Desires, Values and Norms

Abstract

The thesis defended, the "guise of the ought", is that the formal objects of desires are *norms* (*oughts to be* or *oughts to do*) rather than values (as the "guise of the good" thesis has it). It is impossible, in virtue of the nature of desire, to desire something without it being presented as something that ought to be or that one ought to do. This view is defended by pointing to a key distinction between values and norms: positive and negative norms (obligation and interdiction) are interdefinable through negation; positive and negative values aren't. This contrast between the norms and values, it is argued, is mirrored, within the psychological realm, by the contrast between the desires and emotions. Positive and negative desires are interdefinable through negation, but positive and negative emotions aren't. The overall, Meinongian picture suggested is that norms are to desires what values are to emotions.

Keywords: desire, guise of the good, values, norms, ought, emotion, polarity

The language of desire, and aversion, is imperative;
as, Do this, forbear that. (Hobbes, Leviathan, chap. IV)

Introduction

When one desires something, philosophers used to agree, one desires it under the guise of the good. In scholastic terminology, the *formal objects* of desires are values. One issue raised by this traditional view is that values are also widely claimed to be formal objects of emotions. When one entertains a positive emotion towards something, it necessarily appears good to us. For those who put hope in the project of individuating kinds of attitudes—such as beliefs, emotions, and desires—through their formal objects, and want to keep emotions and desires distinct, this is bad news. Both emotions and desires end up having the same sort of formal objects and, relatedly, the same kind of correctness conditions.

Meinong (1972) proposed a neat way out: emotions require presentations of values, but desires require presentations of norms. In a nutshell, one cannot have a positive emotion towards something without it appearing good in some way; and one cannot desire something without it appearing as something that ought to be. Values are the formal objects of emotions; norms are the formal objects of desires. This paper focus on the desire-side of Meinong's proposal: on the view that *desires, by nature, require presentations of norms*. Taking up Lauria's (***this volume***) apt expression, I shall call this the "guise of the ought", in contrast to the traditional "guise of the good" thesis, which claims that desires require by nature presentations of values. My claim in that paper is that *the guise of the ought fares better than the guise of good thesis*.

Although Meinong's view about *emotions*—according to which emotions are essentially connected with presentations of values—has become widely influential within contemporary philosophy (see in particular Tappolet, 2000 for pioneering work), his correlative views about *desires* have remained virtually unnoticed outside circles of Meinong scholars. Mulligan (1998, §2) and Konrad (2000) mention Meinong's view of desire favorably, but Lauria (2014; **this volume**) deserves full credit for having reintroduced Meinong's theory to the contemporary philosophy of desire. One likely reason for this neglect is that although Meinong's views are conceptually limpid, they are not always easy to get at due to his idiosyncratic terminology.[1]

[1] On top of Findlay's foreword and Kalsi's introduction to Meinong (1972), other useful presentations of Meinong's late views about emotions, desires, values, and norms are to be found in Findlay (1935), Findlay (1963), Kalsi (1978), Chrudzimski (2009), and Marek (2010). Raspa (2012) compares Meinong's

A more substantial reason for this neglect, worth dismissing from the start, is that *prima facie* it sounds preposterous to claim that we cannot desire but what appears to us as something that ought to be, or that we ought to do. The guise of the ought seems to capture only these self-righteous desires, arising from some Kantian sense of moral duty. It apparently leaves most mundane desires out of the picture. If I desire to drink a glass of Burgundy, I am clearly not under the impression that it is my *duty* to do so. This objection relies on a misunderstanding about the sense of "ought" in Meinong's proposal. Though "ought" often has moral connotations, Meinong's "ought" is not restricted to the moral domain. Any kind of obligation (rational, aesthetic, legal...) is relevant, including instrumental obligation (Meinong, 1972, 98 sqq.). The *ought* under consideration in the guise of the ought thesis is the normative, unqualified, ought: *ought morally, ought rationally, ought aesthetically*... are only species of *ought simpliciter*.[2]

The arguments I shall advance in favor of the guise of the ought, as against the guise of the good, rely on the view that the opposition between desire and aversion is of the same kind as the opposition between obligation and interdiction, but of a different kind from the opposition between goodness and badness. Section 1 introduces the guise of the ought by locating it within Meinong's full deontic account of desire, and by contrasting it with the guise of the good thesis. Section 2 argues that one neglected difference between values and norms is that obligations and interdiction of contradictory contents are equivalent, which is not the case with *good that* and *bad that*. Section 3 argues that the very same difference holds between desires and emotions: wanting *p* is equivalent to diswanting *non-p*, which is not true of positive and negative emotions. Section 4 relies on this analogy between desires and norms, and disanalogies between desires and values, to defend two arguments in favor of the guise of the ought as against the guise of the good. Section 5 addresses some objections to the guise of the ought.

1 The Guise of the Ought

1.1 Meinong's deontic conception of desires

The idea that norms are to desires what values are to emotions was defended by the late Meinong (1972, 28, 37–8). According to Meinong, emotions (*das Fühlen*) are presentations of values,

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[2] According to Broome (2013, Chap. 2), the central normative concept, is "ought" not modified by any adverbs such as "morally, "rationally"etc.

while desires (*das Begehren*) are presentations of norms.[3] Contrary to evaluative conceptions of desires, which equate desires with presentations of values,[4] Meinong (and Lauria, **this volume**, following him) equates desires with presentation of norms, namely, *oughts-to-be*:

Meinong's deontic conception of desires: to desire something is to be presented with it as something that ought to be.[5]

To desire to eat a florentine is to be under the impression that it ought to be the case that one eats a florentine. Are values deprived of any motivational oomph in such an account? And does Meinong's view entail that desire is a faculty that allows us to grasp the ought-to-be-ness of a state of affairs independently of any of its other natural features? No, because Meinong's deontic conception of desires leans against two further claims:

1. Necessarily, if one has some presentation of norms, one has some presentation of values.[6]
2. Necessarily, if one has some presentation of values, one has some presentation of natural properties.[7]

The two latter claims are the psychological counterparts of the claims that norms are grounded in values, and of the claim that values are grounded in natural properties (two claims also endorsed by Meinong, 1972, 99[8]). Since Meinong equates emotions with presentations of values, the first claim boils down to the claim that desires are grounded in emotions.

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[3] Meinong also calls values "dignitatives", and norms "desideratives". To be more precise, on top of being presentation of values and norms, emotions and desires are also self-presentations, according to him.

[4] See (2005; **this volume**), Tenenbaum (2007), and **Friedrich (this volume)** for some defenses of the evaluative conceptions of desires.

[5] Other deontic conception of desires are possible. One of them would be to equate desires with presentations of ought-to-do (rather than ought-to-be). To the extent that normative reasons are deontic concepts, as he seems to admit, **Gregory (2013, this volume)** might be defending as such an "ought-to-do" version of the deontic conception of desires, according to which desires are beliefs about normative reasons for actions.

[6] In Meinong's terms: presentations of *dignitatives* are the psychological presuppositions of presentations of *desideratives*.

[7] In Meinong's terms: presentations of *objecta* or *objectives* are the psychogical presuppositions of presentations of *dignitatives*.

[8] There is one exception, according to Meinong, however: in the special case of instrumental values and instrumental oughts, the relation is the reverse: instrumental values are grounded in instrumental oughts (Meinong, 1972, 103–4).

Although I take my lead from Meinong's approach to desires in this chapter, I have two main objections to his deontic conception of desires—one questioning its sufficiency, the other its necessity.

My worry concerning necessity stems from the fact that the deontic conceptions of desires mentions only oughts-to-be, at the expense of oughts-to-do. This distinction, however, would help the deontic conception of desires to account for the difference between propositional desires, or *desires-that*, and *desires-to* (Kenny, 1966, 86 sqq.). Desiring that *p* would be equated with the impression that *p* ought to be; while desiring to ϕ would be equated with the impression that one ought to ϕ. Meinong does not take this distinction seriously: he thinks that *oughts-to-do* reduce to *oughts-to-be* (the so-called "Meinong-Chishom reduction"); and indeed, the corresponding view with respect to desires is quite standard: *desires-to* are taken to be reducible to *desires-that* (Schueler, 1995, p. 12). Now, neither of these two reductions, even if widespread, is uncontroversial. So it would be better for the deontic conception of desires not to be committed to either of them.[9]

My objection concerning the sufficiency of Meinong's analysis of desires is that since (i) one can be under the impression that things are as they ought to be and (ii) one cannot desire what one thinks is already the case, then some deontic presentations are not desires. Meinong agrees with (ii). He even provides one of the most precise specifications advanced so far of what one can desire (Meinong, 1972, pp. 85, 143 ff.). In essence, Meinong's view is that our desires are directed at states of affairs ("*objectives*") that the desirer takes to be *non-actual and contingent*. We cannot desire what we take to be already the case. And among the states of affairs that, we think, do not obtain, we can only desire those that, we think, will neither necessarily obtain nor impossibly obtain. If only the future is non-actual and contingent, as Meinong seems to think,

[9] Objections to the the reduction of ought-to-do to oughts-to-be have relied on (i) passive transformations ("Dan ought to kiss Louise" is not equivalent to "Louise ought to be kissed by Dan"; Castañeda 1970; Harman and Wertheimer 1973; Geach 1982; Schroeder 2011),(ii) symmetrical relations ("Dan ought to marry Louise" is not equivalent to "Louise ought to marry Dan". Garcia, 1986) (iii) converse relations ("Andrew ought to walk on the inside of Bryony" is not equivalent to "Bryony ought to walk on the inside of Andrew". Humberstone, 1991). I suspect that analogous objections could be pressed against the reduction of desires-to to desires-that (e.g. "Dan desires to kiss Louise" is not equivalent to "Dan desires that Louise be kissed by him"; "Dan desires to marry Louise" is not equivalent to "Dan desires that Louise marry him", etc.). Broome (2013) presents another kinds of objection from the impossibility of conflicting norms, which could also expand to desires.

then desires are directed at seemingly future-contingent states of affairs: states of affairs that are neither past, nor present, nor future-and-necessary, nor future-and-impossible.

