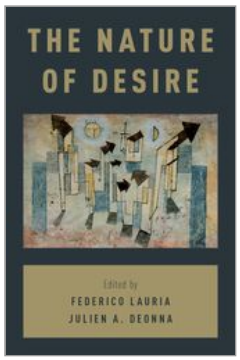

The Nature of Desire
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Print publication date: 2017
Print ISBN-13: 9780199370962
Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: June 2017
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199370962.001.0001

The “Guise of the Ought-to-Be”

A Deontic View of the Intentionality of Desire

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DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199370962.003.0006

Abstract and Keywords

How are we to understand the intentionality of desire? According to the two classical views, desire is either a positive evaluation or a disposition to act. This essay examines these conceptions of desire and argues for a deontic alternative, namely the view that desiring is representing a state of affairs *as what ought to be*. Three lines of criticism of the classical pictures of desire are provided. The first concerns desire’s direction of fit, i.e. the intuition that the world should conform to our desires. The second concerns the “death of desire” principle, i.e. the intuition that one cannot desire what one represents as actual. The last pertains to desire’s role in psychological explanations, i.e. the intuition that desires can explain motivations and be explained by evaluations. Following these criticisms, three positive arguments in favor of the deontic conception are sketched.

Keywords: intentionality of desire, evaluative view, motivational view, deontic view, ought-to-be, direction of fit, “death of desire” principle, satisfaction, Meinong

IF WE LOOK inside ourselves, as the traditional metaphor goes, we see myriad doubts, memories, fears, regrets, loves, and desires. Some people desire to see the ocean; others aspire to become great musicians; Romeo pines for Juliet. Despite the pivotal role of desire in our lives, the nature of desire has rarely been addressed in detail in the philosophical literature.[1] What are desires? How do desires represent the world, and how are we to understand their intentionality? The aim of this inquiry is to investigate these questions. Given that the liver was thought to be the seat of desire in a tradition that started with Plato and remained influential in the Middle Ages, we may echo Blaise Pascal’s famous “Logic of the Heart” by describing this as an attempt at discovering the “Logic of the Liver.”[2]

Allow me to start with a thought experiment in order to approach the issue with a more intuitive touch. Imagine a world inhabited by creatures that are exactly like us in all respects but one. They have doubts, memories, and maybe even emotions and sentiments similar to ours. But unlike us, they have no desires whatsoever. The relevant question is the following: How exactly would this *desireless* world differ from the actual world, where desire is ubiquitous?

In the history of philosophy as well as in the contemporary literature, two prevailing answers to this question have been put forward, which correspond to two classical views of desire.

On the first conception, which is Aristotelian in spirit, desires are essentially positive evaluations.[3] Roughly, desiring a state of affairs is representing it as being good. In desiring to see the ocean, say, one positively evaluates this state of affairs. On this view, a *desireless* world would be a (p.140) world of creatures that do not evaluate anything in a positive light or, at least, that are deprived of the positive evaluation constituted by desire.

According to the second classical view, which is Humean in spirit, desires are essentially motivational states. Desiring that p, it is claimed, is being motivated to act in such a way that p obtains.[4] For instance, desiring to visit Los Angeles is to be moved to act so as to realize this state of affairs. *Desireless* creatures would be inert or would at least lack the motivational “oomph” characteristic of desire. This conception of desire is often taken for granted in the philosophical, psychological and neuroscientific literature.[5]

My purpose is to explore and question these two classical pictures so as to motivate an alternative approach: the deontic view of desire. On this conception, the key to understanding desire is neither goodness nor motivation but a deontic feature: norms of the “ought-to-be” type. Some states of affairs are such that they ought to obtain, and desire, I claim, bears an essential relation to what ought to be. More precisely, the proposal is that desires involve a specific way or manner of representing content: a deontic *mode*. To desire p is to represent p *as what ought to be* or, if one prefers, *as what should be*. Desiring to live in New York is representing this state of affairs *as what ought to be*. Desire thus involves the “guise of the ought-to-be,” so to speak.

To proceed carefully, it is worth formulating three *desiderata* that an appealing view of desire’s intentionality should meet. This will provide the guidelines for our exploration.

According to the “direction of fit” metaphor, beliefs are supposed to conform to the world, whereas the world is supposed to conform to our desires.[6] This contrast appears clearly in cases of mismatch. Suppose Sam believes that it is sunny in London, when it is, in fact, raining. What should be modified is his *belief*, not the *facts*. Beliefs thus have the *mind-to-world* direction of fit. Consider now that Sam desires that it is sunny, when it is raining. Much to his displeasure, his desire is frustrated. Yet this is not a sufficient reason for him to get rid of or modify his desire, since doing so may well amount to a form of cheating or resentment. As illustrated in La Fontaine’s story of sour grapes, there is something wrong in discarding a desire solely on the grounds that it is doomed to frustration: the fox is wrong in believing the grapes are sour and in ceasing to desire them just because he could not get them. If anything, and as far as the satisfaction of desire is concerned, the *world* should change so as to fit the desire: desire thus has the *world-to-mind* direction of fit.[7] Much more could be said, since the interpretation of this metaphor has proven very controversial. (p.141) What is important in the present context, though, is that any promising view of desire’s intentionality should be *compatible* with and *account* for the intuition that desire has the *world-to-mind* direction of fit.[8]

While the first *desideratum* concerns the relation between desire and the world, the next two *desiderata* concern the relation between a subject’s desires and her other mental states. Sometimes desires are partly explained by other mental states, such as the subject’s affective dispositions. In other cases, desires partly explain other mental states, such as intentions. Sam desires to go New York *because* he likes to go to New York, and this desire in turn explains why he

intends to go there. Explanations of this type are crucial for understanding people’s behavior. Any elegant theory of desire’s intentionality should be *compatible* with the explanatory relations that desires bear with other mental states and should ideally *explain* these relations. Call this *desideratum* “consonance.”

