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## Sartre on Affectivity

*Anthony Hatzimoysis*

Emotion has proven resistant to the standard categorizations of psychological states. Indeed, even the term ‘state’, with its connotations of fixity and stability, appears to assume too much about the nature of emotional experience. Highlighting the active side of emotion, its engagement with those aspects of reality which give rise to affective experience, should be a welcome corrective to the traditional emphasis on emotional passivity. Sartre’s work has been pivotal in bringing the active side of emotions to the foreground. Instead of treating behaviour as an optional concomitant of emotion, Sartre appears to approach affectivity as a particular class of conduct.<sup>1</sup> Emotion, for Sartre, is the conscious transformation, by means of one’s body, of a situation. What is transformed, though, is not reality itself, but how the world is experienced by the subject, and, consequently, how the subject responds to a thus transformed world.<sup>2</sup> Correspondingly, what drives the Sartrean analysis of affectivity is the desire to make proper sense of the *signification* of emotion in a twofold sense: what it signifies for the life of the agent who experiences the emotion, as well as which aspect of reality is manifested when the agent is emotionally engaged with the world. Sartre’s ‘phenomenological’<sup>3</sup> approach to affectivity is outlined in the *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* (1939), yet it is not restricted to that essay. Remarks about the phenomenology of affectivity are included in Sartre’s seminal paper on ‘Intentionality’, written around 1934, and are further developed in his long essay on the *Transcendence of the Ego* (1936).<sup>4</sup>

Here, however, I would like to explore the relation between the account given in the *Sketch* and the views expressed in a work published shortly afterwards, *The Imaginary* (1940). Each of the two books presents a bold analytical approach to affective phenomena. Both of them bear testament to Sartre’s unique capacity to pose philosophical questions through an astute narration of human experience. What is not so clear, though, is whether those texts can be read as parts of a harmonious theory.

The question of consistency between the two texts bears upon an issue in the contemporary understanding of emotions. On the one hand, it has been claimed that emotions are closely akin, if not identical, to perceptual states through which the world is revealed to us. That approach underlines the epistemic dimension of affective content, either as a bare experiential datum, or as conceptually structured evidence on

which evaluative judgements can be grounded.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, it has been argued that emotions may be seen not as perceptual takes on the environment, but as functional alterations of the whole organism whose strategic role is to secure for the agent a utility cost-reduction, or a socially mediated preference satisfaction. That approach highlights the behavioural aspects of affectivity, and its intimate relation to the way an agent responds emotionally to the world.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, emotion has been thought to function as a direct cause of behaviour, or as part of the agent's motivational background, or simply as a contributing or hindering force.<sup>7</sup> Sartre is often thought to occupy the extreme position of seeing emotion not merely as connected to a piece of behaviour but as, in a sense, identical to it. For some scholars, Sartre's theory in the *Sketch* entails that 'emotions are actions'.<sup>8</sup> However, as I will argue in section 13.1, that entailment does not hold. Despite the apparent connotations of some phrases in the *Sketch*, Sartre sees emotion as very different from action. Does this difference imply that, for Sartre, emotion is better approached as a type of perceptual experience? *The Imaginary* lends itself to an analysis of affectivity as in many respects similar to perception. In contrast to the account offered in the *Sketch*, the focus of *The Imaginary* is set on emotional feelings, with the behavioural dimension of emotions receding in the background. Is this merely a change in emphasis, or an indication of a deeper tension between the claims made in the two books? And if the latter, does it imply that Sartre saw the error of his old ways, and decided to move on to a different philosophical path?

My answer to those questions will be that Sartre does indeed offer a different set of claims in the two works; the difference lies mainly in the *perspective* from which those claims are made. That difference, in my view, is quite substantial for raising worries about the consistency of the Sartrean theory of emotion. Hence, the success of that theory depends on the possibility of combining the views expressed in the two books into a coherent philosophical outlook. I will first outline the theory offered in the *Sketch* (Section 13.1). I shall then introduce the view developed in *The Imaginary* (Section 13.2) and, after articulating and assessing a possible response to Sartre's critique of subjectivist accounts of emotional feeling (Section 13.3), I will explore in detail the points of similarity and contrast between the views encountered in the two books (Sections 13.4 to 13.6).

### 13.1 Affectivity in the *Sketch*

In his *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, Sartre presents emotion as the conscious transformation, by means of one's body, of a situation: what changes is how the world is experienced by the subject and, consequently, how the subject responds to a thus transformed world.<sup>9</sup>

The world is understood as a totality of phenomena linked in a network of mutual references. The way in which each phenomenon relates to others defines the type of world encountered by the subject. We should distinguish between at least two

worlds: the world of action and the world of emotion.<sup>10</sup> In the former, we experience reality as a combination of demands and affordances; the link between demands and affordances is itself perceived as governed by deterministic processes between causes and effects. The instrumental world of action is captured in the pragmatic intuition of the situation that makes certain moves available for the subject, while denying her others.

The emotional apprehension of the world, on the other hand, hooks on to those qualities or aspects that carry affective meaning for the agent. The joyful, hateful, or bleak world, far from being identical to the world of action, is clearly distinguished from the instrumental world. What appears to bring forth the emotional stance towards the world, is that the situation presents the agent with demands that she is unable to meet—and her emotional response (be it joyous, angry, or sad) consists in a pattern of cognitive and physiological changes which reduce the urgency, lower the intensity, or neutralize the force of those demands.