But Meinong rejects (i). Oughts-to-be, he claims, necessarily apply to non-actual contingent state of affairs.[10] This is precisely why, in his account, desires essentially bear on apparently non-actual contingent states of affairs. The view that desires are directed towards what is presented as contingent futures derives then from the view that oughts-to-be apply to contingent futures (Meinong, 1972, 143-5).

This is where I disagree with Meinong. There is no conceptual inconsistency, *pace* Meinong, in saying that *things are as they should be*, or that *some things have been, are, and necessarily will be as they ought to be*.[11] When Meinong insists that such things "cannot be said," he presumably conflates pragmatics with semantics (a similar conflation, if I am right, is to be found in Lauria, 2014, 237 sqq.; **this volume**). One common reason why one *mentions* norms, admittedly, is to improve their fulfillment. When we look for improvements, there is often no point in mentioning already fulfilled norms, no need to mention things that by this time are as they ought to be. But note first that even if mentioning fulfilled norms is not relevant in this context, it might be relevant in other ones: for instance when, in a more contemplative or conservative mood, we wish to argue that certain things should not be changed. Second, and more crucially, even if mentioning things that are as they ought to be is often pragmatically irrelevant, it remains perfectly meaningful semantically. Hence, the view that desire essentially involves presentations of oughts-to-be does not entail the strong restrictions that Meinong thinks it does with respect to the kind of states of affairs we can desire. If desires are indeed future-directed, this cannot be derived from their being norm-directed. *Contra* Meinong's deontic view, the nature of desires cannot be exhausted by their being directed at states of affairs that (seemingly) ought to be.

Meinong's deontic view, *minus* the reduction of oughts-to-be to oughts-to-do, and *minus* the view that presentations of norms are sufficient to explain desires, leaves us with the view that *desires entail presentations of oughts-to-be or presentations of oughts-to-do*. This view, the guise of the ought, is, I believe, the essential grain of truth in Meinong's deontic conception of desires.

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[10] Similar restriction about the content of norms are commonplace among realist phenomenologists. That what ought to be cannot exist is also defended by Scheler (1973, p. 207); and that obligation necessarily bears on future behaviours is defended by Reinach (1983, p. 11).

[11] A point emphasized by Hartmann (1932, Vol. I, Chap. XVIII (a))

1.2 The Guise of the Good vs. the Guise of the Ought

The guise of the ought (henceforth, GO) is entailed by Meinong's deontic view, but is weaker than that view. It is best introduced in contrast to its famous cousin, the guise of the good thesis, which I shall defines as follows:

Guise of the Good thesis (GG): In virtue of the immediate nature of desire:

1. if *S* desires that *p*, it seems to *S* that *p* is good.
2. if *S* desires to ϕ, it seems to *S* that ϕ-*ing* is good.

In order to remain non-committal with respect to the reduction of *desires-to* to *desires-that*, in accordance with the above, this definition of the guise of the ought mentions two sorts of desires. This definition departs in two other ways from more standard formulations of GG. First, it claims that evaluative presentations are not only necessary but also essential to desire. The reason why the necessity at stake is claimed to be grounded in the nature of desire is that GG purports to shed light on what desires are, and that not everything that is necessary to desire is essential to it (Fine, 1994). Besides, the nature of desire is claimed to be *immediate* rather than mediate (the distinction between immediate and mediate nature is taken from Fine, 1995, §5). This pertains to Meinong's view, mentioned above, that all desires require some presentations of values, because they require presentations of norms. This does not make Meinong an upholder of GG: the presentation of values, under Meinong's approach, only belongs to the *mediate* nature of desire. GG, by contrast, claims that evaluative presentations belong to their immediate essence.

Second, the definition of GG appeals to evaluative seemings, instead of the more usual evaluative *beliefs* or *thoughts*. The reason for this is to allow GG to deal with counterexamples such as the squash player desiring to slam her racket against her opponent: although the player might well *believe* upon reflection that this a bad thing to do, this action might still *appear* to her in that very moment as a good one.[12] I shall speak indifferently of value *seemings* or value *presentations* (which is Meinong's terminology), and assume that presentations or seemings are neither factive (in order to include incorrect desires) nor anti-factive (in order to include correct

[12] The squash player example is from Watson (1975). This line of answer is defended, as far as GG in concerned, by Tenenbaum (2007, 41).

ones).[13] Furthermore, I shall be interested in GG here only insofar as it purports to shed light on the following sort of desires, which are my *explananda*:

1. First, the desires at stake are those directed towards states of affairs or actions, whose content can be expressed by a proposition (loving/desiring that *p*) or infinitive complement (loving/desiring to ϕ).[14] The contrast I shall emphasize between emotions relies on the way desiring and "emoting" behave when their content is negated. To the extent that referring expressions—names—cannot be negated (Geach, 1980, §31), no such contrast holds for objectual desires, if there are such things.[15]
2. Second, I shall assume that GG is restricted to *occurrent* desires, in contrast to standing and dispositional ones. **Döring & Eker (this volume)** point out, against GG, that dispositional desires do not entail occurrent seemings of values. Insofar as GG is restricted to occurrent desires, it is immune to that objection.
3. Third, I shall be interested here only in *thin* desires, in the sense of desires taken apart from any of their affective accompaniments. Schueler (1995, p. 11 sqq.) points out that there are cold desires, deprived of strong phenomenological character, such as desiring to arrive on time or desiring to buy some milk; and that there are also desires accompanied with strong feelings: desires, which, like hunger and other cravings, urges, or appetites, can be felt. What I call *thin* desires are desires taken apart from their affective clothes. Thick desires, by contrast, are complex states, involving affects (bodily sensations, feelings, emotions, moods...) somehow related to thin desires. Hunger, for instance, might refer to a complex state involving the feeling of hunger together with the thin desire to eat (see Hamilton, 1882, vol. II, p. 433; and **Gregory, this volume**). Perhaps there are only thick desires; perhaps thin desires are only abstractions that, in reality, always come clothed with affects (even if of low intensity). But this does not threaten the conceptual distinction between thin

[13] See **Döring & Eker (this volume)** and **Oddie (this volume)** for more on the distinction between doxastic and perceptual evaluativism about desires.

[14] I'm here following Meinong and Merricks (2009) in assuming that propositional desires (and emotions) are not directed towards propositions (we do not, typically, desire or love propositions), but towards states of affairs (which are expressed by propositions in attitudes ascriptions). This is arguably an important distinction between desires and beliefs: we believe propositions, we desire states of affairs.

[15] It is standardly assumed that objectual desires are propositional desires in disguise, but see Brewer (2006) and Forbes (2006, Chap. 4).

and thick desires. Even if desires are necessarily thick, one can grasp thin desires, in abstract thought, by peeling off their affective skin.

In sum, the focus is on *thin propositional occurrent desires*. Speaking of "desirings" might help making clear that the desires at stake are occurrent. But "desiring" is often used to express desires connected strong feelings: "desirings" are occurrent, but they are still too thick. "Wantings" is perhaps the best candidate for expressing what we are after here. "Wantings" are at once more occurrent and less affectively loaded than "desires". As it happens, "wanting" is often used instead of "desiring" in the literature on desire (see e.g. Kenny, 1966, Chap. 5; Audi, 1986).

With this in hand, the "guise of the ought" thesis might be introduced as follows:

Guise of the Ought thesis (GO): In virtue of the immediate nature of desire:

1. If *S* desires that *p*, it seems to *S* that *p* ought to be.
2. If *S* desires to ϕ, it seems to *S* that he ought to ϕ.