By contrast, some relations between desire and other representations are dissonant. One such dissonance is the combination of a desire with the belief that the desire is satisfied. Imagine that Sam desires to see Niagara Falls. Mary offers to take him there. There they are, enjoying the breathtaking panorama. At some point, Sam says, “I want to see Niagara Falls.” “Sam, you *are* seeing Niagara Falls,” replies a quite surprised Mary. We understand Mary’s astonishment. It is strange to express a desire to see something while in the midst of seeing it. Sam might express a desire to *continue* seeing the Falls, but this is a different desire than a desire simply to see the Falls. How could he desire simply to *see* the Falls while he is seeing them and is aware of his doing so? It appears that desire is incompatible with the representation that its content obtains. Let us call this phenomenon the “death of desire” principle. According to this principle, a desire for p ceases to exist once the subject represents that p obtains, for instance once one starts believing that p.[9] In other words, desires are about states of affairs that are *not* represented as actual. This principle is often taken for granted in the literature and has a long pedigree—from Plato and Aquinas to Descartes, Locke, Hobbes, and Sartre.[10] To the extent that it is true, an attractive theory of desire’s intentionality should be *compatible* with and ideally *illuminate* this principle.[11]

A theory of desire should thus strive to account for desire’s direction of fit, as well as for the aforementioned consonant and dissonant combinations of desire with other mental phenomena. In what follows, I shall examine the extent to which the evaluative (§1) and motivational (§2) conceptions of desire meet this constraint. The upshot is that these classical views do not adequately satisfy those *desiderata*, which calls for a (p.142) revisionary account of desire. In the last section (§3), I argue that adopting the deontic conception of desire is the best alternative.

1. Desire and the Good: The Evaluative Conception

Imagine that you desire to listen to Brahms’s 4th Symphony. From a first-person perspective, listening to this symphony seems good to you in some way (e.g. it seems pleasant). The thesis that desire involves a positive evaluation is almost a dogma in philosophy, tracing back to Plato. It is nicely captured by the Scholastic formula of the “guise of the good”: *Nihil appetimus, nisi sub ratione boni*” (There is nothing that is desired, except under the appearance of the good).[12] After all, how could one desire something without seeing any good in it? One way of accounting for this facet of desires is to think of them as positive evaluations.[13] There are different ways of understanding this idea, so let us present a variety of specific shapes the evaluative conception can take (§1.1) before raising three challenges to this view (§1.2).

1.1. Types of Evaluative Views

The most influential form of the evaluative approach to desire—the perceptual model—relies on an analogy between perceptual experience and desire. The relation between desire and the good is alleged to mirror that between, say, visual perception and colors and shapes.[14] As vision presents us with colors and shapes, desire presents us with the good. Since perceptual experiences can be understood as being sensory seemings or appearances, the analogy amounts to conceiving of desires as being *value* seemings or appearances of the good.[15] Defenders of this view emphasize similarities between desire and perceptual experiences. For instance, both are representations held from a particular perspective. Seeing the stars in the sky involves a determinate perspective, namely that of a particular human being who is located miles away from the stars. Similarly, moving from spatial to evaluative perspectives, going to the opera tonight may appear good to me, but not to Sally, depending on our respective cares and concerns.[16] Whatever the merit of the analogy, one needs not adopt it to defend the evaluative conception, since there exist at least two other versions of the latter.[17]

According to the doxastic model of the evaluative approach, desires are evaluative beliefs—to desire p is to believe that p is good.[18] On this view, as in the perceptual model, values are part of desire’s *content*. Yet it is common to think that representations involve an intentional *mode* in (p.143) addition to content—an idea that can be exploited to defend a third variant of the evaluative approach.

Consider belief. Intuitively, in believing something (say, that the cat is on the mat), one represents this thing *as being true* or *as actual*. By contrast, remembering something seems to involve a different manner of representing it, namely *as belonging to the past*. In both cases, there is a specific *way* in which content is represented: a way that seems essential to the psychological type under consideration. In this respect, intentional modes should not be confused with traditional modes of presentation, the latter not being essential to types of representations. For instance, seeing a cup from above and seeing one from the right involve distinct modes of presentation. Yet both representations belong to the same psychological type: visual perception. Intentional modes are thus more than a manner of representing—they are ways of representing that are good candidates for distinguishing between types of representations.

Just as belief might be understood as representing a state of affairs *as actual* and memory might be conceived as the representation of a state of affairs *as past*, where this is part of the *manner* of

representing, desire can be thought as representing a state of affairs *as good*. On this proposal, the value is part of the mode in which the content is represented.[19]

1.2. The Evaluative Conception and the *Desiderata*

Whatever the variant of the evaluative view one favors, it appears that the conception faces major challenges corresponding to the aforementioned *desiderata*.[20]

1.2.1. Evaluation and the “Death of Desire” Principle

Does the axiological view meet the death of desire or the intuition that one cannot desire a state of affairs that is represented as actual? The answer depends, of course, on how appealing to a sort of *evaluation* fares in this respect. And there are reasons to think that evaluations do not fare very well.

First, evaluations *are* compatible with believing that their content obtains. Such beliefs are sometimes even required by evaluative states. For instance, how could one be happy that Mary is on one’s side and thus positively evaluate this state of affairs, if one did not believe her to be on one’s side? Since the “death of desire” principle consists in the claim that desires are *incompatible* with the representation that their content obtains, it appears that conceiving of desire along evaluative lines does not fit well with the principle.

(p.144) The aficionado of the evaluative conception might reply that this does not prevent desire from constituting a type of evaluation that, unlike other ones, satisfies this *desideratum*.[21] Nothing in the axiological view should lead us to think that no sort of evaluation meets this constraint. Still, one important question arises: Why think that the evaluation at stake in desire satisfies this principle, while other types of evaluation do not? In the absence of a convincing answer to this question, the reply seems *ad hoc*.

Second, given that not all evaluations satisfy the “death of desire” principle, the axiological view has difficulty *explaining* this feature of desire, which is something a theory of desire should ideally do. Even if one assumes that some types of evaluation satisfy the relevant principle, this would still have to be conceived as a brute fact or, at least, as a facet that cannot be explained by desire’s evaluative nature only. The question remains: Why is it odd for Sam to desire seeing Niagara Falls when he is aware of seeing them?

A friend of the evaluative view might go so far as to reject the “death of desire” principle, one’s *modus tollens* being another’s *modus ponens*. In fact, the evaluative view fares well with the denial of the “death of desire” principle.[22] However, even if one is convinced that the principle is not true for *all* desires, it remains to be shown why it is a paradigmatic feature of many desires—and appealing to their evaluative nature may prove insufficient in this regard.

I shall now emphasize that similar worries for the evaluative conception arise in connection with the direction of fit *desideratum*, mounting further evidence that the evaluative approach is unable to account for the intuitive features of desire.

1.2.2. Evaluation and Direction of Fit

Does the axiological view provide a plausible picture of desire’s direction of fit, i.e. the intuition that the world should conform to our desires? The answer to this question depends on the direction of fit of the evaluations recruited by one’s approach to desire. Unfortunately for the defender of the axiological view, evaluations generally seem to have the *mind-to-world* direction of fit, unlike that of desire.