That is, in rough outline, Sartre's sketch for a theory of the emotions.<sup>11</sup> The issue I would like to raise here is of a different character: it concerns Sartre's claim that 'emotion is a certain way of apprehending the world'.<sup>12</sup> In the *Sketch*, that claim is introduced in the course of Sartre's analysis of affectivity as a distinct class of conduct. In *The Imaginary*, the idea of affectivity as a mode of apprehension returns, though it is not quite evident how exactly it relates to the view outlined in the *Sketch*. Let us look closely at that issue.

### 13.2 Affectivity in 'The Imaginary'

The accurate interpretation of how a philosopher understands a phenomenon is facilitated by a proper understanding of the expression with which the philosopher purports to capture that phenomenon. The expression 'emotion as apprehension', though, is not by itself easy to comprehend. A first obstacle to a correct understanding of the phrase comes from the fact that cognitive states, such as apprehension, and affective states, such as emotion, are traditionally conceived as sharply different. That difference may permit, at most, the consecutive occurrences of apprehension and emotion. The notion of 'emotional apprehension' might then be thought to denote two states rather than one, with the emotion component following upon the neutral apprehension of reality.

In *The Imaginary* Sartre will probe the validity of the division between the affective and the cognitive by inviting us to think of 'feeling... as a species of knowledge'.<sup>13</sup> Let me call that view 'cognitivist', to be contrasted with the 'non-cognitivist' view of feeling to which Sartre's view is strongly opposed.<sup>14</sup>

Non-cognitivism conceives of feeling as an affective state whose being is exhausted in an ineffable shiver experienced by a subject, in isolation from the surrounding world.<sup>15</sup> The non-cognitivist view may of course be expanded so as to accommodate the connection between what one apprehends and how one feels. The links between feeling and what lies outside the subject are supposedly established through the

mechanics of psychological association. Those connections, though, are treated as optional concomitants of what is essentially a phenomenal state that is lived in pure interiority. The overall picture turns feelings into ‘an ensemble of capricious appearances that are somehow fortuitously united with representations but which at bottom have no real relation with their objects’.<sup>16</sup> This approach leads inescapably to what Sartre aptly calls ‘a sort of solipsism of affectivity’.<sup>17</sup>

The subjectivist may attempt to articulate a response to the Sartrean critique by drawing on the notion of representation. She may claim, for instance, that although there is nothing more to a feeling than what it is like for a subject to undergo that feeling, it might be possible to draw some indirect links between emotion and the world, by means of the representational function of affective experience.<sup>18</sup> If the representationalist manoeuvre is successful, we might have an account of the intentionality that sidesteps Sartre’s objections to subjectivism. It is worth considering, therefore, whether the subjectivist appeal to the representationalist model of intentionality can be effective against Sartre’s argumentation. The issues here are quite technical, but for the purposes of our discussion we may focus only on the question that exercises Sartre himself, concerning the phenomenological credibility of the subjectivist account of emotional feeling. As I will argue, instead of connecting feeling with the world, the representationalist approach multiplies the problems for subjectivism, as it disconnects feeling from emotion.

### 13.3 A Critique of Subjectivism about Emotional Feeling

Subjectivists who rely on representationalist models of mental content may link feeling with reality through the following route. Emotional episodes—as Sartre would be the first to insist—are not disembodied.<sup>19</sup> They almost invariably come with changes in heart rate, skin temperature, body posture, tightening of muscles, and so on.<sup>20</sup> Information processed at a neural, sensory, perceptual, or epistemic level, on the one hand, and the goal directedness of volitional or desiderative states, on the other, may set in train autonomic responses preparatory for action (of strike in the case of anger, withdrawal in the case of sadness, reparation in the case of guilt, etc.). The feeling of fear, according to this view, is the intentional state of sensing changes in one’s body generated by the autonomic responses preparatory for fight-or-flight, caused by the broadly construed cognitive and conative states of the agent. The emotional feeling registers how one’s body stands as a whole in a particular situation. Representationalists may assert that the intentional content of a feeling is what it represents, and what an emotional feeling represents is a bodily gestalt, a patterned web of physiological changes.<sup>21</sup>

However, from a Sartrean perspective, this claim raises a dilemma about the relation between emotion and emotional feelings, neither horn of which is particularly attractive.

If emotions and emotional feelings have the same intentional object, then emotions are directed towards one's bodily state: what I dread is not the murderer catching up with me, but my pulse rate and stomach muscles. This view sounds absurd at worst, and strongly revisionary at best: absurd, because it implies that we are amused, afraid, joyous, or guilty about, say, our body temperature, rather than about the people, actions, or events that make up our social environment. At a minimum, this view demands that we understand ourselves and others as being capable of emotions with just one type of objects, namely the physiological changes that constitute our bodily gestalt. Though not logically incoherent, such a revision would require an immense effort of mental manoeuvring, as it runs counter to both social scientific and folk psychological thinking about emotions.

If, on the other hand, emotional feelings and emotions have different objects, then we are owed an explanation of why such feelings should bear the title of emotions at all. The representationalist might venture an explanation by showing what it is about certain bodily feelings, which makes us identify them as emotional. The answer, perhaps, may invoke a chain of representation: certain feelings represent bodily changes; bodily changes represent certain of the changes in the world that impinge on the body; therefore bodily feelings represent certain changes in the world. Some of those changes in the world relate to matters of concern to us, sources of frustration or satisfaction, actual or forthcoming threats, secured or withdrawn rewards. They are precisely the kind of events that constitute the object of human emotions. Some of our bodily feelings are called emotional because they represent events in the world towards which emotions are directed.<sup>22</sup>

Despite its advantages over traditional forms of subjectivism about emotion, the representationalist line of reasoning encounters some important difficulties. Starting at a rather general level, the representationalist approach draws on the notion of a representational chain that is made possible by the nature of representation as a relation of a state's standing in for something else. However, this view contrasts sharply with the core feature of the Sartrean view of intentionality as a relation of directedness between a state and that towards which that state aims.<sup>23</sup> Take the simpler case of my perceiving dark clouds gathering in the sky. Clouds are caused by various chemical processes on water surfaces of the earth, and, according to the theory under consideration, clouds thus represent such processes. However, the intentional content of my perception is that of clouds in the sky, not of chemical activities of water on earth. It is simply false to equate intentionality with representationality when the latter is understood as a causally determined relation of entities or events that could be interpreted (for all sorts of scientific or practical purposes) as conveying information about each other.