As for GG, the necessary connection between desires and presentations of norms is claimed to stem from the immediate nature of desire, and desires-that and desire-to are not equated *ex hypothesis*. GG claims that because occurrent desires are what they are, it is immediately impossible to desire something without being under the impression that it is good in some way. GO claims that because occurrent desires are what they are, it is immediately impossible to desire something without being under the impression that it ought to be. GO, therefore, is only a small, albeit crucial, modification of GG (just replace "good" by "ought"). GG and GO are rivals, but allied: both claim that desires essentially entail *normative presentations*—by which I mean presentations that are *either evaluative or deontic*.

It is worth stressing that neither GG nor GO entails that normative presentations are *constituents or parts* of desires. Compare this to emotions. It has been maintained that presentations of values are essential to emotions without being for all that constituents of emotions: emotions could be *reactions* to presentations of values.[16] Although less often noticed (but see Tenenbaum, 2007, p. 23), the same possibility holds as far as desires are concerned: the claim that desires require normative presentations—GG or GO—is compatible with the view that

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[16] See Mulligan (2007) for a recent defense of that view and and Teroni (2007) for a more Meinongian approach in reply. As pointed out by Pickavé (2010), the view that emotions are reactions to cognitions rather than cognitions themselves was also endorsed by Aquinas and many medieval thinkers.

presentations of values or norms are essential to, but not constitutive of, desires. One interesting thing about that view is that normative presentations can then be said to *internally justify* desires, to constitute *subjective reasons* for desires. The reason why Julie desires to laugh is that laughing seems good to her (GG), or that it seems to her that she ought to laugh (GO). To the extent that justification is irreflexive, such a move is not open to the evaluative nor to the deontic conceptions of desire.[17]

1.3 Guises and formal objects

GG and GO might be usefully rephrased in the "formal object" jargon: GO amounts to the view that *values are the formal objects of desires*, while GO amounts to the claim that *norms are the formal object of desires*. This connection with the concept of "formal objects" presents two interesting points.[18]

First, it helps make clear what the correctness conditions of desires are under GG and GO. There are two mains conceptions of *formal objects* in the literature:

- The first, in line with Kenny (1966, Chap. 9), relies on the idea that kinds of intentional episodes puts some restriction on the kinds of objects that these episodes *can* bear upon. The kind of object that episodes of some kind necessarily bear upon constitute their formal object. Accordingly, the formal object of desires have to be internalized: for GG the formal objects of desires are *presented* values; for GO they are *presented* norms.
- The second approach to formal objects relies on the idea that kinds of intentional episodes puts some restriction on the kinds of objects that these episodes *should* bear upon. Formal object are here equated with the kinds of objects that attitudes of a kinds ought to bear upon. Formal objects are then external "*correct-makers*".

GG and GO allows for a straightforward explanation of the connection between the internal and external formal object of desires. A desire is correct if and only if the axiological or deontic presentation it involves is veridical. Hence GG will say a desire is correct if and only if its object

[17] See Deonna and Teroni (2012) for an analogous and more detailed objection to perceptualist accounts of emotions.
[18] On formal objects, see Teroni (2007); Mulligan (2007).

is good, while GO will have it that a desire is correct if and only if is object ought to be (or if the desirer ought to do it).[19]

Second, the "formal object" jargon allows to rephrase GG and GO in yet another, third way. Kenny distinguishes *trivial* formal objects, which are obtained by "modalising the relevant verb", from *non-trivial* ones. The trivial formal object of desire, admittedly, is *the desirable* (i.e.: what we desire is presented as desirable to us, and our desire is correct if and only if what we desire is desirable). GG and GO are views about the *non-trivial* formal objects of desires. *According to GG, the desirable is what is good. According to GO, the desirable is what ought to be, or what the desirer ought to do.*

The thesis to be defended now is conditional: *if we have to choose between GG and GO, we should endorse GO*. Since I focus on the relative advantage of GO over GG, I shall assume that the arguments and replies advanced by upholders of GG are available, *mutadis mutandis*, to the upholders of GO. For instance, the annoyed squash player might believe that is would be wrong to smash her racket against her opponent, but the action might still non-epistemically appear to her as right, as an action she ought to do.

But why should we even choose between GG and GO? Since GO (contrary to the deontic view of desires) does not give sufficient conditions for desires, and since GG (contrary to evaluative view of desires) does not give sufficient conditions either, both are in principle compatible. Since each purports only to provide only a partial insight into the nature of desires, one could accept both. But that wouldn't be a very comfortable position to be in. What we can gain from having two independent normative presentations essentially tied to desires is unclear, but what is to be lost is much clearer. First, the conjunction of GG and GO is open to two sets of objections: those raised against GG and those raised against GO. Second, the conjunction of GG and GO over-complexifies the nature of desire: every desire would go, in virtue of its immediate essence, with both deontic and evaluative presentations. Third, insofar as goodness and oughtness are not co-extensive, as I shall argue, the conjunction of GG and GO entails that a desire can be partly correct and partly incorrect. It is no accident that the conjunction of GG and GO has found no proponents yet. Hence, I shall in what follows assume that *GG and GO are rival views*.

[19] That oughtness is formal object of desire is accepted by Mulligan (2007) (2010).

Which one should we choose? GO! One first reason to favour GO over GG is that GG, together with the view that emotions have values as formal objects, leads to the view that emotions and desires share their formal objects. If desires and emotions are distinct kinds of mental episodes, and if formal objects individuate kinds of attitudes, then GO is preferable to GG (Mulligan, 2010). Likewise, if emotions and desires with the same content can have different correctness conditions, then GO is preferable to GG. Although I sympathize with this line of thought, I shall press for another kind of argument here. Its key premise is that desires, like norms—and contrary to values and emotions—forbids indifference to the negation of their content. To establish this, let us first contrast values and norms in that respect.

2 Norms vs. Values

Although the Humean fact/value dichotomy tends to conflate them, there is a distinction between *values* (good, bad, elegant...) and *norms* (obligatory, impermissive, ought...). Where exactly the distinction lies, however, is a tricky and somewhat neglected issue.[20] Several criteria have been advanced. To name but a few: (i) Values are typically expressed through predicates (*being good*, *being crass*), while norms are typically expressed through sentential connectives (it is it is obligatory/impermissive that, it ought to be that...). (ii) Norms apply to actions only, while values have a wider domain of application. (iii) There are thin and thick values (good, elegant, coward...), but there are only thin norms. (iv) Values vary by degrees, but things can be more or less obligatory. This list is far from being exhaustive and none of these criteria is uncontroversial. At the risk of adding confusion, I shall here introduce another criterion, seemingly overlooked.

That values essentially have a *polarity* is one of the few fairly uncontroversial claims in value theory.[21] Such a claim is more rarely made with respect to norms, but one might think that in the same way that good is positive and bad negative, obligation is positive and interdiction negative. What I want to bring out is that the way positive and negative values are opposed to each other essentially differs from the way that positive and negative norms are opposed to each other. Although superficially similar, the positive/negative opposition found in the axiological sphere is distinct from that found in the deontic realm.

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[20] See Mulligan (1989) (1998), Konrad (2000), Ogien and Tappolet (2009, Chap. 2), Wedgwood (2009), Tappolet (2013), Tappolet (forthcoming), Fassio (2013) for some explicit attempts to tackle this problem.

[21] Scheler, 1955, p. 103; Hartmann 1932, Vol. 2, Chap. XXXVI; see Tappolet, 2000, p. 17 for further references

Note that the difference I want to expose only holds for those values and norms that apply to propositions or states of affairs, that is, to entities that might fall with the scope of some "It it not the case that" connective. If there are values that do not accrue to propositions, facts, or states of affairs,[22] the criterion of distinction I am going to advance does not apply to them.

2.1 Formal analogies between values and norms

In the same way that there are the good, the neutral, and the bad; there are the obligatory, the optional, and the forbidden. Both the axiological and the deontic spaces are carved out in a trichotomic way, giving rise to the analogous axiological and deontic squares of opposition (see fig. 1, building on McNamara, 2006a):

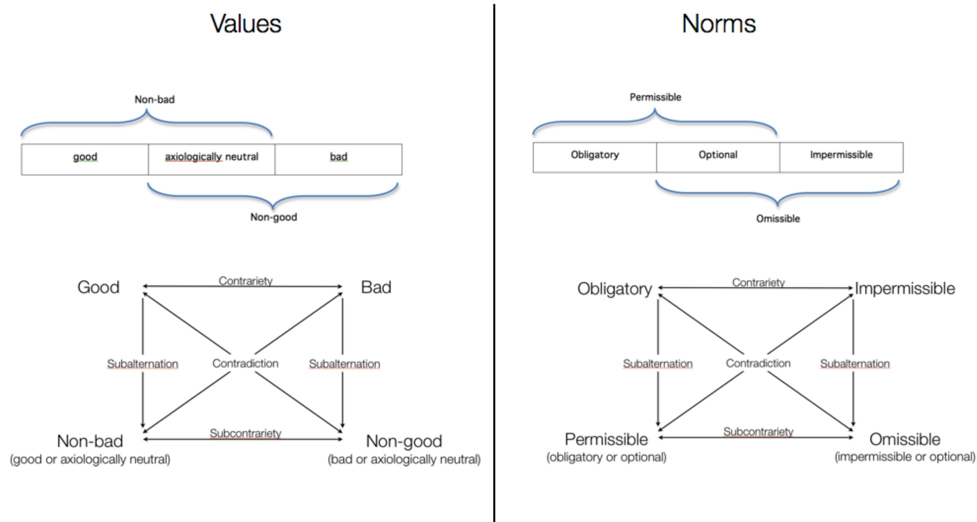

Figure 1: Values and Norms: formal analogies

[22] See e.g. Rescher (1969, p. 8), Anderson (1995, p. 20), Rabinowicz and Ronnow-Rasmussen (2000); Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2003), Rønnow-Rasmussen (2002, chap. 10); Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011, Chap. 10), Mulligan (2009).