Paying attention to the *satisfaction conditions* and the *correctness conditions* of a representation will reveal why. A belief is satisfied if, and only if, its content obtains, i.e. when it is true. Since true beliefs are nothing but correct beliefs, it follows that beliefs’ satisfaction conditions are identical to their correctness conditions. By contrast, the satisfaction of desires does not amount to those desires being accurate: correct desires might be frustrated (p.145) (unlucky, virtuous Juliet), and incorrect desires might be fulfilled (lucky, vicious Romeo). The algorithm is thus the following: When its conditions of satisfaction and correctness are identical, a representation has the *mind-to-world* direction of fit; otherwise it has the *world-to-mind* direction of fit.[23]

With this algorithm in mind, our question can be reformulated as follows: Are the satisfaction conditions of evaluations identical to their correctness conditions? On the face of it, the answer is positive—a positive evaluation of an object or a state of affairs is satisfied if, and only if, that object or state of affairs is good, which amounts to the evaluation being accurate. This is plausible for evaluative beliefs, but also for emotions, which can be understood as another type of evaluative state with the *mind-to-world* direction of fit.[24] This is exactly what is expected from evaluations insofar as they are meant to inform us about what is good or bad for us. After all, why should

the world conform to our evaluations? So it appears that evaluations have the direction of fit opposite to that of desire.

As before, it might simply be assumed as primitive fact that desire is a type of evaluation that has the *world-to-mind* direction of fit. But this reply appears to be as suspiciously *ad hoc* as the one we considered in relation to the “death of desire” principle. And if the key to understanding desire is its being an evaluation, then desire’s evaluative nature should help explain its direction of fit. However, the evaluative view seems to fail to deliver such an explanation, since evaluations typically instantiate the opposite direction of fit.[25] The intuition that the world should conform to our desires remains enigmatic.

1.2.3. Evaluative Consonance

One day, on a whim, I wanted a paper plane. You might wonder why. When confronted with an apparently awkward desire, pointing out the features of the desired object that one regards as desirable gives some intelligibility to the desire.[26] As soon as I tell you that I find paper planes to be beautiful, the mystery surrounding my desire may vanish a little. These explanations amount to specifying the manner in which something is positively evaluated. Furthermore, desires can be explained with reference to various types of evaluation. Sam may desire to swim in the river *because* doing so seems good to him (i.e. in virtue of an appearance of the good) or because he represents swimming in the river *as good* (i.e. in virtue of the evaluative manner of representing content), and so on for other types of positive evaluation.

Now, it is tempting to think that these sorts of explanations are at least partly causal explanations: the fact that one evaluates a state of affairs (p.146) positively causes one to desire that state. This means that the axiological view faces an immediate challenge. Causal relations are irreflexive: they require distinct *relata*. For instance, the statement “p because p,” understood as “the cause of p is p,” does not constitute an explanation: when one wonders why it rains and is answered “Because it rains,” one has not been provided with an explanation. If desires were positive evaluations, then explaining a desire for something by a positive evaluation of this thing would be similarly vacuous. As outlined, however, explaining desires by positive evaluation is far from being vacuous. This should lead us to conclude that the axiological picture cannot make sense of our intuitions regarding the sorts of explanations to which desires are subject.[27]

If this is correct, it appears that the evaluative conception does not satisfy our *desiderata* adequately. However, a positive moral emerges: evaluations can be *the grounds* of desire.[28] Desire can involve the “guise of the good” without *being* an evaluation but in virtue of *depending* on an evaluation. This nicely captures the intuition driving the axiological view while avoiding its difficulties. A world in which creatures do not evaluate anything would, indeed, be a *desireless* world. However, this is the case because evaluation is a necessary condition for desire—not because desire is a kind of evaluation. It is time now to turn our attention to the second classical conception of desire.

2. Desire and Action: The Motivational Conception

Juliet intensely desires to see Romeo. It is likely that this strong desire will give her the motivation to act in ways that will make this desire come true. She might not know how to do so. She might hesitate. She might be afraid of satisfying this desire. Still, she is disposed to realize it. According to the motivational conception of desire, this is the key to understanding desire. On this very popular view, desire is nothing but a motivational state.[29] Since motivation is considered to be desire’s function, this picture corresponds to the standard functionalist approach to desire. In this section, I shall present the motivational conception (§2.1) before assessing it in light of our three *desiderata* (§2.2).

2.1. The Motivational Dogma

The standard way of defining desire in motivational terms is by conceiving it as a disposition to act in favor of the obtaining of its content.[30] In other (p.147) words, in desiring p, a subject is disposed to act in favor of p or, at least, in ways she believes will bring about p. For instance, desiring to contemplate the stars is being disposed to act in such a way that is conducive (or so we believe it to be) to being absorbed by them. Since desires are understood as dispositions to act, this view is compatible with the existence of desires that do not manifest themselves in actions and, more controversially, with desiring subjects who are not *actually* motivated to act. In desiring to change the past, for instance, Romeo might not be *actually* motivated to act in such a way that what he desires comes about. In this case, it is reasonable to explain the absence of actual motivation by the idea that being *actually* motivated to act requires believing that one has the power to realize the desire—a belief that Romeo does not hold. Yet although Romeo is not *actually* motivated to act, he is still *disposed* to act so that the desired state of affairs obtains. Were he to

believe that he could erase the past, he would try to do so, all things being equal.[31]

One might think that the standard motivational conception is at odds with a first-person approach to the intentionality of desire that aims at capturing how desires represent their content. After all, the dispositional picture is silent on this point; it seems to capture desire from the outside, so to speak. A more promising approach is to construe desires as involving a motivational mode. On this variant, desiring a state of affairs is representing it *as a goal* or *as what ought to be done*.[32] For instance, desiring to see Juliet is representing this state *as a goal* or *as what ought to be done*. Be that as it may, is a motivational approach to desire more promising than an evaluative one? I shall argue that this is not the case as motivational and evaluative accounts face the same problems.[33]

2.2. The Motivational Conception and the *Desiderata*

This last assertion may be surprising. At first glance, one might be inclined to think that the motivational conception has the resources to meet the three *desiderata*. First, the standard interpretation of the direction of fit is motivational in spirit: the fact that the world should conform to our desires—the *world-to-mind* direction of fit—is usually equated with the thought that desires dispose us to act. Second, the motivational view also seems to be in a position to satisfy the “death of desire” principle. After all, one is not disposed to act in favor of a state of affairs that one believes already obtains. How could Desdemona be disposed to marry Othello if she were aware that she had already married him? Finally, dispositions to act appear to lend themselves to being explained by evaluations in (p.148) the same way as desires. Romeo’s disposition to visit the MoMA can be explained by his positive evaluation of this state, just like his desire to visit the MoMA. On these grounds, it is tempting to adopt the motivational conception of desire. However, I think that this temptation should be resisted. Let us begin with what may well be the most surprising claim, namely the one concerning direction of fit.