At an explanatory level, the representationalist approach presupposes that we possess the rather unique ability of identifying for each occasion what the object of an emotion is independently of how we feel towards it. It is not sufficient to assert that certain feelings are emotional because they unfailingly happen to co-occur with one's emotions. In order to test the explanatory power of the theory that claims that the

object of feeling and emotion coincide, even though they reach their object through totally different routes, we should be in a position to state whether something is for us frightening or amusing irrespective of how we feel about it. Otherwise it would be simply vacuous to claim with representationalism that each time one experiences emotional feelings, both the feeling and the emotion are about the same thing.

It is worth noting finally, that separating the intentional object of feeling from that of emotion does not avoid the revisionist trap. According to the representationalist version of subjectivism, to feel is to perceive changes in one's body. This implies that any locution of the form 'A feels  $x$  (an emotion) with/about/towards B', should be understood along the lines of 'A perceives  $y$  (a bodily state) and he has also  $x$  (an emotion) with/about/towards B'. Although Pierre says that he feels angry with his neighbours, what he means is the conjunction of two contingently related things, the second of which is devoid of feeling: that he perceives his blood boil, and that he is angry with his neighbours. It might perhaps be possible for representationalism to map ordinary thought and talk onto a two-tier model of bodily reports and statements about one's emotion, though how this is possible in practice remains to be seen.

All of the above problems are symptomatic of the conflict between the phenomenology of emotional experience and its purported representationalist explanation. Being emotionally engaged with something is experienced as a unitary state directed towards that thing. This is what makes possible the sense of seeing things as appealing or appalling, and the suggested parallel between emotional and perceptual states so apposite.

The main moral to be drawn from the preceding discussion is that subjectivism either in its naïve traditional version, or its sophisticated representationalist forms, appears to fail to account for the phenomenology of emotional feeling. The links devised by the subjectivist, 'are established from the outside. It is not a living synthesis of representation and feeling: we remain in the mechanical domain of associations.'<sup>24</sup>

### 13.4 The Reflective Standpoint on Emotional Experience

For Sartre, the subjectivist approach results in a solipsism of affectivity. The culprit for that solipsism is the severing of the feeling from its *signification*, in two senses of that term: which is the worldly *object* signified in an affective episode, and what that episode signifies for the life of the agent who experiences the feeling.<sup>25</sup> The question is how we may reconnect the affective to its signification; and Sartre's answer in *The Imaginary* is that we should appeal to the deliverances of reflection.

Appealing to reflection sounds like an unobjectionable starting point, but, in my view, it is not. In fact, that methodological stricture brings to light some underlying assumptions of Sartre's own conception of his project as phenomenological.<sup>26</sup> Phenomenology purports to be the unprejudiced study of phenomena to the extent that, and exactly as, they present themselves in our experience.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, reflection is but one of the ways in which experience can be approached.

Reflection privileges a first person perspective on affectivity, over an ‘impersonal’ or, at least, ‘third personal’ description of the phenomena. Given that affectivity is something that is ‘lived’—what German phenomenologists call an ‘Erlebnis’, and what Sartre’s French contemporaries refer to as ‘le vécu’.<sup>28</sup> I believe that it is right of Sartre to adopt the reflective standpoint; but it is not philosophically neutral. In fact, the problems we shall encounter as we proceed in our reconstruction of his theory of affectivity may stem from the kinds of standpoint Sartre occupies in different works. Let us see what reflective exploration reveals, according to Sartre, before we assess its methodological significance.

The first datum offered by reflection is that phenomena like joy, hate, melancholy, or indignation are not *states* but *consciousnesses*.<sup>29</sup> To appreciate the bearing of that distinction for Sartre’s view of affectivity, let me outline his view of mental life before reflection takes off.

Pre-reflective consciousness is the ordinary consciousness of objects in the world; reflective consciousness is the consciousness of being conscious of an object. Pre-reflective consciousness is a positional consciousness of a certain object, in the sense that consciousness posits, sets before itself, the object as a target of its intentional activity. However, when one is positionally conscious of a particular object, one is non-positionally conscious of being conscious of that object. Pre-reflective consciousness is thus non-positionally aware of itself as being directed towards its objects. For Sartre, every positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself.<sup>30</sup>

When we think and talk about our experience, the life of consciousness is considered under certain headings, such as ‘qualities of character’, ‘physical acts’, and ‘affective states’.<sup>31</sup> Those headings impose some order into past conscious experience, transforming continuous instances of activity into isolable states. However, according to Sartre, this picture tends to present conscious experience the wrong way round. In reality, what comes first is the conscious activity directed at the world; the psychological state follows, as the outcome of grouping—by means of reflection—several activities under one heading. That grouping generates psychological categories which transcend consciousness, in the sense that those states appear as fixed entities with set boundaries, which share nothing of the fluid and luminous character of conscious activity. Those transcendent psychological states are then erroneously conceived as pre-existing members of one psychological whole, which embraces and governs every aspect of our mental life.