Correspondingly, many tautologies about norms and values closely match each other (see e.g. Goble, 1990). Good, neutral, and bad are contraries, and the disjunction of any two of them is the contradictory of the third. The same holds for obligatory, optional, and forbidden.

I shall assume that what we are trichotomizing here is not the whole world, but, respectively, the axiological and deontic spheres. That is, we are considering only the kinds or categories of objects that *could* be said to be good, neutral, or bad; or which could be said to be obligatory, optional, or forbidden. Not everything that is neither good nor bad is axiologically neutral. Examples are easier to provide for thick values: suppose intrinsic moral values accrues only to actions or agents. Then propositions are neither intrinsically morally good nor intrinsically morally bad—*nor intrisincally morally neutral*. To be morally neutral, one needs to be neither morally good, nor morally bad, but also to belong to the morally axiological sphere—to be an action or an agent. The same holds for thin values and for norms according to the present assumption: axiological indifference is not only a lack of positive or negative value: it has to belong the axiological realm.[23] Likewise, deontic propositions or states of affairs are those propositions or states of affairs that are deontically assessable. We then have:

- If *p* belong to the axiological domain, then *p* is either good, axiologically neutral, or bad. (exclusive disjunction)
- If *p* belong to the deontological domain, then p is either obligatory, optional, or impermissive. (exclusive disjunction)

(I am here assuming for simplicity that the relevant conditions are fulfilled, such as: at the same time, for the same person, under the same respect, in the same way...)

The relation of opposition that will play a central role here is the relation of *polar opposition* between, on the one hand, goodness and badness, and on the other, obligation and interdiction. The concept of polar opposition that is of interest here is one sub-species of contrariety: polar opposites are contraries falling on both side of a "zero point" (Meinong, 1996, p. 145[24]),

[23] Such restrictions on the range of contraries are defended by Woods (1969), Barnes (1969), and Lehrer and Lehrer (1982); as for values, a similar restriction to "axiological regions" is introduced by Husserl (2009, 165, 169)—see Mulligan (2006).

[24] Meinong, however, does not think that polar opposites have to be contraries.

"indifference zone" (Lehrer and Lehrer, 1982), or "pivotal region" (Cruse, 1995, p. 205).[25] I shall define polar opposition between predicates as follows:

polar opposition between predicates: two predicates *P* and *Q* are polarly opposed if and only if (i) there is an indifference predicate *I* between them; (ii) *P*, *Q*, and *I* are contrary predicates.

Thus *being very good* and *being mildly good* are not polarly opposed, for no indifference point lies between them. Likewise *being good* and *not being good* are not polarly opposed, for *not being good* and *being axiologically neutral* are not contrary predicates. But *being good* and *being bad* are polar opposites, for in between them stands *being axiologically neutral*, which is a contrary of both. How "betweenness" is to be understood here is a question I shall leave open: the intuitive sense in which the axiologically neutral lies between the good and the bad is enough for our present purpose. Likewise, *being obligatory* and *being impermissive* are polar opposites, for in between them stands *being optional*. So are *it is obligatory that* and *it is impermissive that,* provided the contrariety relations between properties also hold, *mutatis mutandis*, between unary connectives. We shall say that two unary connectives are contraries if and only if, for any sentence, the two sentences formed from them cannot be both true. We can then define polar opposition between connectives as we defined polar opposition between predicates:

polar opposition between connectives: two connnectives *C* and *C"* are stand in relation of polar opposition if and only if (i) there is a neutral connective *C'* between *C* and *C"*; and (ii) *C, C'*, and C" are contrary connectives.

Thus, *it is necessary that* and *it is impossible that* are polarly opposed, for in between them stands *it is contingent that,* and these three connectives are contrary to each other.

Being good and *being bad*, like *being obligatory* and *being forbidden*, are polarly opposed predicates; and *it is good that* and *it is bad that*, like *it is obligatory that* and *it is impermissive that* are polarly opposed connectives. Both the axiological realm and the deontic realms are trichotomized and polarly structured.

2.2 Formal disanalogies between values and norms

Appearances notwithstanding, however, the polar opposition between *goodness* and *badness* is crucially different from the polar opposition between *obligation* and *interdiction*.[26] While all

[25] See Massin (2014, §1–2) for further details.

norms (of a same type) can be defined in terms of obligation and standard logical connectives alone, there is no way to define values (of a same type) in terms of goodness and such connectives alone. Let us review four deontic tautologies that, on intuitive grounds, have no axiological counterpart ("G"stands for "good that", "N" for "axiological neutral that", and "B" for "neutral that"; "*OB*" stand for "obligatory that", "OP" for "optional that, and "IM" for "impermissive that".)

First:

(1) $(p)(IMp \leftrightarrow OB\neg p)$

It is impermissible to smoke if and only if it is obligatory not to smoke. Obligation and interdiction are *inter-definable through negation* (as are necessity and impossibility). But the corresponding formula does not hold true of values: "it is bad that *p*" is not equivalent to "it is good that $\neg p$":

(1') $\neg(p)(Bp \leftrightarrow G\neg p)$

That is it bad to bully for fun does not entail that it is good not to bully for fun. That might be axiologically neutral. Conversely, that it is good to laugh does not entail that it is bad not to laugh. For while its being good to laugh perhaps entails that is it is not good not to laugh,[27] its being good to laugh is compatible with its being axiologically neutral not to laugh. A famous example is given by Chisholm and Sosa (1966): assume that only happiness is intrinsically good, and unhappiness intrinsically bad. Then, that there are unhappy egrets is bad. But there being no unhappy egrets does not add any positive value to the universe. This is a neutral state of affairs, even if its negation is good. *While the obligatoriness of a state of affairs is equivalent to the impermissiveness of its negation*, *the goodness of a state of affairs is not equivalent to the badness of its negation* (nor is its badness equivalent to the goodness of its negation).

Consequently, for norms, we also have:

(2) $(p)(OBp \rightarrow \neg OP\neg p)$

(3) $(p)(IMp \rightarrow \neg OP\neg p)$

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[26] Some of the value/norm disanologies to be introduced may have been anticipated by Meinong (1996, Chap. 15), although the text is quite difficult to understand, in particular because Meinong allows for degrees of norms, and claims that polarly opposed norms of non-maximal degrees are not contraries.

[27] See Chisholm and Sosa (1966, T22), Iwin (1975, 113 sqq.); Hansson (2007, 120).

If it is obligatory to drive on the right, it cannot be optional not to drive on the right: this has to be forbidden. And it cannot be impermissible to smoke and optional not to smoke. This has to be obligatory. On the other hand, "It is good that p" is compatible with "It is neutral that $\neg p$".

(2') $\neg(p)(Gp \rightarrow \neg N \neg p)$

(3') $\neg(p)(Bp \rightarrow \neg N \neg p)$

It might be elegant to wear a hat, without it being inelegant not to wear a hat: not wearing a hat might be axiologically neutral. It might bad to steal, and neutral not to steal. States of affairs might be good or bad while their absence is axiologically neutral. *That a state of affairs is obligatory entails that its negation is not optional, but that a state of affairs is good is compatible with its negation being neutral*. In Chisholm's words:

> Good states of affairs and bad states of affairs, then, have this feature in common: they have neutral negations, negations that are neither good nor bad. (Chisholm, 1968)

Obligatory states of affairs, on the contrary, have no neutral negations, that is, no negations that are neither obligatory nor impermissive.

Relatedly, the following equivalence holds tautologically for norms:

(4) $(p)[OPp \leftrightarrow (\neg OBp \neg OB \neg p)]$

Smiling is optional if and only if it is neither obligatory to smile nor obligatory not to smile. But axiological neutrality, contrary to deontic indifference, cannot be defined in terms of goodness and logical connectives alone:

(4') $\neg(p)[Np \leftrightarrow (\neg Gp \neg G \neg p)]$

A state of affairs might be neutral while its negation is good or bad. Not experiencing pleasure is neutral. But experiencing pleasure is good.