2.2.1. Motivation and Direction of Fit

According to the standard interpretation, the *world-to-mind* direction of fit amounts to the following. In the case of a mismatch between desire and the world, i.e. when a desire is frustrated, one should not change the desire. Rather (and this is where the motivational view enters the picture), the subject should *act* in such a way that the desire will be satisfied.[34] For this is desire’s function.

One general problem with the motivational conception and the aforementioned interpretation of the *world-to-mind* direction of fit hangs on the satisfaction conditions of dispositions to act and, more generally, of motivational states. Indeed, it is natural to think that the satisfaction conditions of motivational states consist in the subject intentionally *acting*. If Sam is disposed to go to London, his disposition is realized or satisfied when he intentionally goes there. This is explicit in the functionalist picture of desire, especially in its teleosemantic version.[35] In case this intuition is not shared, let me emphasize that desire’s satisfaction conditions should bear a particular relation to action in order for the motivational view to secure an essential link between desire and action. The worry is that the satisfaction conditions of desire refer to the obtaining of its content, which can happen independently of the subject’s action. The desire that it rains, say, is satisfied by the fact that it rains, period. If this is on the right track, then the conclusion is that the motivational approach does not deliver the right satisfaction conditions for desires.[36]

This in turn has an impact on the direction of fit *desideratum*, since the direction of fit of a representation is conditioned on its *satisfaction*.[37] Indeed, the world should conform to our desires only insofar as their *satisfaction* is concerned. For instance, all things considered, the world should not conform to our immoral desires, as this would lead to a world of evil. Yet as far as the satisfaction of those desires is concerned, it remains true that the world should conform to them, although this consideration is defeated by their immoral nature. Since it appears that the motivational view does not deliver the right satisfaction conditions for desires, it is difficult to see how it could account for their direction of fit in an appealing way.

(p.149) In fact, it delivers counterintuitive verdicts in situations where the content of a desire obtains independently of the subject’s action. If satisfaction consists in the subject’s acting such that the desire’s content obtains, the desire will not count as satisfied when the subject gets what she wants independently of her actions. Hence the world should still conform to the desire. This sounds far-fetched, to put it mildly. Even if it assumed that the desire is satisfied in such circumstances, the norm that the subject act so as to satisfy the desire has not been met. This is problematic, as the following case will illustrate.

Imagine that Romeo desires to see Juliet and can arrange a meeting by writing a letter to her. Before having the opportunity to do so, he meets her in Venice by pure chance. According to the motivational

interpretation of desire’s direction of fit, Romeo should have acted to bring about the satisfaction of his desire. But he did not comply with this norm. We should then conclude that something went wrong: Romeo’s behavior was inappropriate or dysfunctional. But this is absurd: Romeo did nothing wrong, and such cases seem far from dysfunctional. Isn’t it ideal to get what one wants without making any effort? One might reply that the inappropriate character of Romeo’s behavior is defeated by other considerations: Romeo has been prevented from acting, and ultimately the right result happened, provided that this reunion is a good thing. Yet this reply should lead one to suspect that what matters for desire satisfaction is that the content of the desire obtains, whether in the presence of action or in its absence. After all, the satisfaction conditions of desire do not make any reference to action, so why put so much emphasis on action? A conception of desire that clearly implies that desires are satisfied when their content obtains is more elegant.

Consequently, it is not clear that desire’s direction of fit should be equated with the norm that desiring subjects *act* so as to satisfy their desire. Rather, a more modest norm suggests itself: that the *world* should change for the desire to be satisfied. The motivational conception might well make sense of the direction of fit of intentions or dispositions to act, since the satisfaction conditions of those phenomena are constituted by actions. Still, as far as desire is concerned, the view seems to be slightly off target. And the reason is that it fails to capture the right conditions of desire gratification.

2.2.2. Motivation and the “Death of Desire” Principle

As emphasized earlier, it is tempting to think that the motivational approach has the resources to meet the “death of desire” *desideratum*. For subjects (p.150) are not disposed to bringing about states of affairs they believe already obtain.[38] As intuitive as this may sound, I think this explanation is suspect.

First, according to the “death of desire” principle, a desire for a state of affairs ceases to exist when one represents that one’s desire has been *satisfied*. The principle then appears to depend on the representation of desire’s satisfaction. Now, if the motivational view delivers the wrong picture of desire’s satisfaction conditions, as I argued, it cannot elegantly meet the *desideratum* on the death of desire either. This argument relies on the same considerations as the ones presented in section 2.2.1, so let us turn our attention to a further problem.

In order to make full sense of the “death of desire” principle, the motivational view should explain the apparent incompatibility between desiring p and representing p as obtaining. Why are we not disposed to act in favor of states of affairs that we believe already obtain? It is quite plausible to think that one is disposed to act in favor of a state of affairs only if one believes that there is something one could do, albeit maybe in an ideal world, to bring it about. Now, if the state of affairs already obtains, then there is nothing one can do to bring it about. So, presumably, if a subject believes that a state of affairs obtains, she will not believe that there is something she could do to bring it about.[39] The belief in a desire’s satisfaction thereby prevents one from being motivated, since it is incompatible with the belief that one can bring about the desire’s satisfaction. Believing that a desire is satisfied will thereby kill the desire.

Despite being intuitive, the story remains problematic. Imagine that Othello believes that a state of affairs obtains and also believes that he can change the past. He will very likely believe that he can act in favor of the obtaining of this state, despite his belief that the state already obtains. It is thus not clear why believing that a state obtains should require the absence of the belief that one could act in its favor. And since no alternative motivational story of the “death of desire” principle suggests itself, the lesson is that the motivational view fails to provide a satisfactory explanation of it.

This observation should lead us to worry whether the motivational conception is compatible with the “death of desire” principle in the first place. Imagine that Othello believes that he had a gin and tonic, while also believing that he can go back in time. He might still be disposed to act in favor of having this very same drink, despite believing that he has just had it. Indeed, were he to travel back in time and at this point have the desire for this cocktail again, he would act so as to have it again. It is important to remind the reader that, in order to account for desires that do not involve (p.151) *actual* motivation, the motivational view should provide room for such *counterfactual* motivation, as outlined earlier.[40]

This case would be harmless if desires did not vanish when subjects believe both that they can bring about a state of affairs and that this same state of affairs obtains. However, restricting the principle in this way is not really an option. Even if Othello believes that he can travel back in time, he might cease to desire to drink this particular gin and tonic at the instant he believes that he just drank it. True, as soon as he believes that he has traveled back in time, he might again desire that cocktail. But this might be because he then believes that he did

not have this very same gin and tonic. In this respect, dispositions to act differ from desires: even before he traveled back in time, and despite believing that he just had this gin and tonic, Othello *is* disposed to have this drink. According to the motivational view, one should conclude that he still desires so. Yet, as just emphasized, this conclusion is counterintuitive. As far-fetched as this scenario may seem, it reveals that the motivational conception does not account for the death of desire: when one represents that a desire is satisfied, the desire vanishes, yet the disposition to act may still remain alive.