Sartre asserts that affective states make their appearance when one reflects on one’s past mental or physical activities, on one’s actions, judgements, or feelings. Take for instance the relation between the feeling of lust and the state of love. Feeling lust at the sight of a particular person is an experience absorbed with the attractive qualities of that individual. Experienced as a direct engagement with the world, the upheaval of a particular feeling towards someone marks the intentional connection between my consciousness and that being. The feeling of lust is a conscious activity occurring

instantaneously or through a limited time span, and one that meets Sartre's absolute principle of consciousness, i.e., to be an instant of lust and to feel as an instant of lust are one and the same thing: there is no gap within the 'consciousness (of) lust' between appearing and being.<sup>32</sup>

The genitive construction 'consciousness (of) lust' might give the impression that in the course of ordinary encounter with the world, there is a thing called 'lust' to which consciousness pays attention. That interpretation is misleading. Lust is not an object for consciousness; it is consciousness itself as it experiences its intentional object. The genitive participle 'of' is put in brackets so as to signal that the grammatical construction purports to characterize what a particular consciousness is (namely, lust), not what the consciousness is about (its intentional object, the particular person who has arrested my sexual attention). However, if we were to move from the plane of emotional encounter with the world, to the higher level of reflection upon that type of encounter, our consciousness could take in its purview the emotion-consciousness. At that level, lust or other emotional experiences would themselves become an object of conscious examination and, thus, the locution 'consciousness of lust' (free of internal brackets) would denote the second-order activity of consciousness focusing upon its conscious activities. The confusion of the first-order level of the (lustful, despairing, or joyous) experience of the world, with the second-order level of the consideration of such an experience by the (reflective) subject is a major source of difficulties for the adequate analysis of affective phenomena.

### 13.5 Affectivity as a Distinctive Mode of Intentionality

In *The Imaginary*, Sartre contrasts *states* with *consciousnesses* and places the affective phenomena in the latter category. As we just saw, however, Sartre's detailed discussion of that issue in previous works provides a different or, at least, more fine-grained mapping of the affective domain. To take one of his favourite examples: hate is not a *consciousness* but a *state* produced by one's reflection on one's past feelings of disgust or repulsion towards the person who was the intentional object of the 'consciousness (of) repulsion'. Repulsion is not an object for pre-reflective consciousness; it is consciousness itself as it experiences its intentional object (the particular detestable person). When consciousness turns its attention back unto itself, trying perhaps to make sense, narrate, or evaluate its past behaviour, consciousness may group certain activities under the heading of 'hate', attributing thus to itself a state out of which particular instances of repulsion supposedly emanate. Note, moreover, that such an attribution is not produced from a neutral description of isolated mental events; rather, it expresses a commitment as to how the agent is to stand towards the detestable person. To move from the claim 'I am feeling a violent repulsion while looking at Pierre' to the claim 'I hate him' is to perform 'a passage to infinity'.<sup>33</sup> To state that you hate someone is, in essence, to judge what your feelings towards him meant in the past and



to express a commitment as to how you are to stand, in feeling, thinking and action, towards that person in the future.

A feeling, according to this picture, forms the ground of affectivity: it is a distinct manner in which consciousness is directed at the world, while a state is the reflective product of consciousness's taking purview of its past activities. To the activity of feelings, we may contrast the passivity of states, and to the fluidity and lucidity of the former, we should counterpose the fixity and opacity of the latter. Affectivity is first and foremost a consciousness, and all consciousness is directed at an object. Sartre's account of feeling is premised on those two claims. Before we see how his account of feeling concludes, it is worth inquiring about the relation between the two claims: are they independent of each other, and if not, which one forms the basis for the other?

The opening lines of the long paragraph from the section of *The Imaginary* that we examine at present, appear to favour the former option. Sartre states that 'Reflection delivers us affective *consciousnesses*. . . . And we must apply to them the great law of consciousness: all consciousness is consciousness of something.'<sup>34</sup> It seems therefore that the former phenomenological claim stands independently of the latter nomic statement, which comes to validate an important step towards the cognitivist view Sartre wishes to uphold: 'Feelings have special intentionalities', they represent a way of consciousness transcending itself towards the world. 'To hate Paul is to intend Paul as a transcendent objet of consciousness.'<sup>35</sup> However, in earlier works Sartre presents the nomic statement as itself a product of phenomenological reflection: intentionality is revealed as the essence of consciousness, each time consciousness purports to make sense of itself.<sup>36</sup>

I think that the different statements on intentionality raise the following issue for Sartre: *either* he means that affectivity is intentional because it is given to the reflexive gaze as a type of conscious activity, *or* he maintains that it is a type of conscious activity because it is shown, upon reflection, to be always intentional. The former horn of the dilemma is what appears to be chosen when the paragraph under examination opens. As the text unfolds, though, it is the latter horn for which Sartre opts—and that is all for the best, I think, for two reasons. First, it offers Sartre a sound basis on which to develop his account; instead of importing into his discussion an extraneous dogma about mental life in general, he attends to the special character of affective experience. Secondly, it sets for Sartre the task of providing an independent consideration in support of his claim that affectivity in general, and feeling in particular, are intentional phenomena.