Interestingly, the negated equivalence here might still be used to define other concepts, distinct from axiological neutrality. One might call—somewhat paradoxically—"*positively indifferent*" a state of affairs of which neither it nor its negation are good. A state of affairs will then be *negatively indifferent* iff neither it, nor its negation are bad. Finally a state of affairs will be indifferent, *tout court*, if it is both positively and negatively indifferent. Consequently, all states of affairs indifferent *tout court* are neutral (and so are their negation). But not all neutral

states of affairs are indifferent *tout court*, because some neutral states of affairs might be such that their negation is good or bad.[28]

These contrasts between values and norms are not confined to values and norms viewed as propositional connectives. They also hold for axiological and deontological predications, as long as the bearers of values and norms can be negated. For instance:

- ϕ-*ing* is obligatory $\leftrightarrow$ $\neg\phi$-*ing* is forbidden.[29]

Again, the corresponding axiological equivalence does not hold:

- $\neg$(ϕ-*ing* is good $\leftrightarrow$ $\neg\phi$-*ing* is bad)

If smiling is obligatory, then not smiling is forbidden. But that smiling is good does not entail that not smiling is bad. Not smiling might be axiologically neutral.

Neither is this asymmetry restricted to *thin* values and norms. It also holds for thick ones (assuming that there are some thick norms or adverbial oughts—e.g. rationally required):

- (p) (it is morally obligatory that $p \leftrightarrow$ It is morally forbidden that $\neg p$)

The corresponding equivalences do not hold for adverbially specified values:

- $\neg$(p) (it is morally good that $p \leftrightarrow$ It is morally bad that $\neg p$)

Nor do they hold for thick values:

- $\neg$(p) (it is admirable that $p \leftrightarrow$ It is despicable that $\neg p$)

Whether connectives or predicables, indeterminate or adverbially specified, operating on propositions, actions, or state of affairs, obligation and interdiction are inter-definable only with the help of negation. Goodness and badness aren't. The goodness of something is not equivalent to the badness of its negation. One would strive in vain to get goodness out of badness and negation alone.

The polar opposition between goodness and badness is therefore importantly distinct from the polar opposition between obligation and interdiction. The polar opposition between obligation

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[28] Substantially, the same point is made by Chisholm and Sosa (1966) in their seminal paper, where they introduce the distinction between axiological neutrality and indifference (however, since they introduce the distinction within the course of reducing monadic values predicates in terms of betterness, they define axiological indifference as follows: a state of affairs is indifferent if it is not better than its negation, and if its negation is not better than it, which is equivalent to the definition proposed here).

[29] As Hintikka (1971) points out, some difficulties arise here when quantification over individual acts is introduced. I shall ignore that difficulty here.

and interdiction might be called *formal* in the sense that one can get from one to the other by applying standard logical connectives. The polar opposition between goodness and badness, on the other hand, is *material*, in the sense that no matter how one plays with standard logical connectives, one cannot get from the one to the other.

formal polar opposition between connectives: two unary sentential connectives *C* and *C"* stand in relation of *formal* polar opposition if and only if (i) they are polarly opposed; and (ii) for any proposition p, $Cp \leftrightarrow C''\neg p$.

material polar opposition between connectives: two unary sentential connectives *C* and *C"* stand in relation of *material* polar opposition if and only if (i) they are polarly opposed; and (ii) they are not formally polarly opposed.

My point has been that material polar opposition is ubiquitous among axiological concepts, but nowhere to be found among deontic ones. That deontic concepts are formally related is what allows standard deontic logic to rely on a formal language that only contains *one* primitive deontic concept (*permission*, as in Von Wright, 1951, or more standardly *obligations or oughts*). Although the other deontic concepts do not figure in the basic language, they are easily introduced by adding some definitional patch that *defines* each of the missing deontic modalities in terms of the fundamental one ("the traditional definitional scheme" as McNamara, 2006b calls it). By contrast, no definitional scheme of the sort could be added to a logic of goodness, say, so as to get a logic of neutrality and badness. A logic of values requires at least two axiological primitives (which might be one reason why logics of values are less developed that deontic ones).

3 Desires vs. Emotions

In this section I argue that the above analogies and disanalogies between values and norms closely match the analogies and disanologies between emotions and desires.

3.1 Formal analogies between Desires and Emotions

Like the axiological and the deontic realms, the affective are emotional spheres displaying a tripartite distinction. There are positive and negative emotions, and there are states of affective indifference. There are positive and negative conations, and there are states of conative indifference. Following the Brentanian use, let us use "love" to subsume all the positive emotions, and "hate" to subsumed all negative ones. And following standard philosophical use,

let us call "desire" the positive conation, and "aversion" the negative one. None of these terminological choices is unproblematic. In particular, "aversion", perhaps even more than "desire", suggests a thick conative attitude, instead of the thin one we are after. Suffice it to say that the term "aversion" is here used in a theoretical sense, to label the opposite of *thin occurrent propositional desire* (see 1.2). If "wanting" is the best way to express such desire, then "diswanting" could be perhaps a better way to express the polar opposite of thin desires.

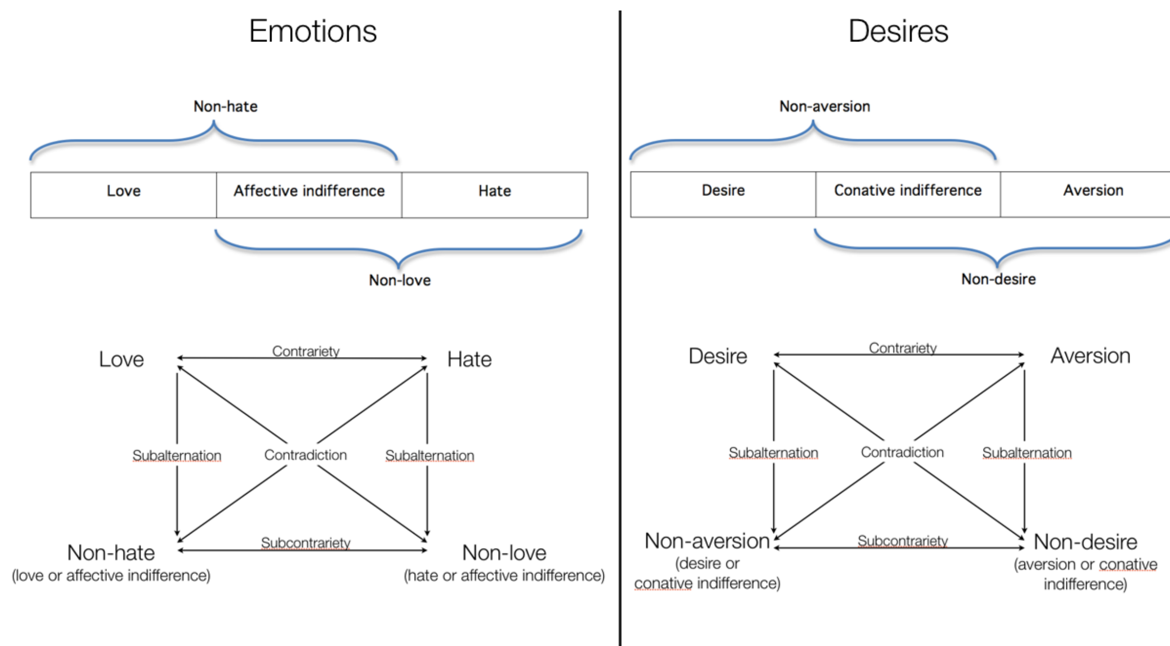

Figure 2: Emotions and Desires: formal analogies

Fig. 2 represents two squares of oppositions that might be built from the affective and conative trichotomies.[30] As with values and norms, these two trichotomies are understood as dividing not all entities, but respectively the affective and conative domains. Accordingly, they can be rephrased as follows:

- If p is an affective content, then p is either loved, affectively indifferent, or hated. (exclusive disjunction)
- If p is a conative content, then p is either wanted (desire), conatively indifferent, or diswanted (aversion). (exclusive disjunction)

[30] The conative square of opposition can be found in Kenny (1966, p. 88).

(I am here assuming for simplicity that the relevant conditions are fulfilled, such as: at the same time, by the same person, under the same respect, in the same way...)

Desire and aversion, like love and hate, are polar opposites. Desires, like emotions, have a polarity: aversion is negative, desire is positive. In Davidsonian terminology, desire is a "*pro*-attitude", aversion a "*con*-attitude". In between desire and aversion lies the *conatively indifferent;* in the same way than in between love and hate stands the *affectively indifferent*.