2.2.3. Motivational Consonance

We commonly explain one’s motivations with reference to one’s evaluations in the same way as we do for desire. At first sight, the motivational view thus seems well placed to illuminate the explanation *of* desires. But does it capture explanations *by* desires?

Consider the following explanation. Mary *loves* the Metropolitan Opera. This is why she *desires* to go to the Metropolitan Opera. And she is *disposed* to go to the Metropolitan Opera *because* she desires to go to there. The more we know about Mary’s mental states, the more we understand why she is disposed to act in this way. One explanation of the disposition is provided by her desire, which is in turn grounded in a positive evaluation (love). Although the mention of Mary’s desire might be insufficient to justify her disposition to act, *prima facie* it provides a partial explanation of it. Moreover, the explanation seems to be partly causal: the desire causes and might also be the reason for her motivation.

Now, given the already mentioned irreflexivity of causal relations, such explanations turn out to be vacuous if desires are nothing but dispositions to act. Yet intuitively, these explanations appear to be informative. It thus seems that the motivational view fails to make sense of desire’s explanatory power.

(p.152) This argument of course relies on a conception of motivation that the defender of the motivational conception of desire is unlikely to share. On this approach, desiring just *is* being motivated, and the alleged explanatory relations are vacuous. By contrast, our argument invites us to think of motivation as being partly *dependent* on desire rather than as being identical to it.[41] In order to motivate this picture, it is fruitful to consult our modal intuitions about cases in which someone desires a state of affairs but is not disposed to act in its favor. If such inert desires are conceivable, then we have a reason to

think of desire as *grounding* motivation rather than *being* a motivation.[42]

Imagine that Romeo is suffering from a particular type of depression. His depression is such that it has deprived him of having any dispositions to act. Still, it is conceivable that he desires certain states of affairs. He might desire that his beloved Juliet fares well, despite not being disposed to do anything to bring this about. This case should not be confused with others in which a person fails to be motivated to act so as to satisfy some desire because a second, stronger desire of hers outweighs the motivation of the first one. In the case under discussion, Romeo has no stronger desire, nor is he lacking the modal beliefs necessary for being disposed to act. He strongly wants that p, has no conflicting desire, and believes that he can act in favor of p, yet fails to be disposed to act. The depression has not only masked the manifestation of the disposition; it has damaged the motivational system. This, I contend, is conceivable. Empirical studies even suggest that patients suffering from Parkinson’s disease or akinetic mutism manifest this kind of inertia, despite the fact that these people seem to have desires.[43] Moreover, the intuitive verdict of such cases is instructive: it is natural to diagnose Romeo as suffering from strong practical irrationality, or at least from an absence of practical rationality. This suggests that desires provide some reason to be disposed to act in favor of their satisfaction, although they might do so with the help of the evaluation on which they are based. This is one way that desires can ground motivations.

If this argument is on the right track, then it appears that motivation is at most a sufficient condition for desire but not a necessary one. A *desireless* world could thus be a world without motivation, possibly inhabited by totally passive creatures. But this is explained by desires *grounding* motivations rather than being *identical* with them. The motivational “oomph” of desire could then be captured by means of this grounding relation.

To sum up the dialectical situation, the classical conceptions of desire face inverted problems. On the one hand, axiological views focus on a necessary but insufficient condition for desire by outlining the evaluative (p.153) ground of desire. On the other hand, motivational views focus on what is at most a sufficient but not necessary condition for desire, as they put emphasis on motivations based on desire. If this is correct, then the grain of truth in these approaches concerns the grounding relations instantiated by desire: what is

grounded on desire (motivation) and what desire is grounded in (evaluation). This is why they seem to miss what they should capture: this thing called desire.

This conclusion has been motivated by means of philosophical exploration, but the neuroscientific evidence on desire points our inquiry in the same direction. It is almost a dogma in neuroscience that desires are involved in the reward system and are related to the neurotransmitter dopamine.[44] According to the neuroscientific picture, desire comes with an anticipation of reward that regulates motivation and is in turn regulated by the experience of the actual reward. One important challenge is to translate these findings in folk-psychological terms so as to shed light on the intentionality of desire. In this respect, Schroeder has done substantial work in claiming that the neuroscientific findings call for a picture of desire that differs from the classical ones. He argues that equating desire with an evaluative cognition fares poorly in the face of the empirical evidence.[45] Similarly, he claims that the neuroscientific picture does not favor the motivational conception of desire.[46] It goes far beyond the scope of this essay to discuss this issue in detail. However, as far as our dialectic is concerned, it seems that the conclusions drawn so far in this chapter are in line with Schroeder’s interpretation of the neuroscientific evidence. Furthermore, studies reveal that motivation is strongly influenced by desire and, in turn, by positive anticipation. It thus appears that the neuroscientific picture of desire aligns itself with the moral that has emerged: positive evaluation might ground desire, and desire might ground motivation. In light of the empirical evidence, Schroeder has proposed to identify desires with representations of rewards.[47] I venture that the deontic view of desire is one way of understanding what representations of rewards are from a first-person perspective. In section 3, I argue that the deontic conception can fill the explanatory gap between evaluation and motivation that has appeared on *a priori* grounds and that our neuroscientific interlude has corroborated.

3. Desire and Ought-to-Be: The Deontic Conception

What if desires, like vows, prayers, and demands, were essentially deontic representations, i.e. representations concerning what *should be* the (p.154) case? Desiring to live in New York would amount to being somehow struck by the fact that one’s living there is *how things should be*. This is the intuition that drives the deontic conception of desire defended in this essay. This section presents this view (§3.1) and sketches three arguments in its favor (§3.2).

3.1. The Deontic View

The deontic conception I shall defend has it that desiring is representing a state of affairs *as what ought to be* or *as what should be*, where this captures the deontic *mode* of representing.