Sartre discharges that task with a masterful move against his subjectivist opponent. A standard contention of the subjectivist camp is that once you remove the psychological manifestations of emotion, affectivity vanishes, and all you are left with is an intellectual grasp of the situation or an abstract judgement. Sartre turns the tables, by inviting his opponent to consider a thought experiment: 'Try to bring about in yourself the subjective phenomena of hate, of indignation without these phenomena being oriented *on* a hated person, *on* an unjust action, and you can tremble, hammer your

fist, blush, but your inner state will be devoid of indignation, of hate.<sup>37</sup> Affectivity for Sartre is a conscious ‘aiming at’ an object; remove the object, and the affective will vanish, as well. Affectivity in other words is necessarily a world-directed, intentional phenomenon.

The picture of affectivity Sartre draws in *The Imaginary* contains two further important elements concerning, on the one hand, the intentional activity and, on the other, its intentional object. First, affectivity is irreducible to other forms of intentionality. In particular, the fact that feelings are directed at something should not be taken as grounds for rendering affectivity a subspecies of whatever is taken as the standard form of intentionality. Attempts to assimilate the intentionality of feelings to some other form of directedness at the world include the analysis of emotion as similar to desire,<sup>38</sup> or as identical to a kind of judgement,<sup>39</sup> or as a variation on propositional attitudes that do not involve acceptance of the relevant content as true, such as imaginings, thoughts, or construals.<sup>40</sup> Sartre is sharply opposed to all those attempts: ‘We must not commit the intellectualist error . . . Feeling aims at an object but it aims in its own manner, which is affective.’<sup>41</sup>

Secondly, my feeling towards the qualities of the object (say, the long, white fine hands of the loved person) is not an optional add-on, subsequent to the neutral representation of those hands; rather, the feeling itself ‘is a certain way that finesse, whiteness, vivacity have of appearing to me’.<sup>42</sup> That statement is, in my view, the clearest and nearest Sartre ever gets in *The Imaginary* to illustrating the claim, made in the *Sketch*, that emotion is a certain way of apprehending the world.

### 13.6 A Problem of Consistency

Here is the problem which, to my knowledge, has gone unnoticed in the literature. In the *Sketch*, the claim about emotion as a mode of apprehension purports to capture Sartre’s novel approach to affectivity as a particular class of conduct. Yet nothing in the account of affectivity we encounter in *The Imaginary* involves any claim about human conduct. The discussion, in the section we have examined, proceeds without a reference to how affectivity relates to how one engages, stands towards, or behaves in a demanding situation. Moreover, no indication is given that the account articulated in that section is, in any important sense, incomplete. In *The Imaginary*, affectivity is approached from a first-person perspective, through an analysis of feelings as intentional phenomena, in which certain qualities of an object are given to the subject, in a distinctive way, such that the subject acquires a non-intellectual knowledge of the world. By contrast, the *Sketch* purports to analyse affectivity in terms of the functions served by our emotive reactions to a situation. We should underline here two features of the functionalist account given in the *Sketch*, one concerning its content, the other the perspective from which it is articulated.

The situations that give rise to an affective response are characterized in the *Sketch* as *difficult*.<sup>43</sup> Faced with a situation that makes strong or unbearable demands, the agent responds bodily and mentally not in order to effect changes in the world (that would be

a practical response), but with a view to alter the conceptual parameters of the situation, so that the demands raised by the situation are diffused. We could be allowed to think that Sartre views affective phenomena as a repertoire of ‘defence mechanisms’, if that label were not reinterpreted along Freudian lines.<sup>44</sup>

Most importantly, though, we should note that, in the *Sketch*, the description of the relevant phenomena, the examples chosen, as well as the moral drawn from the proposed interpretation, are all in principle available to a third-person standpoint. The first person perspective from which the phenomenological account in *The Imaginary* is articulated is not prominent in the relevant part of the *Sketch*, except for the sections where Sartre attacks some classic theories of emotion for their failure to make sense of the relation between affectivity and the world.<sup>45</sup>

The difference of methodological standpoints marks one important distinction between the accounts of affectivity presented in the two works. Another significant difference is that the negative characterization of affectively relevant situations in the *Sketch* is absent in *The Imaginary*. That absence may not be attributed to an oversight, or to a desire not to go through again an issue already covered in previous works; rather, there is reason to believe that the absence is indicative of a deeper tension. On the one hand, there is no evident link between the intentionalist account of feelings offered in *The Imaginary*, and the evaluative claim that feelings may be directed only towards negative aspects of the world. On the other hand, the intentionalist view appears to entail for Sartre that a situation in which things fail to present affective qualities is a situation of reduced positive significance: the affective qualities of object in a situation ‘... entirely permeate the object; when they disappear... perception remains intact, things are not touched, and yet the world is singularly impoverished’.<sup>46</sup>

### 13.7 Conclusion

I think there is a tension between the accounts of affectivity presented in the *Sketch* and *The Imaginary*. The tension could be reduced through a division of theoretical labour, with the earlier work offering us an account of emotion sketched from a third-person perspective, and the later work providing us with an account of feeling narrated from a first-person standpoint. However, unless those accounts are shown to be compatible, they can hardly be thought to stem from a consistent philosophical outlook.