3.2 Formal disanalogies between desires and emotions

As it first appears, the formal relations between desires and its opposites seem to match closely those between love and its opposites. However, these superficial analogies conceal a deeper disanalogy. Desire and aversion are inter-definable through negation, as are obligation and interdiction (see e.g. Heathwood, 2007). If "*D*" stands for "*S* desires that", "*A*" for "*S* is averse to" and "*CI*" for "*S* is conatively indifferent to", we have:

(5) $(p)(Dp \leftrightarrow A\neg p)$

For instance, being averse to being pain is equivalent to desiring not being in pain. This equivalence might be challenged on terminological grounds, for, as noted above, aversion seems to involve more that mere "desiring not" (Schroeder, 2004, 26). But recall that aversion is here used as a term of art, to denote the polar opposite of thin occurrent desire. Terminological issues aside, the substantial point is that one cannot think of a polar opposite to desire that would not be co-extentional with desiring not. The fundamental reason for this is *that one cannot desire something and be conatively indifferent to its negation. If we want the presence of something, we cannot but diswant its absence*. If Julie desires to smoke, she cannot be indifferent to not smoking. She has to be averse to it. Nor can we be averse to something and be indifferent to its negation: if Julie is averse to being in pain, she cannot be indifferent to not being in pain. She has to desire it. Hence we also have:

(6) $(p)(Dp \rightarrow \neg CI\neg p)$

(7) $(p)(Ap \rightarrow \neg CI\neg p)$

By contrast, the polar opposite of love (of positive emotions) is not co-extensional with loving-not. Loving to do something is not tautologically equivalent to hating not doing it ("*L*" stands for "*S* loves that", "*H*" for "*S* hates that ", and "*AI*" for "*S* is affectively indifferent to"):

$(5')\neg(p)(Lp\leftrightarrow H\neg p)$

While "Suzy wants to swim" is equivalent to "Suzy is diswants not to swim"; "Suzy likes swimming" is not equivalent to "Suzy dislikes not-swimming". This is true, it seems, of all polarly opposed emotions that have a propositional content. Thus, that Paul would be proud if Julie was his wife does not entail that Paul would be ashamed if Julie was not his wife. That one enjoys reading Stendhal does not entail that one suffers not reading him.

This is due to the fact that it is possible to love something and to be indifferent to its negation: Julie might love smoking, without hating not smoking. Or Julie might hate being in pain, without for all that loving not to be in pain.

$(6')\ \neg(p)(Lp\rightarrow\neg AI\neg p)$

$(7')\ \neg(p)(Hp\rightarrow\neg AI\neg p)$

Finally, being conatively indifferent to something is equivalent to being neither desirous of it nor desirous of its negation. Paul is conatively indifferent to walking if and only if he neither desires to walk nor does desires not to walk.

$(8)(p)[CIp\leftrightarrow(\neg Dp\neg D\neg p)]$

But emotional indifference is not like this. One can be affectively indifferent to being healthy, while strongly disliking not being healthy. One can be affectively indifferent to the absence of bears, but still afraid of their presence. The lack of perfume from a rose leaves us cold, while we would be delighted by its presence.[31]

$(8')\neg(p)[AIp\leftrightarrow(\neg Ap\neg A\neg p)]$

Therefore, conative indifference and aversion can be defined only with the help of desire and the standard logical connectives. Affective indifference and hate cannot be defined in the same way from love and logical connectives.

In sum, *desires and aversion are formal polar opposites; love and hate are material polar opposites*.

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[31] As with values (see sect. 2.2), one can define others kinds of affective indifference. "Positive affective indifference" corresponds to the case where one neither loves a state of affairs, nor loves its negation. "Negative affective indifference" corresponds to the case where one neither hates a state of affairs nor its negation. "Affective super-indifference" corresponds to the case where one neither loves nor hates a state of affairs, *nor its negation*.

This disanalogy between emotions and desires, I conjecture, stems from the fact that positive and negative emotions have—while positive and negative conations lack—*opposite hedonic valences*. The polar opposition between pleasantness and unpleasantness is of the very same kind as the polar opposition between positive and negative values (Klocksiem, 2010): in the same way that *bad that p* is not equivalent to *good that not p*, *pleasant that p* is not equivalent to *unpleasant that not p*. Desire and aversion, on the other hand, do not differ with respect to their hedonic valence, thus licensing their inter-definability through negation.[32]

4 In favour of the Guise of the Ought

The analogies between norms and desires on the one hand, and values and emotions on the other, are quite strong: the four necessary truths (1–4) about norms have the same logical form as the four necessary truths about desire (5–8); the four necessary truths about values (1'–4') have the same logical form as the four necessary truth about emotions (5'–8'); and the conative-deontic truths, on the one hand, and affective-axiological truths, on the other, have distinct logical form. Although these formal analogies between norms and desires do not *per se* constitute an argument in favor of GO, they certainly do arise some favorable suspicion in favor of GO as against GG: it would come as a surprise that desires connect more closely to values than to norms. I shall propose two arguments to that effect, both relying on these formal analogies.

4.1 The formal objects of aversion and conative indifference

To do so, I need first to make clear what the formal objects of conative indifference and aversion are under GG and GO. Under GO, necessarily, the object of aversion will be presented under the

[32] The two main views in the literature about the hedonic tone of desires apply to both desires and aversions indifferently. They are :

1. Desires and aversions are essentially unpleasant, and hence do not have opposite valences (see e.g. Locke, 2008, Chap. 21,§31–2 , Bain, 1859, Marshall, 1891).
2. Desire and aversion do not have any hedonic tone essentially (Sidgwick, 1892, Sidgwick, 1981, cf. long note in the end of chap. IV , Allen, 1930, 27 sqq. , Hamilton 1882, Vol. II, p. 433, Schueler 1995, p. 11 sqq.).

One argument in favor of first view is that since one cannot desire what one thinks is the case, desires are essentially unsatisfied, which is essentially unpleasant (See Meinong, 1972, p. 86 ; **Lauria, this volume, and Oddie, this volume** on the "death of desire principle"). One possible reply is that conditional desires whose condition is not met (such as Paul's desire to buy Mary a diamond if he wins the lottery) are not frustrated but only cancelled (McDaniel and Bradley 2008), so that cancelled desires do not have to be unpleasant.

"guise of the forbidden"; whatever is "diswanted" will be presented as something that ought not to be.

GO$_{\textbf{(aversion)}}$: In virtue of the immediate nature of aversion (desiring not):

1. if S is desires that $\neg p$, it seems to S that $\neg p$ ought to be.
2. if S desires to $\neg \phi$, t seems to S that he ought to $\neg \phi$.

While under GG we will have, in virtue of the above:

GG$_{\textbf{(aversion)}}$: In virtue of the immediate nature of aversion (desiring not):

1. if S is desires that $\neg p$, it seems to S that $\neg p$ is good.
2. if S desires to $\neg \phi$, it seems to S that his $\neg \phi$-*ing* is good.

As for conative indifference, which is equivalent to 'neither desiring nor desiring-not', one might think at first that it only requires the absence of any normative presentation. But recall first that conative indifference is here understood—as desire and aversion—as an *occurrent* episode, in contrast to a dispositional one; and second, that conative indifference towards p is not *only* the absence of desire and aversion towards p. As we saw, conative indifference, must, on top of that, *belong to the conative domain* (sets or spatial regions for instance are not conatively indifferent). Under these assumptions, in order to be conatively indifferent to some action or state of affairs, one has to *be presented with its normative status*. One cannot be in a state of occurrent conative indifference towards something, under GG and GO, without considering its axiological or deontic status Accordingly, in the case of GO what we are conatively indifferent to must be presented to us *as optional;* while, for GG, what we are conatively indifferent to must be presented to us *as axiologically neutral:*

GO$_{\textbf{(indifference)}}$: In virtue of the immediate nature of conative indifference:

1. if S is conatively indifferent to p, it seems to S that (neither p nor $\neg p$ ought to be).
2. if S is conatively indifferent to ϕ-*ing*, it seems to S that (S neither ought to ϕ , nor ought to to $\neg \phi$).

GG$_{\textbf{(indifference)}}$: In virtue of the immediate nature of conative indifference:

1. if S is conatively indifferent to p, it seems to S that (neither p nor $\neg p$ are good).

2. if S is conatively indifferent to ϕ-*ing*, it seems to S that (it is neither good that S ϕ-*s*, nor good that S does not ϕ-*s*).

One this basis, two arguments in favor of GO as against GG might be advanced.

4.2 First argument: the explanatory advantage of GO over GG

Values and emotions license indifference to the negation of their content; norms and desires forbid such an indifference. If one desires something one cannot be indifferent to its negation. The first argument in favor of GO as against GG is that GO, *contrary to GG, provides a natural explanation of this impossibility*.

How is it that Julie cannot desire to laugh while being indifferent to not laughing? According to GO, If Julie desires to laugh, she is under the impression that *she ought to* laugh. Now suppose Julie were also conatively indifferent to not laughing. GO entails that she would be under the impression that is *it not the case that she ought to laugh*. But then she would have two simultaneous presentations with contradictory contents: she would feel that she was both under the obligation to laugh and not under that obligation. Hence, by reductio, Julie cannot be indifferent to not laughing.