Given that this proposal refers to norms of the ought-to-be type, let me say a few words about them. There is a plethora of norms: one ought to keep one’s promises, to avoid inflicting unnecessary suffering, and to eat properly, etc. In these examples, the word *ought* refers to the obligation for given subjects to act in certain ways. We use the same word *ought* with a closely related but distinct purpose when we say, for instance, that cancer ought not to exist, that Mary being happy is how things should be, or that things turned out the way they should have. *Prima facie*, no appeal to obligation to act in a certain way seems necessary to explain these uses of *ought*. I shall assume here that the latter are ought-to-*be* norms—they are about states of affairs—and should be contrasted with ought-to-*do* norms.[48] For the remainder of my discussion, it is important to keep in mind that the deontic view appeals exclusively to ought-to-*be* norms.[49]

It is another feature of the deontic conception that it rests on the distinction between mode and content.[50] Desiring p is representing p *as what ought to be* or, if one prefers, *as what should be*. The content of a desire is a state of affairs (typically a non-deontic one), while its deontic character is taken care of at the level of the mode of representing the content. Desires are thus distinct from deontic beliefs: while deontic beliefs take deontic states of affairs as their content, desires involve a deontic manner of representing. In order to clarify the contrast, let me formulate an analogous proposal for belief. In believing p (say, that it rains), one represents p *as obtaining* or *as actual*. Within this picture, the difference between desire and belief consists in the presence either of a deontic or of an “existential” feature in the respective modes.[51] Most philosophers acknowledge the existence of intentional modes but often assume that they are reducible to functional roles.[52] On my proposal, it is important to observe that the deontic mode is irreducible to the functional role of desire, namely motivation.[53] My approach takes modes seriously and uses (p.155) them to unravel desire’s semantics, which, I think, was the credo of early phenomenologists.[54]

To my knowledge, there are no advocates of the deontic view in the contemporary literature, but Velleman and Massin defend related accounts.[55] Meinong, however, if I interpret him correctly, has proposed this picture of desire.[56] Be that as it may, the conception has the resources to meet our three *desiderata*, or so I will argue.

3.2. The Deontic View and the *Desiderata*

The main idea is that ought-to-be norms are all we need to make sense of our *desiderata* because these norms instantiate the properties that were singled out in each *desideratum*. Let us address them in turn.

3.2.1. Direction of Fit and Ought-to-Be

Let us assume that there is a sense in which norms have a direction of fit. This sense might not be literal. Directions of fit are features of representations, and considering that norms may not be representations, the assumption may seem far-fetched. But there are reasons to think it is not. If the idea of a direction of fit is to be understood in terms of appropriate ways for fit or satisfaction to obtain, then norms may well have a direction of fit. Norms, like desires, can be satisfied in the sense that their content can obtain. More importantly, in cases of mismatch between a norm and the world, it is clear that what should be changed, all things being equal, is the world. Consider that Sam ought to keep his promise. It is an essential feature of this norm that what should be changed, if anything, is the world—not the norm. As in the case of desire, changing the norm rather than the world would amount to cheating. This facet of norms is what makes them crucial in regulating people’s behavior and ideally making the world a better place. This observation, of course, emerges from considering the *satisfaction* of norms and is entirely compatible with some norms being inappropriate and thus in need of being changed. Still, if we focus exclusively on satisfaction, even inappropriate norms are such that the world should conform to them. In all these respects, then, norms behave exactly like desires. Note too that the differences between ought-to-do and the ought-to-be norms are irrelevant here as there is no reason to think that these norms differ in this regard. It is essential to the norm according to which, say, it ought not to be that people die in terrible pain that the world should conform to it rather than the other way around.

(p.156) This feature of norms, I contend, is the key to understanding the direction of fit of desire. Indeed, if desires involve a deontic mode, then the world must conform to them in order for satisfaction to obtain. The reason is that the world should meet norms. The contrast in direction of fit is made manifest when we focus on representations not involving a deontic mode. Consider the similar proposal made for beliefs. In believing that it rains, say, one represents the state of affairs that it rains *as obtaining*. Unlike desire, which involves a deontic manner of representing content, beliefs can be described from a first-person perspective without reference to any norm. After all, facts (i.e. what obtains) are not deontic entities, unlike norms. Since facts are not such that the world should conform to them, representing a state of affairs *as obtaining* does not imply that the world should conform to the representation. Rather, if anything, the

representation of content as actual should conform to the facts, given that it represents its content *as a fact*. Beliefs thus come with the norm of conforming to reality, i.e. the *mind-to-world* direction of fit.

The deontic view, then, is not only compatible with the direction of fit of desire; it also provides an appealing elucidation of this vexed metaphor. Desires have the *world-to-mind* direction of fit *because* they involve a deontic mode. In contrast to the evaluative conception, the proposal under discussion, grounded as it is in an essential feature of norms, is not *ad hoc*. Similarly, given its emphasis on ought-to-*be* rather than ought-to-*do* norms, the deontic view delivers the right satisfaction conditions for desire, unlike the motivational picture. The world should thus conform to our desires because the world is supposed to fit norms.

3.2.2. The “Death of Desire” Principle and Ought-to-Be

How does the deontic conception fare with the death of desire? Again, norms seem to satisfy a principle close to that of the death of desire.

Consider this sentence: “Sam ought to answer this question now, and Sam has answered this question now.” *Prima facie*, this sentence sounds odd. Intuitively, if Sam has answered the question, then it is not the case that he ought to answer it, for he just did. Likewise, if Sam ought to answer the question, then it is not the case that he did, precisely because answering it is what he ought to do. Within this sentence, then, the deontic operator does not coexist happily with the existential operator.

Now, there is *prima facie* no reason to think that the ought-to-be operator differs from the ought-to-do operator in this respect. It then follows that deontic operators are incompatible with the existential operator governing the very same content. In other words, norms are incompatible with the (p.157) obtaining of their content. The norm is in place as long as its content does not obtain. As soon as its content is realized, it disappears. Norms do not survive their satisfaction. Or so it is intuitive to think.[57]

If there is indeed an incompatibility between a norm being in place and its being satisfied, then the following claim suggests itself: desires die when one believes that they are satisfied. For desire involves a deontic mode, while belief involves an existential one. As norms are incompatible with the facts that constitute their satisfaction, so are desires incompatible with beliefs about their

actual satisfaction. Again, the symmetry between norms and desires is the key to explaining the “death of desire” principle.[58]

This being said, the deontic view is compatible with a more modest attitude vis-à-vis the “death of desire” principle. There are apparent counterexamples to the principle. For instance, my desire to treat other people with respect seems compatible with my belief that I treat them with respect. The same is true of any desire about general or non-dated states of affairs.[59]

It is important to recognize that any apparent counterexamples in the case of desires also have analogous counterparts in the case of norms.[60] Indeed, if we focus our attention on general norms, e.g. the norm that one should respect other people, then one might start questioning the alleged incompatibility of norms with their satisfaction. After all, at least *prima facie*, some people do respect others while still being supposed to do so. Sometimes things are exactly as they should be.[61] Since the deontic view is committed to an analogy between desires and norms, it is not committed to the truth of the “death of desire” principle but merely to the mirroring of desire and norms in relevant respects. It can accommodate counterexamples to the “death of desire” principle where there are symmetrical counterexamples to the claim that norms are incompatible with their satisfaction. Depending on one’s intuitions, one may endorse a stronger or weaker claim about the principle without impacting on the force of its deontic explanation.

