those that "survive our discounting practice[s]" (102). As Tappolet explains, "when we want to determine whether something should count as a defeater, we have to look to our shared practices of discounting certain conditions as likely to interfere with our responses, a practice that aims at making sense of intrapersonal, but also interpersonal, discrepancies" (172; also 101-2). Thus, we might deem the shame assessments of someone on medication inappropriate on the grounds that we have a practice of taking medication of that sort to cloud evaluation. Though Tappolet grants this framework is quite general, she maintains it's sufficient to show that unlike normative neo-sentimentalism, her account is not circular or trivial. These results are impressive. Not only does the representational aspect of Tappolet's Sentimental Realism fit nicely with her Perceptual Thesis, but the richness of the overall proposal does much to advance our understanding of what a viable neo-sentimentalist account of value might look like.

Chapter 4 extends the discussion of emotions' role in value theory by examining their relevance for our understanding of moral responsibility. In particular, Tappolet's project is two-fold. First, she begins by assessing the prospects for a neo-sentimentalist account of the Strawsonian idea that to be morally responsible is to be a fitting target of reactive attitudes like guilt, resentment, and gratitude. Second, given the troubles she uncovers for neo-sentimentalist Strawsonians, Tappolet draws on her Sentimental Realism to develop an alternative account of the relationship between moral responsibility and reactive attitudes.

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[3] Tappolet defends this "tracking" claim in Chapter 5.

Tappolet's critical project begins with what she calls the constitutive interpretation of Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" (1962). On this account, to be morally responsible *just is* to be a fitting target of the reactive attitudes. From this starting place, Tappolet observes that tying moral responsibility to these fitting emotions invites a neo-sentimentalist account of the property of being morally responsible which, in turn, suggests that the *concept* of moral responsibility should also be given a neo-sentimentalist analysis (130-1). The upshot, then, is that the constitutive interpretation appears to commit one to understanding 'moral responsibility' as a response-dependent concept.

While extending a neo-sentimentalist account of value to the domain of moral responsibility would seem to square with the idea that the normative domains should be given a unified analysis, Tappolet disagrees. The "Asymmetry Problem" provides reason to think there are important structural and functional differences between responsibility and value—differences that undermine the prospects of a neo-sentimentalist account of (the concept of) moral responsibility.

First consider the structural asymmetries between value and responsibility. With regard to value, there's a tight connection between emotions and the associated value concepts and properties. Not only do we find lexical connections between emotion terms ('shame,' 'disgust') and the associated concepts (the shameful, the disgusting), but emotions and their associated values also display telling affinities: both come in degrees, have (positive/negative) valence, and are typically paired with a polar opposite (e.g., pride and shame; joy and sadness). By contrast, there's no lexical connection between responsibility and reactive attitude labels like 'shame' and 'resentment' (136). And although Tappolet allows that there might be a way to makes sense of responsibility as gradable (though she's skeptical), she maintains there's little support for the other structural features: while

particular reactive attitudes are valenced, moral responsibility itself is not. Similarly with regard to the existence of polar opposites (140).

Turning to functional asymmetries, Tappolet notes that value judgments display both a non-cognitive dimension given their intimate tie to motivation, and a cognitive dimension insofar as they purport to describe the evaluative features of agents, actions, and objects—a combination that a neo-sentimentalist account appears well-positioned to explain (84, 118-9, 142-4). However, while judgments of responsibility are like value judgments with regard to their cognitive dimension, Tappolet argues that it's much less clear that they share the non-cognitive tie to motivation: while deeming myself to be responsible for the accident might motivate me to apologize, it's seems implausible to think that I'd be *practically irrational* were I to lack such a motivation. But if that's right, then though responsibility judgments may incline us to have certain motivations, this connection is significantly weaker than is typically associated with the non-cognitive dimension of value judgments—i.e., failing to be motivated doesn't entail practical irrationality (Smith 1994). Yet once we see that responsibility judgments are (principally) cognitive phenomena, the second attraction of a neo-sentimentalist account fades: if there isn't a robust non-cognitive dimension to responsibility judgments, then (unlike the case of value judgments) there's nothing for a neo-sentimentalist account to reconcile.[4]

