

# Pure Intentionalism About Moods and Emotions\*

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## Abstract

Moods and emotions are sometimes thought to be counterexamples to *intentionalism*, the view that a mental state's phenomenal features are exhausted by its representational features. The problem is that moods and emotions are accompanied by phenomenal experiences that do not seem to be adequately accounted for by any of their plausibly represented contents. This paper develops and defends an intentionalist view of the phenomenal character of moods and emotions on which (1) directed moods and emotions represent intentional objects as having *sui generis* affective properties, which happen to be uninstantiated, and (2) at least some moods represent affective properties not bound to any objects.

## 1 Introduction

According to intentionalism, a mental state's phenomenal features are determined by its representational features. All there is to the phenomenal experience of seeing blue is the visual representation of blueness. An experience of blueness does not involve "raw feels" or blue qualia; its phenomenal nature is exhausted by the represented blueness.

Moods and emotions throw a wrench in the intentionalist project. The problem is that they really seem like "raw feels" or mere qualia. Even though they are sometimes *directed* at particular objects, their phenomenal character does not seem to be adequately captured by any of the features they seem to represent their objects as having. Moods, such as sadness, elation, and irritation, pose an even greater problem; they seem to be entirely *undirected*, lacking intentional objects entirely. They pervade our experience without attaching to any particular objects or other

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targets.

This paper develops and defends an intentionalist theory of the phenomenal character of moods and emotions. On the view I will defend, (1) emotions and some moods represent intentional objects as having *sui generis* affective properties that happen to be uninstantiated, and (2) like concepts, but unlike most perceptual representations, affective representations can be tokened without binding to any object representations, yielding undirected moods.

The paper proceeds as follows: §2 clarifies some key notions, §3 provides an intentionalist account of emotions, and §4 provides an intentionalist account of directed and undirected moods.

## 2 Moods, emotions, and intentionalism

*Emotions* are affective states that seem to be directed at something. Examples include fear of a dog, joy about an upcoming event, and guilt about a wrong one has committed. Emotions tend to be fairly short-lived and are usually caused by a specific stimulus, which may or may not be what they are directed at. *Moods* are affective states that do not seem to be directed at anything. Examples include happiness, sadness, and anxiety. Moods tend to be longer-lasting than emotions, and are usually not associated with a specific stimulus.<sup>1</sup> For most moods, there is a corresponding phenomenally similar emotion. For example, an anxious mood is phenomenally similar to anxiety about something, say an upcoming event.<sup>2</sup>

*Intentionalism* is the view that a mental state's phenomenal features are reducible to, supervenient on, type or token identical to, or determined by its representational features. Loosely, the idea is that phenomenal consciousness is nothing over and above mental representation.

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- 1 What distinguishes moods from emotions is a matter of some controversy. The various criteria proposed for distinguishing between them (their duration, whether they exhibit directedness, and whether they are connected to a specific stimulus) can come apart (see Kind, this volume). For most purposes, it might be best to assume that moods and emotions are natural kinds and to fix reference on them partly ostensively by use of examples or typical features. Since my goal is to provide an intentionalist account of all affective states, everything I say should apply equally well on different ways of distinguishing between moods and emotions.
  - 2 Moods and emotions are arguably complex states involving all or many of bodily, behavioral, neural, cognitive, normative, and phenomenal components. However, since intentionalism is a theory of phenomenal character, it is the phenomenal component that primarily concerns it. Thus, the intentionalist's explanandum is the phenomenal character of moods and emotions, not moods and emotions in their entirety, and intentionalism about moods and emotions is a view specifically about the phenomenal character of moods and emotions.

Intentionalist views can be categorized based on purity. *Pure intentionalism* is the view that phenomenal character is reducible to, supervenient on, type or token identical to, or determined by representational content *alone* (Mendelovici, 2010, Ch. 7). *Impure intentionalism* is the view that phenomenal character is reducible to, supervenient on, type or token identical to, or determined by representational content *together with some other features*. These other features are usually functional roles (Tye, 2000) or perceptual or other modalities (Lycan, 1996; Crane, 2003; Chalmers, 2004).