Perhaps such a coherent and explanatory powerful outlook on affectivity requires the inclusion of the functionalist and intentionalist proposals, in a theory of the human way of being. That is the task that Sartre will eventually try to carry out, a few years later, in his elaborate analysis of *l’homme en situation*.<sup>47</sup> Even though the facts that comprise a situation are not of one’s own making, the significance they carry for each agent is dependent on the ways she projects herself in the world. Accordingly, the emotions will figure as parts of the agent’s response to a situation whose affective qualities are correlated to the values that inform the agent’s project. Affectivity will thus find its

place in an ontology of what is ‘truly concrete’, that is neither the world in itself, not consciousness for itself, but ‘the man within the world’.<sup>48,49</sup>

## Notes

1. ‘... une classe particulière de conduite’, in *The Imaginary: a phenomenological psychology of the imagination* (London: Routledge, 2004)—cited as *IPPI*—a translation by Jonathan Webber of *L’Imaginaire: Psychologie phénoménologique de l’imagination* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940)—cited as *I<sup>c</sup>: IPPI* 199, n. 25/*I<sup>c</sup>*, p. 92, fn. 2. In that note, Sartre refers to the French psychologists Pierre Janet and Henri Wallon, whose theories form the backdrop of his own approach to emotional phenomena; see *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* (London: Routledge Classics, 2004)—cited as *STE*—a translation by Philip Mariet of *Esquisse d’une Théorie des émotions* (Paris: Hermann, 1939)—cited as *ETE: STE*, pp. 17–26/*ETE*, pp. 37–55. Cf. my discussion in *The Philosophy of Sartre* (Durham: Acumen, 2011) section 4.VII, regarding Sartre’s attempt to transcend those theories towards a phenomenologically sound account of emotion.
2. *STE*, p. 41/*ETE*, p. 79.
3. *STE*, p. 34/*ETE*, p. 69.
4. ‘Intentionality: A Fundamental idea in Husserl’s Phenomenology’, *Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology* 1, 2 (1970): 4–5—cited as *IHP*—a translation by Joseph Fell of ‘Une Idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: L’intentionnalité’, in *Situations I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), pp. 31–4—cited as *I. The Transcendence of the Ego* (London: Routledge, 2004)—cited as *TE*—a translation by Andrew Brown of *La Transcendence de l’ego* (Paris: Vrin Librairie Philosophique, 1988)—first published in *Recherches Philosophiques* (1937)—cited as *LTE*. On the question of the exact dating of the composition of the two drafts see Van de Coorebyter’s detailed discussion in ‘Introduction et notes’, in *La transcendance de l’ego et autres textes phénoménologiques*, by Jean-Paul Sartre, introduits et annotés par Vincent de Coorebyter (Paris: Vrin, 2003), pp. 7–81.
5. See Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), chs. 4–5; Catherine Elgin, *Considered Judgment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), ch. 5; Christine Tappolet, *Emotions et Valeurs* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000); Mark Johnston, ‘The Autonomy of Affect’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63 (2001): 181–214; Robert Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jesse Prinz, *Gut Reactions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Linda Zagzebski, *Divine Motivation Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004); Julien Deonna, ‘Emotion, Perception and Perspective’, *Dialectica* 60 (2006): 24–49; Sabine Döring, ‘Seeing What to Do: Affective Perception and Rational Motivation’, *Dialectica* 61 (2007): 363–94.
6. Paul Griffiths acknowledges the Sartrean roots of current work on the strategic role of emotions in ‘Basic Emotions, Complex Emotions, Machiavellian Emotions’, in *Philosophy and the Emotions*, ed. Anthony Hatzimoyisis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 39–68; cf. D. M. Buss, *The Dangerous Passion: Why Jealousy is as Essential as Love and Sex* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); S. Chevalier-Skolnikoff, ‘Facial expression of emotion in nonhuman primates’, in *Darwin and Facial Expression: A Century of Research in Review*,

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7. Important discussions, which address issues already raised in Sartre’s work, involve Rosalind Hursthouse, ‘Arational Actions’, *Journal of Philosophy* 88 (1991): 57–68; Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1999); Aaron Ben-Ze’ev, *The Subtlety of Emotions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000); Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Craig Delancey, *Passionate Engines: What Emotions Reveal about the Mind and Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Sabine Döring, ‘Explaining Action by Emotion’, *Philosophical Quarterly* 53 (2003): 214–30; Bennett Helm, *Emotional Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Christine Tappolet, ‘Emotion, Motivation, and Action: The Case of Fear’, in *Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 325–45.
  8. Jerome Neu, *A Tear is an Intellectual Thing: The Meanings of Emotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); cf. G. Mazis, ‘A New Approach to Sartre’s Theory of Emotions’, *Philosophy Today* 27 (1983), pp. 183–99; D. Weberman, ‘Sartre, Emotions, and Wallowing’, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33, 4 (1996): 393–407.
  9. *STE*, p. 34–61/*ETE*, p. 69–117. Sartre calls this type of transformation ‘magical’ (*STE*, p. 55/*ETE*, p. 107). For a careful analysis of that notion see Sarah Richmond, ‘Magic in Sartre’s Early Philosophy’, in *Reading Sartre*, ed. Jonathan Webber (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 145–61, as well as my attempt to respond to her insightful remarks about Sartre’s views on that topic, in ‘Consistency in the Sartrean analysis of emotion’, *Analysis* 74, 1 (2014): 81–3.
  10. *ETE*, p. 74–8. The distinction is not exhaustive: in *Being and Nothingness* Sartre will discuss a third type, in between the world of action and the world of emotion, that he will call ‘the world of desire’; see *Being and Nothingness* (Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2003)—cited as *BN*—a translation by Hazel Barnes of *L’être et le néant: Essai d’ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943—édition corrigée avec index d’Arlette Elkaim-Sartre, 1976)—cited as *EN: BN*, pp. 412–15/*EN*, pp. 431–43; for a detailed interpretation of the Sartrean approach to the worlds of desire and action, see Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason: Toward and Existentialist theory of History, Vol. 1* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), chs. 1 and 4, and for informative discussions Joseph Catalano, *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre’s Being and Nothingness* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), ch. 6, and Sebastian Gardner, *Sartre’s Being and Nothingness* (London: Continuum, 2009), Part III.