The Asymmetry Problem might suggest that reactive attitudes are only contingently related to moral responsibility. But to accept this, Tappolet maintains, would be a mistake: we would be unable to preserve the intuition that guilt, resentment, gratitude, and the like are appropriate responses to the moral features of our actions and characters. Thus, the second part of Chapter 4

[4] Though we won't pursue the matter, it's worth pausing to ask how well this argument—with its reliance on there being a robust connection between emotions and motivation—fits with the Chapter 2 conclusion that emotions are only contingently tied to motivation. C.f., Tappolet's discussion at p. 118.

develops a novel neo-sentimentalist proposal that takes emotions and responsibility to be essentially—but indirectly—related. More specifically, while standard neo-sentimentalist proposals seek to secure a *constitutive* connection between the reactive attitudes and moral responsibility, on Tappolet's alternative proposal, emotions are tied to responsibility *by way of* the morally valuable features of one's actions. So, for instance, the gratitude I feel toward you for helping me is fitting, not because of some constitutive tie between my gratitude and your responsibility, but rather because (i) you helped me and (ii) the fact that your assistance was morally valuable reflects well on you. Importantly, in order for your assistance to reflect well on you, you *must* be responsible for it. So while the connection between my gratitude and your responsibility comes indirectly via the moral value that your assistance has, it's *not* a contingent tie: your responsibility for the action is essential to its reflecting well on you and so to the appropriateness of my gratitude (152-3). Thus, we can allow that 'moral responsibility' isn't response-dependent, while still maintaining that it has an essential connection to (fitting) reactive attitudes.

In her last chapter, Tappolet turns to agency. Her aim is to show that emotions can—and often do—contribute positively to autonomous action. Not only do emotions *track* practical reasons (sometimes more accurately than the conclusions we come to through deliberation), but they can also be *responsive* to reasons in the ways they need to be to facilitate autonomous agency.

Tappolet's thesis that emotions track practical reasons follows smoothly from the combination of her Perceptual Theory given the (plausible) assumption that the instantiation of an evaluative property constitutes a (pro tanto) reason: since emotions are perceptions of evaluative properties, they're perceptions of practical reasons. Thus, emotions can "track" reasons in the sense that they can inform us of the reasons we have; and their ability to do this is independent of the beliefs, deliberations, and judgments we make about our reasons (164-6). Moreover, if emotions

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provide this type of independent and privileged access to evaluative properties, then they're central to our ability to be aware of the reasons we have and so crucial to the capacities that undergird human agency (167).

To help develop this line, Tappolet points to cases where emotions appear to better track reasons than do our associated considered judgments. Instances of recalcitrance, for example, can be cases where (say) our fear of the black widow better tracks our reasons for action than does our judgment that the little spider is harmless. Akratic action provides another example. Huck Finn's emotional resistance to turning Jim over to the slave hunters better tracks his reasons than does his considered judgment that it's wrong for him to harbor a slave. In particular, Huck's judgment neglects considerations—e.g., that Jim is a good friend in need of help—that his emotions are sensitive to (179-80).

But even if emotions, and actions based on them, can *track* reasons, do they exhibit the *reasons-responsiveness* that's essential to agency? Tappolet maintains they can. On her account, reasons-responsiveness needn't involve conscious deliberation as many Rationalists maintain. Rather, one can respond to reasons by simply acting on emotions so long as one's emotions are undergirded by well-tuned epistemic and practical habits—what Tappolet calls "agential virtues." More specifically, the idea here is that emotions are reasons-responsive to the extent that they're the upshot of a process of reflective self-monitoring whereby an agent is "disposed to intervene and take control if she has reason to distrust her emotion" (176; also Jones 2003). So I demonstrate reasons-responsiveness in acting on my anger just in case I have no reason to think my ire is misplaced and, were it reasonable for me to think my anger was misfiring, I would not act on it. Given this account of how emotions can be reason-responsive, Tappolet concludes the chapter by showing how her proposal allows that agents acting on emotions can be seen as acting autonomously, whether

autonomy is defined in terms of either a capacity for critical reflection or particular cares/motivations (190-4).