In what follows, I defend a type identity version of intentionalism, on which phenomenal features are literally identical to certain representational features.<sup>3</sup> The identity version of intentionalism arguably faces the greatest challenges in accounting for moods and emotions. It must maintain that the phenomenal characters of moods and emotions are identical to, rather than merely supervenient on or determined by, their representational contents. If this version of intentionalism can offer a plausible account of emotion, then other, weaker, versions should also be defensible on similar grounds. For brevity, “intentionalism” will be taken to refer to the type identity version of intentionalism.<sup>4</sup> Since the view I will defend does not appeal to non-representational features, it is a type of pure intentionalism about emotions, which makes it compatible with both pure and impure intentionalism about phenomenal states in general.

Intentionalism is at least initially plausible for experiences such as color experiences, shape

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<sup>3</sup> This version of intentionalism is favored by many intentionalists, e.g. Gilbert Harman (1990), Fred Dretske (1995), Michael Tye (1995, 2000, 2009), Alex Byrne (2001b), and Frank Jackson (2004, 2005). It is in a good position to provide a satisfying theory of consciousness, since it claims that phenomenal features of mental states are literally identical to their representational features, rather than merely supervenient on them or in some way determined by them that might leave open the possibility that phenomenal features are something over and above representational features.

Introspection also provides some initial support for an identity version of intentionalism. For many phenomenal characters, there is a matching represented property, and the two do not appear to be distinct. For example, there is something it is like to have a visual experience of the blackness of the letters on this page. This phenomenal character has a matching represented property, *blackness*. But there do not seem to be two blackness-related mental features, a phenomenal blackness and a represented blackness. Introspectively there appears to be only one blackness, which may be correctly described as both a represented property of the letters, and a phenomenal character. The same holds for other aspects of experience. Introspection provides evidence for only one mental feature, and this provides some support for the identity version of intentionalism.

<sup>4</sup> The identity version of intentionalism is compatible with there being representational features that are not identical with phenomenal features, but if we deny this then the view also counts as a version of the *phenomenal intentionality theory*, the view that a state’s intentional features are type or token identical, reducible to, supervenient on, or determined by its phenomenal character (see e.g. Horgan and Tienson, 2002). Sometimes intentionalists endorse the further claim that the intentional is explanatorily or ontologically prior to the phenomenal, in which case their version of intentionalism would not be compatible with the phenomenal intentionality theory.

experiences, and sound experiences. In the case of shape, intentionalism claims that the phenomenal character of a shape experience is exhausted by the representation of shape properties. This is somewhat plausible at least largely because there are suitable candidate represented properties that adequately “match” shape experiences’ phenomenal characters. For example, the represented property *circle* is similar enough to the phenomenal character of an experience of a circle to be plausibly identified with it. As this example illustrates, intentionalism about an experience is at least initially plausible when there is a suitable candidate represented content that adequately “matches” the experience’s phenomenal character. When there is no suitable candidate, intentionalism is significantly less plausible.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of moods and emotions, however, it seems that there are no suitable candidate represented contents to “match” the states’ distinctive phenomenal characters. First, it is not even clear what moods and emotions represent, or if they represent anything at all. Second, it is not at all clear that any of their candidate representational contents adequately match their distinctive phenomenal characters. For example, no candidate representational content plausibly attributed to joy seems to adequately match its phenomenal character.