11. A detailed interpretation of that theory is attempted in *The Philosophy of Sartre*, secs. 4.XII–4.XIV. His approach illuminates some puzzling emotional phenomena and helps to resolve problems encountered in emotion research. Cf. my paper on ‘Passive Fear’, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 14 (2015), for the articulation of a Sartrean approach to the phenomenon of fear-involved tonic immobility, that is of major interest to contemporary emotion science. Yet Sartre’s approach has not been free of criticism. Most of those criticisms are directed against the intimate link that Sartre’s account seems to postulate, between emotional states and personal responsibility. Some of the most astute criticisms come from readers otherwise sympathetic to Sartre’s overall philosophical outlook, such as Iris Murdoch, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953); Hazel Barnes, *An Existentialist Ethics* (New York: Knopf, 1967); Robert Solomon, ‘Sartre on Emotions’, *Journal of Philosophy* 72, 17 (1975): 583–4; and Greg McCulloch, *Using Sartre: An Analytical Introduction to Early Sartrean Themes* (London: Routledge, 1994).
12. ‘L’émotion est une certaine manière d’appréhender le monde’ (*STE*, p. 35/*ETE*, p. 71). Independently of exegetical issues in Sartrean scholarship, this claim can be illuminated from two perspectives. One perspective would enable us to see what is distinctive of emotion as opposed to other manners of apprehension, while the other perspective would highlight the fact that emotion is an apprehension as opposed to other kinds of mental activity; both perspectives may also fuse so as to throw light on the nature of the objects apprehended by emotion.
13. ‘le sentiment se donne donc comme une espèce de connaissance’ (*IPPI*, p. 69/*I<sup>re</sup>*, p. 94). I follow Jonathan Webber in his translation of the French *sentiment* as ‘feeling’, even though that word lacks the connotations of the English word ‘sentiment’, thus making the reader unaware of the underlying connections between the French school of psychology (to which Sartre often refers in the course of his analysis), and the tradition of sentimentalism in English-language philosophy—see for instance, a fine application of insights from both traditions in *La psychologie des sentiments*, by Theodule Ribot (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1896).
14. Note that Sartre’s own term for the view he criticizes is ‘subjectivism’. Given, though, the multiple philosophical connotations of that term and of its contrary, ‘objectivism’, I think it is more accurate—and closer the spirit of the claim that feeling is a kind of ‘*connaissance*’—to call that view ‘cognitivist’. The cognitivist view I attribute to Sartre should not be confused with a realist understanding of the values featuring in the intentional content of emotional feeling. A realist conception of evaluative qualities is apparent in Sartre’s early paper on ‘Intentionality’—see, e.g. ‘To hate another person is one more way of bursting towards him; it is to find oneself suddenly faced with a stranger whose objective “hateful” quality one experiences’, and more explicitly: ‘Fearsomeness is a property of this Japanese mask, an inexhaustible, irreducible property that constitutes its very nature—not the sum of our subjective reactions to a piece of carved wood’ (*IHP*, p. 4–5/*I*, pp. 32–3). To be sure, in that paper, Sartre aims at a phenomenologically accurate narration of the relevant experiences, rather than an ontological explanation of the arising of the qualitative aspects of things in themselves; cf. my *The Philosophy of Sartre*, sec. 2.IV for further discussion. In general, it is worth preserving the distinctions between the epistemic and the metaphysical level of analysis, on pain of bypassing important alternatives that purport to articulate a way of justifying evaluative judgements without succumbing to extravagant ontological claims about the referents of the concepts involved. The best context of debating this issue

is contemporary meta-ethics, where the relation between emotional feeling and evaluative qualities has been explored. For related discussion see my paper ‘Ontology and Axiology’, *Philosophy* 72, 280 (1997): 293–6, and Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson, ‘Sentiment and Value’, *Ethics* 110 (2000): 722–48. For reasons that will gradually unfold, another label for Sartre’s position could be ‘intentionalism’, i.e., the view that feelings are essentially intentional, in the sense that they are necessarily directed at some object; cf. Alex Byrne, ‘Intentionalism Defended’, *Philosophical Review* (2002): 199–240, for background discussion. However, intentionalism itself is subject to alternative interpretations, depending on the role attributed to intentional *content* in accounting for the totality of the intentional *experience*. It is not clear, to me at least, that Sartre would be happy to treat the content intended as the exclusive source of the main characteristics of the intentional event; see *The Philosophy of Sartre*, ch. 5 for further analysis.