All told, Tappolet provides one of—if not the—most worked out defenses of the Perceptual Theory and its relevance for a range of debates regarding moral epistemology, the nature of value and moral responsibility, and our understanding of rational agency. With our overview complete, we turn to raise three worries before concluding with some general remarks about what Tappolet's proposal tells us about the nature of emotions and their relevance to issues in value theory.

2.   A First Worry: The Analogy Argument

As we have seen, the analogy argument of Chapter 1 provides crucial support for Tappolet's Perceptual Theory. But given the differences she acknowledges between emotions and sensory experiences, there's reason to be concerned that the analogy cannot do the metaphysical and epistemological work she wants—namely, showing that emotions are a kind of perception and that they can provide reasons for belief.

First, consider the identity claim. Recall that though Tappolet grants emotions are unlike sensory perceptions in several respects—e.g., they have an intimate connection with motivation, are (typically) valenced, and require cognitive bases—she maintains there's no conceptual difficulty in identifying them as perceptions. But while we can agree that there isn't an analytic connection here, it's also true that the more differences we find between emotions and paradigmatic forms of perception, the less support the analogy argument provides for the claim that emotions are perceptions. Importantly, it's not just the number of disanalogies that's worrisome. The ways in which emotions differ from sensory perceptions also brings trouble: they suggest that emotions and perceptions are different kinds of mental states.

To see this, let's first distinguish perceptual states from intentional states more generally. In particular, notice that while all perceptual states are intentional in the sense of having content or 'aboutness,' not all intentional states are perceptions—though desires, wishes, intentions, and hopes all have content, they aren't perceptual states. But if having content is not what's characteristic of being a perceptual state, then what is? At least part of the answer seems to lie in how perceptual states make use of the content they have: perceptual states are intentional states that play a distinctive role in our mental economy—one that differs from the role played by non-perceptual intentional states like desires and wishes. More specifically, perceptions are states that use intentional content to *inform* the perceiver about (external) objects and their properties. By contrast, desires and intentions use their content to give shape to how we *respond* given our understanding of the world.

Now here's the trouble: the features that emotions have that make them disanalogous with sensory perceptions suggest that, though they're intentional states, they do more than merely inform. In particular, we've seen that unlike sensory perceptions, typical emotional episodes (i) are experienced as valenced, hedonically-toned phenomena, (ii) have an intimate connection to motivation/action, and (iii) are assessed not just for accuracy, but also rationality. But if emotions have features indicative of a mental state that does more than just inform, then it seems odd to equate them with perceptions. After all, if a mental state's function is merely to inform, why would it have features like (i)-(iii)—features that are characteristic of a state that functions to influence how one responds to the way the world is?[5]

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[5] At this point Tappolet might reply that the force of the argument in the text fades once we move away from an understanding of 'perception' that takes sensory perceptions as the paradigm and instead adopt a more liberal understanding that sees perception "as a kind of awareness of things and qualities…a form of openness to the world" (29). But this move arguably just trades one set of concerns for another. We can agree that if perception is understood metaphorically—an "openness to the world"—then emotions count as perceptions. But unless more is said to flesh out the metaphor, we must also acknowledge that things like feelings of neuropathic pain, hunger, perhaps even cogito-style thoughts (e.g, 'I'm now thinking of aluminum' [Burge 1996]), have equal claim to being perceptions—for they too *provide awareness of things and qualities.*

Ultimately, Tappolet may not be all that bothered by this. Her willingness to accept that emotions might just be "quasi-perceptions" (30-1) suggests the identity claim is less significant to her account than is the work that emotions can do given the parallels they have with sensory perceptions. On this front, recall that an important implication Tappolet sees as following from her Perceptual Theory is epistemological. As she explains, "on the basis of the Perceptual Account I have defended, it appears plausible that emotions have an epistemic function that is comparable to that of sensory perception" (168). So Tappolet could argue that even if features (i)-(iii) cause trouble for the identity claim, they don't prevent emotions from playing a perception-like epistemic role. This would be significant since emotions' epistemological role is central to her account of their relevance for agency in Chapter 5.