The deontic conception can thus illuminate the “death of desire” principle whether or not the principle is true of all desire. Unlike the evaluative view, and provided that norms satisfy a similar principle to some extent, it does so without being *ad hoc*. In contrast with the motivational picture, it delivers the right satisfaction conditions while avoiding the problem that comes with an appeal to dispositions. Scheler already pointed out that norms are incompatible with facts and that representations of norms are in the same way incompatible with representations of facts.[62] The originality of my proposal lies in equating the relevant representations of norms with desires, which shares the spirit of Meinong’s suggestion.[63]

(p.158) 3.2.3. Consonance and Ought-to-Be

In light of our discussion of the classical conceptions of desire, the deontic proposal should provide room and account for the following explanatory relations: desires are partly explained by positive evaluations and can partly explain motivations. The deontic view appears to meet this requirement. It is intuitive to explain why Sam

represents being in New York as what ought to be with reference to his positive evaluation of this state of affairs. Similarly, it makes sense to explain why Mary is motivated to go to Los Angeles with reference to her representing this state of affairs as what ought to be. Can we substantiate these intuitions further? The answer will depend on whether values, ought-to-be norms, and ought-to-do norms instantiate similar relations.

At first approximation, this seems to be the case. It is natural to think that p ought to be *because* p is valuable.[64] Consider the norm that it ought to be that people heed traffic lights. This norm seems to be grounded in the goodness of heeding traffic lights, which, in turn, is inherited from the value of life. Likewise, obligations to act in given ways seem to be explainable by what ought to be, i.e. the state of affairs resulting from the action required. Mary ought to go to Los Angeles because it ought to *be* that she lives there. This might constitute only part of the explanation of the ought-to-do norm. Appealing to the evaluative property grounding the norm will provide a (more) complete explanation. Still, since explanatory relations are (at least to some extent) transitive, this is compatible with the idea that ought-to-be norms partly explain ought-to-do norms.

Of course, much more can be said about the relations ought-to-be norms bear to values and ought-to-do norms.[65] In particular, it should be shown that they are irreducible to these other entities, since reduction here would make the corresponding explanations vacuous.[66] Yet on the face of it, the suggested articulation of the relations between values, ought-to-be norms, and ought to-do norms seems to be informative or, more to the point, as consonant as the explanatory relations holding between desires, evaluations, and motivations. Desires can explain motivations and be explained by evaluations because ought-to-be norms ground ought-to-do norms and are built on goodness.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that the deontic conception of desire constitutes a promising approach to the intentionality of desire. Desiring is representing (p.159) a state of affairs *as what ought to be*. Indeed, classical views face the challenge of explaining desire’s direction of fit, accommodating the “death of desire” principle, and articulating satisfactorily the explanatory relations instantiated by desire. I claimed that the deontic view can meet the three crucial *desiderata*, since norms of the ought-to-be type share the relevant properties. In a nutshell, the deontic mode elegantly espouses the contours of desire: desires and ought-to-be fit like hand and glove. This is not to say that the classical views of desire fail to capture anything about desire. Quite the contrary, in fact: if the deontic conception is correct, then the classical views of desire emphasize what appear to be the grounding relations instantiated by desire. In this respect, the deontic conception can secure the grain of truth of the classical views without suffering from their pitfalls.

In addition to offering an alternative picture of desire, the proposal is a first step in reinstalling intentional modes at the heart of our philosophical preoccupations. It is not clear that functional roles capture all there is about intentionality. There is room for a first-person approach to the mind that takes seriously the idea that mental representations are different points of view about the world. Specifying this idea in terms of intentional modes could then disclose the “logic” of mental representations, as I tried to do with the case of desire.

A *desireless* world would thus be a world in which creatures do not represent anything as what ought to be, do not require anything of the world, and do not care whether or not some states of affairs obtain. It would be a dull world deprived of any aspirations—and of much of its charm—because desire is the “eye” of what *should* be.[67]

Notes

(p.160)

(p.161)

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Notes:

(1.) Notable exceptions are, among others, Schroeder 2004; Oddie 2005; Tenenbaum 2007; Arpaly and Schroeder 2013.

(2.) See in particular, Plato 1953: *Timaeus*, 70c–72b; Galen 2005: 6.8.6–6.8.77. I owe this metaphor and the following thought experiment to Kevin Mulligan.

(3.) See Stampe 1986; Oddie 2005; Tenenbaum 2007; section 1 of this essay. In this volume, see Oddie, Friedrich.

(4.) See Smith 1994; Dancy 2000; section 2 of this essay. In this volume, see Döring and Eker, Alvarez. I use “p” to refer to the content of desire without implying that the content is necessarily propositional.

(5.) See Schroeder 2004: 3; introduction to this volume.

(6.) See, among others, Anscombe 1963; Platts 1979; Searle 1983; Humberstone 1992. In this volume, see Railton’s, Gregory’s, and Wall’s contributions as well as the introduction.

(7.) The contrast in directions of fit extends more generally to cognitive and conative representations as well as to speech acts.

(8.) For the thought that the idea of a direction of fit is dubious, see Sobel and Copp 2001; Milliken 2008; Frost 2014.

(9.) The representation that p obtains might be a belief or whatever state that represents content as actual (e.g. perceiving that p, seeming to one that p).

(10.) Plato 1953: *Symposium*; Aquinas 1920–1942: Ia IIae, 30, 2 ad1; Descartes 1989: [57]; Locke 1975: II, 20, 6: 174; Hobbes 1994: [6]; Sartre 1984. For contemporary discussions, see Kenny 1963: 81–84, 115–116; Armstrong 1968: 155; Boghossian 2003: 42–43; Oddie 2005: 72. In this volume, see Oddie, Massin, Döring and Eker, and the introduction.

(11.) One might want to deny this principle. But this comes at a cost, as similar principles intuitively hold for all types of conations. For instance, intending to do something and simultaneously believing that one has executed one’s intention is odd. This suggests that the principle captures something essential to conations.

(12.) My translation. Kant 1997: AA 05-59, 12–14. On the guise of the good, see Tenenbaum 2013, and, in this volume, Oddie, Massin. For doubts, see Velleman 1992, Döring and Eker *this volume*.

(13.) Another way of accounting for this feature consists in thinking of positive evaluation as a necessary feature of desire without being identical to it (see end of section 1).