15. *IPPI*, pp. 68–70/*I<sup>e</sup>*, pp. 92–5.
16. *IPPI*, p. 68/*I<sup>e</sup>*, p. 93.
17. *IPPI*, p. 68/*I<sup>e</sup>*, p. 93.
18. For an original attempt to retain a subjectivist account of feeling with a representationalist account of intentionality see Jesse Prinz, ‘Emotion, Psychosemantics, and Embodied Appraisals’, in *Philosophy and the Emotions*, ed. Anthony Hatzimoysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 69–96; for background discussion see J. C. Spisman, and R. S. Lazarus, A. M. Mordkoff, and L. A. Davison, ‘The experimental reduction of stress based on ego-defense theory’, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 68 (1964): 367–80; K.R. Scherer, ‘On the Nature and Function of Emotion: A Component Process Approach’, in *Approaches to Emotion*, ed. K. R. Scherer and P. Ekman (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1984), pp. 293–318; and R. S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
19. ‘There are no feelings without an ensemble of corporeal phenomena’ (*IPPI*, p. 137). Emotional experience, according to Sartre, cannot be dissociated from the body on pain of ‘falsity’ of the professed emotion: ‘the physiological phenomena... represent the seriousness of the emotion, they are the phenomena of belief’ (*STE*, p. 50/*ETE*, p. 96—translation altered).
20. Cf. *STE*, pp. 15–17/*ETE*, pp. 33–7.
21. See, for instance, Peter Carruthers, *Phenomenal Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Craig DeLancey, *Passionate Engines: What Emotions Reveal about the Mind and Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
22. Cf. Jesse Prinz, *Gut reactions: a perceptual theory of emotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), ch. 2.
23. On Sartre’s phenomenological view of intentionality, see my analysis in *The Philosophy of Sartre*, secs. 2.III and 5IV. Alternative accounts of the notion of intentionality involved in emotional experience are offered by Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and the Will* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976); Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotions* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1987); Robert Gordon, *The Structure of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Peter Goldie, *The Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robert Roberts, *Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2003); Robert Solomon, ‘Emotions, Thoughts and Feelings: What is a “Cognitive Theory” of the Emotions and Does It Neglect Affectivity?’, in *Philosophy and the Emotions*, ed. Anthony Hatzimoysis

- (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1–18; and F. Teroni, ‘Emotions and Formal Objects’, *Dialectica* 61, 3 (2007): 395–415.
24. *IPPI*, p. 68/*I<sup>r</sup>*, p. 93.
  25. *IPPI*, p. 68/*I<sup>r</sup>*, p. 93.
  26. *STE*, pp. 3–15/*ETE*, pp. 7–30; cf. *IHP*, p. 4/*I*, pp. 32–3; *TE*, pp. 2–20/*LTE*, pp. 13–44; *The Imagination* (London: Routledge, 2012)—cited as *TI*—a translation by Kenneth Williford and David Rudrauf of *L’Imagination* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1936)—cited as *I<sup>m</sup>*; *TI* ch. IV/*I<sup>m</sup>* ch. 4.
  27. Sartre’s reception and eventual transformation of Husserl’s phenomenological project is exhaustively explored by Vincent de Coorebyter, *Sartre face à la phénoménologie* (Brussels: Ousia, 2000), pp. 50–83, 276–9, 393–9; cf. Stephen Priest, *The Subject in Question* (London: Routledge, 2000) for a concise and illuminating discussion.
  28. *TE*, p. 1/*LTE*, p. 13.
  29. *IPP*, p. I 69/*I<sup>r</sup>*, p. 93.
  30. Cf. *TE*, pp. 9–16/*LTE*, pp. 26–37; cf. *BN*, p. 9/*EN*, p. 18. We may express the distinction by stating that positionally we are aware of objects, and that non-positionally we are aware of our experience of those objects; cf. Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008). For the bearing of that distinction on the contemporary discussion about the relation between self-consciousness and self-knowledge, see my paper ‘A Sartrean Critique of Introspection’, in *Reading Sartre*, ed. Jonathan Webber (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 90–9.
  31. *TE*, p. 21–6/*LTE*, pp. 45–51.
  32. *TE*, pp. 22–3.
  33. *TE*, pp. 22–4/*LTE*, pp. 46–9.
  34. *IPPI*, pp. 68–9/*I<sup>r</sup>*, p. 93.
  35. *IPPI*, p. 69/*I<sup>r</sup>*, p. 94; cf. Sartre’s characterization of affective consciousnesses as ways of ‘discovering the world’ in what is probably his very first discussion of that issue: ‘haine, amour, crainte, sympathie... elles ne sont que des manières de découvrir le monde’ (*IHP*, p. 5/*I*, p. 34).
  36. *IHP*, p. 4/*I*, pp. 32–3; *TE*, pp. 2–16/*LTE*, pp. 14–37; *TI*, pp. 125–42/*I<sup>m</sup>*, pp. 139–60.
  37. *IPPI*, p. 69/*I<sup>r</sup>*, p. 93. The main philosophical target here is, of course, William James; cf. *ETE*, pp. 33–43, and my application of the Sartrean critique on neo-Jamesian variations of the peripheric theory, in *The Philosophy of Sartre* secs. 4.V–4.VI.
  38. See the seminal discussions by Elizabeth Anscombe, *Intention* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 70–3; Donald Davidson, ‘Intending’, in *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 83–102; Graham Oddie, *Value, Reality and Desire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005) sec. 3.9.
  39. Robert Solomon, *The Passions* (New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1976); William Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
  40. Patricia Greenspan, *Emotions and Reasons* (London: Routledge, 1988); for criticisms of that approach see Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson, ‘The Significance of Recalcitrant Emotion’, in *Philosophy and the Emotions*, ed. Anthony Hatzimoysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 127–46, and Michael Brady, *Emotional Insight* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), sec. 1.4.3.



41. *IPPI*, p. 69/*I<sup>c</sup>*, p. 93.
42. *IPPI*, p. 69/*I<sup>c</sup>*, p. 94.
43. 'Ce monde est *difficile*.' (*ETE*, p. 78.)
44. See ch. 4 of *The Philosophy of Sartre* for the critique of Freudianism in the *Sketch*.
45. *STE*, pp. 15–27/*ETE*, pp. 33–67.
46. *IPPI*, p. 69/*I<sup>c</sup>*, p. 94.
47. *EN*, pp. 95–7, 333–6, 489–90.
48. *EN*, pp. 37–8.
49. I am indebted to Alix Cohen, Robert Stern, and two anonymous referees for comments on an earlier draft.

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