But as others have noted, the claim that emotions are epistemically on par with sensory perceptions is hard to reconcile with the fact that emotions, but not sensory perceptions, require cognitive bases (e.g., Brady 2013: Chapter 4; Deonna & Teroni 2012: Chapter 6). We can draw this out by considering two claims that Tappolet appears to accept:

(1) Justification. Emotions, like sensory perceptions, are first-hand sources of reasons for belief (42-4).

(2) Access. Emotions are dependent on their cognitive bases in a way that sensory perceptions are not; while vision can give us *direct* access to what we see, emotions only provide *indirect* access to their objects: one's fear of the dog must come by way of some other mental state/act—e.g., seeing or imagining the dog (22, 25).

But it's unclear Tappolet can endorse both claims. Though the difficulty can be spelled out in different ways, here's one version. In the case of sensory perception, it's (in part) the fact that my seeing the box on the table gives me *direct access* to the box and its properties that explains why my

visual perception provides "first-hand" justification for my belief that the box is on the table. But given (2), emotions only give *indirect access* to their objects. So how is (1) possible—how can emotions provide justification *in the same way* that vision does?

Tappolet's response, at least as we understand it, is to challenge (2): *only part* of an emotion's content comes indirectly.[6] More specifically, while she agrees that emotions require cognitive bases, she maintains that these cognitive bases are only responsible for part of emotions' content—the particular object, but not the formal object (42-4, 169 footnote 14; c.f., Pelser 2014). The idea seems to be this. Access to the particular object of an emotion is indirect—in order for my fear to be about *the dog* (its particular object or target), my access must come by way of seeing or imagining the dog. But the dog's *fearsomeness* (its formal object or evaluative property) is something I have direct access to. Thus, the tension between (1) and (2) dissolves: though emotions require cognitive bases for access to their particular objects, access to—and so justification regarding—formal objects is, like sensory perception, direct.

The proposal is provocative, but we're worried about its complexity. On Tappolet's account, the content of my fear of the dog—my seeing *the dog as fearsome*—comes through two routes: I get the dog content indirectly by way of seeing the dog and I get the content about the dog's evaluative properties—its fearsomeness—directly. But what explains this? Why is it that though fear's access to the dog must be indirect, its access to the fearsomeness needn't be? To drive home the difficulty of this challenge, notice that other features of Tappolet's view rule out some potentially appealing ways of explaining these different modes of access. For instance, her commitment to understanding the content of emotions to be non-conceptual (17-8, c.f., 42-4) prevents her from adopting elements of Robert Roberts' perceptual proposal. On his account, emotions are ways of directly seeing—

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[6] Unpacking Tappolet's argument is a bit challenging since, for dialectical reasons, her discussion of emotions' epistemic role is spread over several parts of the book—principally, Chapters 1.6 and 5.2.

conceptually construing—an object's evaluative features: in fearing the dog, I see the dog as fearsome by way of engaging evaluative concepts to construe its sharp teeth and aggressive posture in a normatively-loaded way—as dangerous to me (2013: 50-3). An option more in-line with Tappolet's commitments would be an appeal to supervieneince (39-40): *because* the evaluative supervenes on the non-evaluative, though fear's access to both the dog and the dog's non-evaluative properties (sharp teeth, aggressive posture) is indirect, fear has direct access to the dog's fearsomeness. However, while this supervenience strategy is intriguing, we find it hard to assess without an understanding of the nature of this 'because'—how is it that facts about supervenience explain facts about differences in our epistemic access? Thus, while we're open to the possibility that Tappolet can answer this explanatory challenge, we have trouble seeing how the story might go. As such, we're worried about the plausibility of the epistemological role her Perceptual Theory suggests emotions have.