The special challenge for intentionalism posed by emotions is that of accounting for the *distinctive* phenomenal character of moods and emotions. On many views, moods and emotion involve visual, auditory, cognitive, or other states that might contribute to their overall phenomenal character. If such views are correct, then the intentionalist must account for all these phenomenal characters in order to provide a complete account of the phenomenal character of moods and emotions. However, visual, auditory, cognitive, and other such phenomenal characters don’t pose a *special* challenge for intentionalism about emotions. Presumably the intentionalist must already account for the phenomenal character of these experiences. Moods and emotions pose a *special* problem for intentionalism because they seem to have phenomenal characters that outrun visual, auditory, etc. phenomenal characters. These are the distinctive phenomenal characters of anger, fear, sadness, disgust, etc. One way to get a grip on these phenomenal characters is to consider the case of two different emotions directed at the same intentional objects, for example, excitement and anxiety directed at the same upcoming event represented in

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<sup>5</sup> This is seen most clearly in the case of the identity version of intentionalism. This version of the view is an identity claim, and identity claims seem more plausible when the items that are to be identified appear similar. Phenomenal circularity and represented circularity seem similar, so it is at least somewhat plausible that they are in fact one and the same thing.

thought. The two states' different phenomenal characters are the distinctive phenomenal characters of excitement, on the one hand, and anxiety, on the other. In what follows, I will be concerned with offering an account of the *distinctive* phenomenal characters of moods and emotions.

There have been few explicit endorsements of intentionalism about moods and emotions.<sup>6</sup> Peter Goldie (2000, 2002) has a view of moods and emotions that arguably anticipates intentionalism about emotions. On his view, moods and emotions consist in both an awareness of bodily states and a “feeling toward” particular objects. Both of these components account for the phenomenal character of emotions. “Feelings toward” are representational states that are automatically imbued with phenomenal character, much as the intentionalist would like. For Goldie, moods differ from emotions in that they are directed towards general or non-specific objects.

Michael Tye (2008) specifically offers an intentionalist account of emotions. On his view, the phenomenal character of emotions is determined by their representation of objects as (1) having evaluative features, such as threateningness, and (2) causing or accompanying certain physiological or bodily disturbances. Tye (1995) offers an intentionalist view of moods on which their phenomenal character is accounted for by the representation of departures from the “range of physical states constituting functional equilibrium” (p. 129). William Seager (2002) offers a similar account of emotions on which emotions' phenomenal characters are determined by the representation of evaluative properties and bodily states. Seager suggests that moods are “reflections of the base or average” evaluative features (p. 678).

As we will see, these views offer useful insights. However, I will argue that they do not get things quite right. Instead, I will suggest that the distinctive phenomenal character of moods and emotions is best explained by the representation of *sui generis* affective properties. §3 develops the view for emotions, while §4 develops the view in the case of moods.

### **3 Emotions**

Emotions are affective states that seem to be directed at objects. An intentionalist account of the

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<sup>6</sup> This is somewhat surprising given that many views of emotion involve representational states (see Charland (1995), who proposes a representational framework for situating these theories).

phenomenal character of emotions must specify which of the contents of emotions account for their distinctive phenomenal characters. After canvassing various options, this section suggests that the representational contents that account for directed emotions' distinctive phenomenal characters are *sui generis* properties.

### 3.1 Bodily states

On many views of emotions, emotions involve the awareness or perception of bodily states. On the James-Lange theory, for instance, emotions involve the awareness of bodily states such as one's heart racing or one's blood pressure rising (James, 1884; Prinz, 2004, 2005, 2006). The intentionalist might suggest that emotions' representation of bodily states accounts for their distinctive phenomenal characters; call this the *bodily states view*.

The James-Lange view is currently out of fashion, and the reasons for this are instructive for assessing the bodily states view. A common objection is that the same physiological processes, and presumably the awareness of the same physiological processes, is associated with different emotions (Cannon, 1929). For example, physiological arousal caused by an injection of epinephrine can be associated with both anger and euphoria (Schacter and Singer, 1962). While there may in fact be subtle differences in the physiological reactions associated with these emotions (LeDoux, 1996), it seems doubtful that awareness of these subtly different physiological reactions is sufficient to account for their different phenomenal characters as the bodily states view would require.