Besides, if the upholder of GO endorses, following Meinong, the view that *values* are the formal objects of *emotions*, he will be in a position to explain why Julie *can* love to laugh and to be affectively indifferent to not laughing. Since it is *possible* that laughing is good and that not laughing is indifferent, Julie can, without contradiction, be presented with its being good to laugh *and* with its being axiologically indifferent not to laugh. So the reason why emotions license indifference to the negation of their content, is that their formal object—values—do the same. And the reason why desires forbid indifference to the negation of their content is that their formal object—norms—do the same.

Under GG, by contrast, no such explanation is at hand. Julie's desire to laugh entails that laughing seems good to her. This presentation is *compatible* with not laughing seeming neutral to her, so no explanation of why she cannot be conatively indifferent to not laughing is available here. Furthermore, if values are also the formal objects of emotions, then obviously GG cannot provide an explanation of the formal contrast between conations by relying on their formal objects.

Two objections might be raised against this explanation of why it is impossible to desire to ϕ and be conatively indifferent to ¬ϕ. First, one could object that the explanation advanced on behalf of GO only shows that it would be *irrational* for Julie to desire to sleep while being indifferent to it: it does not show that this is *impossible*. But even if we grant this, GO's comparative advantage remains. For upholders of the view that contradictory deontic presentations are not impossible, but irrational, will also be led to say that all the psychological necessities we have been putting forward are in fact just necessities of rational psychology. Suppose it is not impossible, but only irrational, to desire something while being avert to its negation. GO's explanatory advantage remains, *mutatis mutandis*: the reason why one cannot rationally desire to laugh while being indifferent to not-laughing becomes that one cannot rationally be presented with laughing as something that ought to be and be presented with not-laughing as something optional.

A second possible objection is that the explanation advanced goes backwards. A subjectivist or a buck-passer about norms could think that, if anything, the formal relations between norms derives from the formal relations between desires: "obligatory that *p*" forbids "optional that non-*p*" because "desire that p" forbids "conative indifference to non-*p*". Here again, even if this is granted, the explanatory advantage of GO over GG remains. For a GO-buck-passer, for instance, will be in a position to say that the reason why the obligation to ϕ entails the interdiction to not ϕ is that *being obligatory* amounts to *being the object of an appropriate desire*, while *being forbidden* amounts to *being the object of some appropriate aversion*. He will then appeal to the more primitive fact, according to him, that desiring to ϕ entails being avert to ¬ϕ to explain the corresponding deontic truth. A GG-buck-passer could not do that.

In sum, under GO, deontological necessary truths might be used to explain conative necessary ones (or the reverse), which cannot be done under GG. Beside, the upholder of GO can straightforwardly explain the contrast between emotions and desires by appealing to the analogous contrast between values and norms. For upholders of GG these startling analogies are purely coincidental—which is implausible and renders the explanatory agenda quite heavy.

4.3 Second argument: the motivational inertness of the bad

Second, the fact that one cannot be conatively indifferent to the negation of what one desires is not only something that GG, contrary to GO, fails to explain; it is also an important troublemaker for it. For it leads to the consequence that badness is not the formal object of any conation. Only goodness is motivationally relevant: badness is deprived of any immediate motivational oomph. This directly follows from the way that formal objects of desire, conative indifference, and aversion are understood under GG. To recall:

1. The formal object of desire is the good (it is good that p).
2. The formal object of conative indifference is *not* the axiologically neutral (but: neither p nor $\neg p$ is good which is *not* equivalent to p being *axiologically neutral*).
3. The formal object of aversion is *not* the bad (but: $\neg p$ good, which is not equivalent to p is bad).

That goodness is our only motive, and that badness is motivationally inert under GG is clearly seen by looking at conative indifference. Since conative indifference requires only *finding 'neither p nor ¬p good'*, and that *neither p nor ¬p are good* is compatible with *p is bad*, it is possible to be conatively indifferent to p while finding p bad. Conative indifference is not essentially connected to axiological neutrality (but only to "positive indifference", see note). GG captures the attraction of badness at the price of giving up the repulsion of badness.

GO, on the other hand, has no problem handling the motivational role of impermissiveness, for if something is obligatory, its negation has to be impermissive:

1. The formal object of *desire* is the *obligatory* (it ought to be that p).
2. The formal object of *conative* indifference is co-extensional with the *optional* (neither p nor $\neg p$ ought to be).
3. The formal object of *aversion* is co-extensional with the *impermissive* (it ought to be that $\neg p$).

Under GO, The three elements of the deontic trichotomy are presented, respectively, by one element of the conative trichotomy. Under GG, only the first element of the axiological trichotomy, goodness, figures in the content of all three types of conation.

The upholder of GG might try to retrieve some role for badness and neutrality by arguing that aversions *also* immediately require presentations of badness; and that conative indifference *also* immediately requires presentation of neutrality. This move would entail that indifference and aversion (but not desire) come with two distinct, non-extensional, immediate formal objects. Diswanting that p would require being under the impression that $\neg p$ is good *and* being under the impression that p is bad. But since the contents of such impressions are not equivalent, this proposal is (i) psychologically quite demanding, and (ii) normatively implausible: certain conations would be correct with respect to one of their formal objects, but not with respect to the other.

5 Objections answered

5.1 *Ought* has no polar opposite

In order to argue that the deontic domain is formaly polarly structured, I have focused on obligation and interdiction. But, one might object, "ought", contrary to obligation, has no polar opposite. If this is correct, formal polar opposition is not essential to deontic concepts, and it cannot be true that norms, contrary to values, are formally polarly opposed. Worse, if "ought" is the central deontic concept, this suggests that interdiction is just a notation variation for "ought to not", instead of a *sui generis* deontic concept, so that in the end polar opposition would be completely absent from the deontic realm.

As a first reply, I want to suggest that "ought" does have a polar opposite. True, "ought" has no *lexical* polar opposite in English, French, or German. But it is easy to construe such a polar opposite from negation: the polar opposite of "ought", I submit, is "ought not". "Ought not", as rightly stressed by Meinong (1972, pp. 97, 103) is emphatically *not* the contradictory—or external—negation of "ought". This is due to the fact that "ought", as linguists say, is a *neg-raising* verb (Horn, 1989, 308–330, Gajewski, 2007). A verb is neg-raising if its external negation typically entails its internal negation. Thus, "It ought not to be that people starve" does not (only) mean "It is not the case that it ought to be that people starve", for it also entails: "It ought to be that people do not starve". Because "ought" is neg-raising, there is nothing inconsistent in saying, e.g., that rocks neither ought to be, nor ought not to be.

But this does not show yet that "ought" has a polar opposite; for, granting that the negation in "ought not to ϕ" is not external, it then appears to be internal, that is, to modify ought's content: "ought to not-ϕ". All we would have then, are oughts with contradictory contents, but not polarly opposed "oughts". On this approach, the equivalence between "obligatory that *p"* and "forbidden that ¬*p*", cashed out in "ought" terms, would be trivially true in virtue of the nature of double negation: "it ought to be that *p*" iff "it ought to be that ¬¬*p*".

One plausible suggestion is that the negation in "ought not" is *neither external nor internal*. "It ought not to be that *p*" is neither the same as "It is not the case that *p* ought to be" *nor the same as "It ought to be that ¬p"*. The idea is that in "ought not" the negation modifies "ought" rather than its sentential complement. A first hint that it might be so is that English modals license the contraction of negation (oughtn't, shouldn't...). Second, consider:

1.
   (a) Paul ne doit pas rire. [Paul ought not to laugh.]
   (b) Paul doit ne pas rire. [Paul ought to not laugh. (?)]
2.
   (a) It ought not to be that people starve.
   (b) It ought to be that people do not starve.
3.
   (a) What A ought not do is B
   (b) What A ought to do is not B (Horn, 1989, p. 87)

As urged by Horn (1989, 86–89), because ought is neg-raising, there are no external negations in any of these examples, in particular in sentences (a). Relatedly, sentences (a) and (b) have the same truth conditions. But intuitively they have different connotations or meanings. That negation is in one case constructed with the modal, and in the other with its complement, suggesting that even if we lack modals for interdiction, we still have linguistic resources to mark them, *qua* distinct for obligation with negative content. (See Horn, 1989, 86–89 for further considerations to this effect.)[33]

[33] In a similar way, the Fregean idea that the rejection of a proposition is nothing but the acceptance of its negation has recently come under pressure (Smiley, 1996; Rumfitt, 2000; Mulligan, 2013).

Although I sympathize with this reply, there is another reply to the present objection that is less committal. According to it, all that is required for the arguments above to go through is that "ought", like "desiring", but contrary to "good", *forbids indifference to its contradictory content*. Even if "ought" has no polar opposite, "It ought to be that *p*" is incompatible with "It is optional that ¬*p*", in particular with "It ought to be that ¬*p*". The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for "desire that", but false for "It is good that".