3. A Second Worry: Motivation and Contemplative Emotions

An important line of defense for Tappolet's Perceptual Theory is the case she makes against the common idea that emotion and motivation are necessarily connected. Her core critical argument, recall, is her analysis of the Charles example: since his fear of the green slime is merely contemplative (that is, it lacks a fear-related motivation), we have a counterexample to the claim that emotions have a necessary tie to motivation. But we're not convinced that understanding Charles' fear as contemplative is the best way make sense of the example.

First, in order for Tappolet's example of contemplative fear to hold up, Charles must actually be afraid. In this vein, Tappolet dismisses Walton's conclusion that Charles is not experiencing fear because he does not believe he's in danger. As she notes, Walton's verdict follows only given his endorsement of the (dubious) Judgmentalist Theory of emotion whereby being afraid

requires the belief that one is in danger (64; Walton 1978: 6-7). But we needn't presume Judgmentalism in order to have doubts about whether Charles is afraid. For instance, given Walton's description of the case, Charles's response might be nothing more than the combination of a heightened state of *arousal* as he watches the slime's relentless destruction and *startle* when the slime picks up speed and makes a turn toward him (c.f., Robinson 1995). If that's plausible, then there's no reason to think Charles is experiencing fear—much less contemplative fear.

Settling the above aside, let's follow Tappolet in supposing both that Charles is afraid and that if his fear involves motivation, it comes by way of a fear-related desire.[7] To show that Charles' fear is desire (and so motivation) free, Tappolet considers what she sees as the two best reasons for thinking otherwise. The first possibility is that while Charles has a fear-related desire, he also has a stronger, conflicting desire (say, to watch the movie) that wins out. In response, Tappolet argues that

> the suggestion that there is a conflict of desire, which could possibly require some deliberation, does not seem to fit Charles' case. Charles seems far from torn between a desire to watch the film and a desire to run away. Also, one wonders how it could be that his desire to watch the film could be stronger than his desire to avoid a horrible death. (64-65)

But there are three reasons to be suspicious of this reply. First, the suggestion that if Charles had conflicting desires, he would (likely) be engaged in deliberation to work them out does not fit with Tappolet's preferred account of practical reasoning. As we've seen (§1), she maintains the reasons we act on can be controlled through habits of self-monitoring that needn't engage deliberation when the processes that provide us with access to reasons (e.g., emotions) give conflicting prescriptions (182; c.f., 59). Thus, we needn't be bothered by Charles' lack of deliberation.

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[7] Recall that Tappolet is working within the framework of a "Desire Theory" which takes the motivational dimension of emotion to be grounded in desires.

Second, Tappolet's reply assumes that if Charles' desire to watch the movie wins out over his fear-related desire, the two must be in "conflict" such that he's "torn" about which to go with: it's because he displays no sign of conflict that Tappolet deems the two desires proposal implausible. But drawing a lesson from Andrea Scarantino's motivational theory of emotion (2015), we could understand our motivational system as a set of hierarchically arranged desires.[8] On this proposal, Charles' desires occupy different spots in the hierarchy. Because his desire to watch the movie is higher in the queue, it "wins out" and drives his behavior. But since his desires reside at different "levels," they aren't really in conflict. So (pace Tappolet), we can explain why Charles isn't torn between his two desires.

Finally, with regard to Tappolet's contention that it's hard to make sense of how a desire to avoid death could be weaker than a desire to watch the film, we should recall her observation that there's much more to fear behavior than just the proverbial fight/flight response (54-6). In particular, Charles' fear might manifest as a sophisticated freeze response, not flight. If so, then the puzzle dissolves: though Charles' desires have different *goals* (enjoy the film vs. avoid death), their *means* to securing these goals are the same—namely, staying put. Taken together, this trio of concerns suggests Tappolet's dismissal of the two desires explanation is too hasty.