(14.) For the sake of the argument, I assume that the perceptual analogy consists in the claim that desire is analogous rather than identical to perceptual experience.

(15.) Stampe 1986; Oddie 2005, *this volume*; Tenenbaum 2007.

(16.) Oddie 2005: 60–63.

(17.) For skepticism on the perceptual model, see Friedrich, Döring and Eker, Gregory, Ashwell *this volume*.

(18.) Davidson 2001. See Friedrich, Döring and Eker, Ashwell *this volume* for objections.

(19.) Friedrich 2012, *this volume*.

(20.) For further criticism of the evaluative conception, see Döring and Eker, Massin, Ashwell *this volume*.

(21.) See Oddie *this volume*.

(22.) See Oddie 2005: 70–72, *this volume*.

(23.) See De Sousa 2011: 56–57.

(24.) See, for instance, De Sousa 1987; Tappolet 2000; Deonna and Teroni 2012.

(25.) One might reply that desire has both directions of fit (see Railton, Gregory *this volume*). For reasons I do not have the space to present here, I think this move is not helpful (Lauria 2014: 56–59).

(26.) See Anscombe 1963: 70–78.

(27.) One might reply that some reflexive explanations are informative. I have argued that this reply does not stand, given the disanalogies between reflexive, informative explanation and the explanation of desire by evaluations (Lauria 2014: 61–63).

(28.) See Massin (*this volume*) and Meinong (1917) for a similar view; see, however, Döring and Eker *this volume*.

(29.) See, for instance, Armstrong 1968; Stampe 1986; Stalnaker 1984; Smith 1994; Dancy 2000; in this volume, Döring and Eker, Alvarez, Railton, Ashwell.

(30.) See, for instance, Stalnaker 1984: 15.

(31.) Some have argued that those cases are counterexamples to the motivational view (Mele 2003) or mark the distinction between wishes and desires (Döring and Eker *this volume*). However, see Armstrong (1968: 155), Schroeder (2004: 17), and Dancy (2000: 87–88) for a reply.

(32.) See e.g. Schafer 2013.

(33.) For further criticism of the motivational view, see Döring and Eker, Alvarez, Gregory, Railton *this volume*.

(34.) See, for instance, Searle 1983; Smith 1994. In this volume, this interpretation is assumed in Railton’s and Gregory’s contributions.

(35.) See e.g. Millikan 2005; Papineau 1984.

(36.) See Friedrich (2008: 5–6) for a similar objection.

(37.) This is motivated further by the thought that the fitting relation *is* satisfaction (Lauria 2014: 142–146).

(38.) Stampe 1987: 336–337. See also Armstrong (1968: 155), Dretske (1988: 114), and Goldman (2009: 96), although the last two do not appeal to *representations* of facts but merely to facts. See also Russell’s analysis of desire in Kenny 1963: 72.

(39.) See Döring and Eker *this volume*.

(40.) The worry presented focuses on the dispositional variant of the motivational view, but extends as well to the variant appealing to a motivational mode.

(41.) See Marks 1986: 139–141; Schroeder 2004: 139; Friedrich 2008: 6–7.

(42.) See Strawson’s (2009) Weather Watchers for a candidate of inert desire.

(43.) See Schroeder 2004: 173–174.

(44.) See Schroeder, Railton *this volume*.

(45.) See Schroeder *this volume*.

(46.) Schroeder 2004: 107–130.

(47.) Schroeder 2004.

(48.) On the distinction between ought-to-do and ought-to-be norms, see Harman 1973; Geach 1982; Jackson 1985; Von Wright 1998; Wedgwood 2006, 2007; Schroeder 2011.

(49.) In this respect, the view I favor differs from the other deontic accounts in this volume, which appeal to reasons to act (Gregory) or norms in general (Massin). It is also different from accounts relying on the imperative mode or force, at least if the latter is constituted by an ought-to-do norm (see Schafer 2013; Archer 2015).

(50.) See Friedrich *this volume*. On modes, see Lauria 2014: 122–128.

(51.) Given the presence of the deontic feature in the mode, one might say that desiring p is *oughting* p. If it is assumed that oughts are requirements, it follows that desiring is, in a sense, requiring a state to obtain. I take it that those are equivalent formulations of the deontic view (Lauria 2014: 131).

(52.) This is explicit in the teleosemantic approach (e.g. Millikan 2005).

(53.) See Lauria 2016.

(54.) For other approaches to desire appealing to modes or force, see Friedrich 2012, *this volume*. Schafer (2013) and Archer (2015) use force to unravel justificatory or inferential relations, respectively.

(55.) Velleman (2000: 105) explicitly writes that desiring is representing some content *as to be made true*, while believing is representing content *as a fact*. However, it appears that Velleman equates the mode of desire with goodness (106, 115) and is thus a proponent of an evaluative conception of desire. In this volume, Massin argues that desire’s formal object is the ought-to-be or ought-to-do, whereas the present proposal focuses on ought-to-be norms. Moreover, Massin does not equate desires with deontic representations, unlike what I argue here. See also Mulligan (2007) for the idea that the formal objects of desires and wishes are, respectively, ought-to-do and ought-to-be.

(56.) See Meinong (1917: 91, 96) for the essential relation desires bear to the ought-to-be and Meinong (1917: 37) for the view that the ought-to-be is part of desire’s mode, at least as I understand him.

(57.) See Castañeda 1970.

(58.) See Meinong 1917: 143–145.

(59.) See Oddie *this volume* for another counterexample.

(60.) See, however, Lauria (2014: 243–250) for a defense of the principle against those cases.

(61.) See Massin *this volume*.

(62.) Scheler 1973: 207–208.

(63.) As Massin *this volume* underlines, Meinong understood the “death of desire” principle in terms of the idea that we desire future and contingent states of affairs. My understanding is different (Lauria 2014). Yet the explanation of the principle is the same: the appeal to norms.

(64.) See Meinong 1917: 99; Scheler 1973: 184; Mulligan 1998; Ogien and Tappolet 2009; Tappolet *forthcoming*.

(65.) For a more detailed discussion, see Lauria 2014: 177–185.

(66.) On the distinction between values and norms, see Massin *this volume*.

(67.) This essay is a summary of my PhD dissertation. I wish to express my gratitude to the following people for their insights and support: Julien Deonna, Gianfranco Soldati, Fabrice Teroni, Kevin Mulligan, Graham Oddie, Peter Railton, Martine Nida-Rümelin, Richard Dub, Otto Brun, Alexander Bown, Clare Mac Cumhaill, Alexander Skiles, David Sander, Timothy Bayne, Olivier Massin, Amanda Garcia, Ghislain Guigon, Anne Meylan, Julien Dutant, and the contributors to this volume.