5.2 *Right* and *Wrong* are not formal polar opposites

Another objection, brought to my attention by Federico Lauria, has it that some deontic predicates—such as right and wrong—are not formally but materially opposed. If this is true, some deontic concepts display the same formal relations as axiological concepts, and are consequently closer to emotions than to desires. The argument goes as follows:

P1 *Right* and *wrong* are deontic predicates.

P2 *Right* and *wrong* are polarly opposed predicates.

P3 Its being *right* to wear a hat does not entail its being *wrong* not to wear a hat.

C The polar opposition between some deontic predicate (right and wrong) is not formal (given the definition of formal polar opposition above) but material.

This objection, I submit, relies on an equivocation about the extension of "right". "Right" has a broad and a narrow sense (Timmons, 2002, pp. 7–9). In the broad sense, "right" is co-extensional with "obligatory or optional", that is, with "permissible". In the narrow sense, "right" is co-extensional with "obligatory". If "right" is used in the broad sense, P3 is true (for it can be optional to wear a hat) but P2 is false (for there is no indifference zone between right—permissible—and wrong). If right is read in the narrow sense, then P2 is true (in between right and wrong) but P3 is false (for if it is right—obligatory—to wear a hat, then it has to be wrong not be wear one).

5.3 *Desire* has no polar opposite

In the same way as modals like "ought" and "should", "desire" seem to lack any proper English opposite. As noted above "aversion" is a rather poor term for the polar opposite of *thin* desires,

for it is affectively loaded. If desire has no polar opposite, one might object that formal polar opposition cannot be essential to the conative realm, and the arguments above collapse.

A first reply is that if "wanting" is the best way to express thin occurrent desires, as suggested, then other languages provide words corresponding to "diswanting", such as "*disvolere*" in Italian (see for other examples). Beside since "wanting" is neg-raising—contrary to desiring[34]—one could here again rely on the difference between "Julie does not want to laugh" and "Julie wants not to laugh" to argue that diswanting something is not merely wanting its negation (although the two are equivalent). So wanting might, after all, have a polar opposite.

But one does not even need not to accept this in order to accept the arguments in favor of GO. As long as wanting forbids conative indifference to the negation of its content, contrary to verbs of emotion and attitudes, we have all we need to carry through these arguments.

5.4 The guise of the better

Another objection has it that a close cousin of GG is immune to the objections raised above. According to this, the formal objects of desires are comparative values: whatever one desires is presented to us as better than its negation:

Guise of the Better (GB): In virtue of the immediate nature of desire:

1. if S desires that p, it seems to S that p is better than $\neg p$.
2. if S desires to ϕ, it seems to S that ϕ-*ing* is better than $\neg\phi$-*ing*.

Under GB, the formal object of conative indifference will be "having the *same value as* its negation", while the formal object of aversion will be "being worse than its negation". So construed, GB is immune to the two objections raised against GG, for "better than", "same value as", and "worse than" behave like "obligatory that", "optional that", and "impressive that"—and unlike "good that", "neutral that", and "bad that". "Better than" and "worth than" are *formal* polar opposites: "p is better than $\neg p$" iff "$\neg p$ is worse than p".

[34] Horn notices:

> Want neg-raises freely, wish somewhat less so, and desire only with difficulty […]. It is hard to detect any relevant non-ad hoc semantic or pragmatic distinction between want and desire […] which could account for this distinction. (Horn, 1989, p. 321)

Why then prefer GO to GB? The cautious answer is that the view defended here is only the preferability of GO over GG, and that GB is not a version of GG. True, upholders of GG sometimes switch more or less surreptitiously from the guise of the good to the *guise of the better* (Davidson, 2001; Tenenbaum, 2013). But since *being good* is neither necessary nor sufficient for *being better*, this is a substantial step towards a distinct theory. Let me however hint at two reasons why GO might still fare better than GB.

First, one main motivation in favor of GO is to preserve the one-to-one correspondence between kinds of attitudes and kinds of formal objects. But betterness is naturally construed as the formal object of (evaluative) *preferences* rather than of desires. In the same way that GG leads to the view that desires and emotions share their formal objects, GB leads to the view that desires and preferences share their formal objects.

Second, it is unclear that desiring that p always entails taking p to be better than $\neg p$, for the reason that some desires might not be grounded in values at all, even comparative ones. These are desires whose formal objects are *norms that are not grounded on the values of their bearers*. Such as:

1. Norms grounded on values other than those of their bearer. Such as (i) *conventional norms*: the obligation to drive on the right side of the road is arguably not grounded in its being good or better to drive on the right;[35] (ii) *instrumental norms*: Meinong (1972, 103–4) suggests that instrumental oughts ground instrumental values rather than the reverse. (iii) Relatedly, some *consequentialists norms* for actions, grounded on the value of their results or consequences.
2. Norms directly grounded in natural/non-normative properties:[36] Julie ought to do what she promised, arguably, not because what she promised is good or better, but simply because she promised it.
3. Norms directly grounded on rights or freedoms (property rights, freedom of speech...). Julie's obligation not to steal Paul's bike is arguably directly grounded in Paul's property rights on this bike.[37]

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[35] I thank Christine Tappolet for calling my attention to such cases.
[36] Reinach (1983, §4).
[37] Reinach (1983, §5).

4. Norms not grounded, or self-grounded: categorical imperatives perhaps; or norms governing reactive attitudes: that one ought to have positive attitudes towards things of positive values is perhaps not grounded in its being good, or better, to have such attitudes.[38]

GO can account for such obligations not grounded in values, which GG and GB fail to do (this argument relies only on the possibility of such obligations or interdictions).

5.5 The motivational force of values

Finally, one might object that GO is an even worse position than GG with respect to the motivational role of values, for according to GO, *no value at all (not even goodness) is essentially presented with desires*. Presentations of values do not belong to the immediate nature of desires: conations are under the tyranny of norms.

One way to account for the motivational role of values in the context of GO is, following Meinong, to claim that our presentations of norms are grounded in our presentation of values.[39] Typically (but not always, as we just saw), things seems to ought to be because they seems to have (or lack) some value. This claim is the psychological counterpart of the ontological claim that norms are grounded in values (Meinong, 1972, 99). Values, in Meinong's terms, are *borrowed* objects of desires. Given the formal disanalogies between values and norms, it cannot, however, be claimed that "p ought to be" iff "p is good", and "p ought not to be" iff "p is bad". Norms grounded on values have to be grounded on *comparative* values, which, as we saw, are stands in relations of formal polar opposition. More precisely, when norms are grounded on the values of their bearer we will have:

- It is obligatory that p (partly) because p is *better than* $\neg p$.
- It is optional that p (partly) because p has *the same value as* $\neg p$.
- It is impermissive that p (partly) because p is *worse than* $\neg p$.

Hansson (2007, p. 144) and Tappolet (forthcoming) recall that two main accounts of the relation between *oughts* and *values* have been advanced. One equates "ought" with "good": it has to be rejected for the reasons advanced above. The other equates "ought" with "best", and is in tune with the present proposal, for norms that are grounded on values.

[38] Tappolet, forthcoming.
[39] In Meinong's terms: presentations of *dignitatives* are the psychological presuppositions of presentations of *desideratives*.

A natural objection to such a proposal is that it ends up giving a pretty complicated picture of the motivational force of values. To motivate, monadic values have to ground comparative values, which in turn have to ground norms. If monadic values are presented by emotions, if comparative values are presented by preferences, and if norms are presented by desires, then to act on the basis of a monadic value we need to go through emotions, preferences, and, at last, desires. This might sounds far-fetched. But this is not necessarily the only way to act on the basis of values. GO is not committed to the view that only desires motivate. Emotions might directly motivate. For instance, we might sometimes *act out of our emotions*, without the help of any desires.

Finally, note that the present objection to GO, according to which it cannot account for the motivational role of value, has a counterpart objection directed against GG. For in the very same way that desires are value-blind under GO, *desires are norm-blind under GG*. So one important question is *how GG can account for the motivational force of norms*. I suspect that it will be more difficult for GG to make room for norms than it would be for GO to make room for values. It would be implausible to account for the conative role of norms by arguing that presentations of values are typically grounded in the presentation of norms, so that norms would be the *borrowed* object of desires. The reason for this is that the natural order of explanation between values and norms, when there is one, is that values ground norms rather that the reverse. Typically, things ought to be because they are good, or better, or best, and not the other way round.[40] If this is correct, we might have here a further reason to favor GO over GG: it is easier for GO to account for the motivational role of values than for GG to account for the motivational role of norms.

I conclude that if desires are grounded on some normative presentations, as agreed by both upholders of GG and of GO, these presentations are better construed as presentations of norms than as presentations of values.[41]

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[40] A point emphasized by Scheler (1973, 206). One might object that some buck-passing accounts of values give priority to norms over values. But buckpassing and GG do not go along well. It is notoriously difficult for buckpassers to account for value-seemings, which lie at the heart of GG (see e.g. Rønnow-Rasmussen 83–4), for what we desire is intuitively not presented under the guise of what ought to be favoured in virtue of its natural properties.

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