The second defense of the claim that Charles' fear is accompanied by a desire that Tappolet considers is one that takes Charles' belief that the slime is fictional to interfere with his fear-related desire—this interference then explains why he doesn't flee. Tappolet finds this suggestion implausible since it requires us to attribute an "utterly irrational" belief-desire combination to Charles—namely, a desire to escape a threat he believes to be fake (65). While we agree there's a sense is which Charles' belief-desire combination is irrational, we're unsure it's problematic. After all,

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[8] As far as we can tell, one can accept Scarantino's hierarchical model of our motivational system without also endorsing his (more controversial) motivational theory of emotion.

part of the appeal of horror movies, part of the reason we go to these films in the first place, seems to be that because we recognize these movies are fiction, we see them as providing a safe way to experience "danger"—they provide us with a way to elicit and so learn to manage our feeling of terror and our desire to escape (see Walthers 2004 for an argument of this sort). If that's right, then the proposal Tappolet rejects may actually be the best way to make sense of Charles' behavior.

Stepping back, our concerns about Tappolet's rendering of the Charles case suggest her argument for contemplative fear falls short. Given fear's status as a paradigmatic emotion, this brings a cost to her Perceptual Theory and the analogy argument she uses to defend it. Tappolet might seek to contain the damage by emphasizing that what's true of one emotion may not be true of others (5, 49): even if fear bears an essential connection to motivation, it's doubtful that emotions like nostalgia or contentment also do. However, while going this way might vindicate the more general claim that emotions *as a class* aren't essentially motivating, we're uncertain how much protection this buys—much will depend on whether other paradigmatic emotions also have a necessary tie to motivation.

4. A Final Worry: Sentimental Realism and Evaluative Disagreement

We've noted how Tappolet's Perceptual Theory lends itself to a distinctive form of neo-sentimentalism, one whose representational and realist elements provide new resources that help her account avoid difficulties that beset traditional, normative neo-sentimentalist proposals. Granting that Tappolet's Sentimental Realism has these advantages, we believe it has trouble offering a plausible account of evaluative disagreement. This, in turn, raises questions about whether Sentimental Realism ultimately offers a better account of value.

To get started, consider the Peruvian food cuy—cooked guinea pig, often served with the limbs and head still attached. Many in the US would find their stomach turning at such a meal, but

it's considered a delicious treat in Peru. In light of this, it seems that someone from the US could disagree with a Peruvian about whether the cuy before them is disgusting. A viable neo-sentimentalist proposal needs to be able to account for evaluative disagreement like this. In particular, we want an account that not only captures these diners as genuinely disagreeing about the cuy, but that also delivers a plausible explanation of what they're disagreeing about and so what resolving the disagreement would involve.

According to Tappolet's Sentimental Realism, the property of being disgusting is response-independent. So there's an objective fact of the matter about whether cuy is disgusting and this means the diners' disagreement is about whether cuy has this property. On this front, one of them is mistaken and determining who is—resolving the disagreement—is thus a matter of figuring out whether the US diner's disgust is appropriate: does it accurately represent the (response-independent) evaluative properties of the cuy?[9] But Tappolet's proposal allows her to say more. In particular, recall that on her account, assessments about whether an emotional response accurately represents the evaluative property it aims to track are a matter of determining whether the response coheres with our practice of "discounting" evaluative judgments made under conditions that are likely to interfere with the emotions they're based on. So, for instance, did the US diner deem the cuy disgusting because he tasted it shortly after brushing his teeth? If so, then on Tappolet's account, we have reason to think it's his disgust which misrepresents—it's his assessment, not the Peruvian's, that's mistaken.

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[9] Here we follow Tappolet's preferred rendering of the realist dimension of her sentimentalism: the realism is a robust realism that takes evaluative properties to be objective, non-relational properties (116). Since her account is officially neutral on how "realism" should be understood, one could opt for a constructivist proposal that makes disgustingness a person/culture relative property. Because going this way would allow that the US and Peruvian diners aren't really disagreeing, we set this possibility aside.

As an account of evaluative disagreement, we have two concerns. First, not all evaluative disagreement seems plausibly understood as disagreement that—at bottom—concerns whether someone's emotion-based judgment survives our discounting practices. Consider: suppose the US diner points to the oozing grease and the charred feet of the cuy as evidence of its disgustingness; suppose further that the Peruvian rejects this: he thinks the grease and the charring are what give the cuy its delectable, crispy richness. Such an exchange seems less about discounting practices and more about what makes the cuy disgusting—or not. Tappolet might reply that we don't see the relevance of discounting practices in this exchange because we haven't pushed far enough: at its core, the Peruvian's response amounts to a claim that there's something about the conditions from which the US diner is basing his decision that lead his disgust to misrepresent the cuy.

We're suspicious of this line of response—it seems to over-intellectualize the exchange between the diners. But rather than pursue this further, we'll move to our second concern. It seems perfectly possible for the Peruvian and US diners to agree on what the relevant discounting practices are, to agree that they have not been violated, but nonetheless disagree about whether the cuy is disgusting. If that's right, it suggests that the question of whether the cuy is disgusting is not best understood descriptively—does the cuy have the objective property of being disgusting?—but rather normatively: does the cuy merit disgust—ought one be disgusted by it? But, notice, to say all this is just to conclude that evaluative disagreement is better explained by normative neo-sentimentalism than Tappolet's alternative.

These observations about evaluative disagreement reveal important limitations in Tappolet's account. But we're unsure whether they tell decisively against her Sentimental Realism—as she's shown, normative neo-sentimentalism faces significant problems of its own. Rather the lesson, we believe, is that the debate between these forms of sentimentalism will turn on questions about how

important one takes making sense of evaluative disagreement to be and what resources one thinks the normative neo-sentimentalist has to address the Wrong Kinds of Reasons Problem.

5.   Conclusion: Prospects and Perils for Perceptual Theories of Emotion

Though we've just raised a set of worries about Tappolet's account, one of the central virtues of her book is that it highlights why the question of whether emotions are perceptions matters. In this vein, we close with three observations about how *Emotions, Values, and Agency* informs recent trends in research at the intersection of emotion and value theory.

(1) Epistemology. Perceptual theorists like Tappolet take emotions to be sources of justification. But given that the analogy between emotion and sensory perception is imperfect, are the two really on a par with regard to their epistemic import? As we saw, Tappolet maintains that given the ways in which emotions are like sensory perceptions, they have what it takes to be sources of justification. But suspicions are likely to linger until more is said. What are the relevant features of emotions that allow them to function as more than mere proxies for the (sensory, memory, etc.) processes that do the actual epistemic work? How do these features provide justification and in what sense does the resulting proposal still count as perceptual?

(2) Neo-sentimentalism. A provocative move in Tappolet's book is the thought that her Perceptual Theory points to a better neo-sentimentalist account of value. But if our critical observations are on point, the marriage is an uneasy one. Tappolet's proposal pushes us to form of sentimentalism that's both representational and realist. But this combination sits uncomfortably with traditional arguments for neo-sentimentalism—particularly, those that emphasize neo-sentimentalism's ability to make sense of evaluative disagreement and (so) its ability to capture the role that our emotions (and our assessments of our emotional responses) play in regulating our evaluative judgments (e.g., Wiggins 1987; D'Arms 2005). We've already made some suggestions

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regarding what adjudicating these debates will involve (§5). Here we want to add that this intra-sentimentalist debate raises important questions about why one should be interested in a sentimentalist account in the first place.

(3) Agency. The arguments of Chapter 5 add to our understanding of how emotions can contribute positively to human agency. But Tappolet's repeated—and, in our mind, correct—observation that what's true of one emotion may not be true of others, raises questions about how well this "pro-emotion" conclusion holds up once we start looking at particular emotions and not just emotion as a class. If recent work on disgust (e.g., Kelly 2011; Palakias 2013) and anxiety (e.g., Kurth 2015, 2016; Summers & Sinnott-Armstrong 2015) is any guide, there won't be a simple answer. Rather, whether an emotion facilitates agency will depend on which emotion we're considering and what dimension of agency we're focused on (moral, practical, etc.).

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