The bodily states view also faces a challenge in accounting for the experienced directedness of directed emotions. Fear of a dog seems to be in some way directed at *the dog*, and this directedness is reflected in emotion's distinctive phenomenology. While the bodily states view allows that emotions exhibit directedness towards bodily states, this is not the type of experienced directedness we're after. We're after directedness towards dogs and other extra-bodily entities.

One way to see the worry is to consider the following phenomenal contrast case: Compare (1) visually experiencing a dog and a raccoon while fearing the dog, and (2) visually experiencing a dog and a raccoon while fearing the raccoon. Suppose the visual experience, the level of fear, and the physiological response to the fearful object are the same in both cases. It is still plausible that there is a phenomenal difference between (1) and (2). But the bodily states view treats the two

cases alike. They both involve the same visual experience and the same physiological response that we are presumably aware of.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the representation of bodily states does not fully account for the phenomenal character of emotions.

### 3.2 Intentional objects

Emotions are usually directed at various objects. It is quite plausible that emotions involve the representation of these objects, and so we might call them *intentional objects*. Perhaps the phenomenal character of emotions has to do with the representation of intentional objects; call this the *intentional objects view*.

Emotions can be directed towards a diverse range of intentional objects belonging to a diverse range of ontological categories, such as concrete particulars (fear of a dog), events (anxiety about an upcoming performance), propositions (happiness that one has achieved a goal), regions of space-time (fear of the dark alley at night), and ourselves (embarrassment at oneself). An emotion's intentional object need not be the object that caused it (for example, workplace stress can cause one to become irritated at an innocent friend). These intentional objects need not even exist (one can be afraid of monsters under the bed). Intentional objects can be represented in various modalities. For example, fear can be directed at a dog represented in various perceptual modalities, or in imagination or thought.<sup>8</sup>

Although it is quite plausible that emotions represent intentional objects, this doesn't yet explain emotions' *distinctive* phenomenal characters. A perceptual experience of a dog and a fear of a dog have the same intentional object represented in the same modality (e.g. vision), but the emotion has a distinctive phenomenal character that the perceptual experience lacks. Merely representing an intentional object in perception, thought, or imagination does not suffice to

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<sup>7</sup> One might suggest that the phenomenal difference between the two cases is a difference in attention, detail in the representation of the raccoon versus the dog, or some such. While there probably are such accompanying differences, it is implausible that they exhaust the phenomenal difference between the two cases. It seems introspectively obvious that experienced fear in some sense attaches to the objects that it is directed towards.

<sup>8</sup> Intentional objects might be *singular contents*, contents involving individual entities as direct constituents, or they might be property clusters or some such. There is much debate surrounding how perception and thought represent intentional contents, but we need not take a stand on it. Indeed, since it seems that the objects of emotion are generally provided by other types of mental states, such as perceptual states and thoughts, one might look to considerations concerning those types of states to settle these questions. Of course, which of these views about intentional objects is correct will affect what phenomenal characters intentional objects can contribute to an experience. However, the intentional objects view fails on all these views, or so I will argue.

capture emotions' distinctive phenomenal characters.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.3 Affective properties

Perhaps the intentionalist can find the contents that determine emotion's distinctive phenomenal character not in the generic representation of emotions' intentional objects, but rather in some special *affective* properties they represent their intentional objects as having; call this the *affective properties view*. It does seem that emotions somehow *qualify* their intentional objects, or present them in certain *ways*. This qualification goes beyond the ways non-emotional perception, imagination, and thought qualify these same intentional objects. For example, when we fear a dog, we not only experience the dog as brown, moving, barking, etc., but we also experience the dog as *scary*. When we are frustrated at a situation, we experience the situation as *frustrating*. When we experience joy at the thought of an upcoming event, the event itself is experienced as *joyous*. But what do these properties of being scary, frustrating, and joyous amount to?

#### 3.3.1 Ordinary physical properties

One option is that affective properties are just ordinary physical properties, like those of having a certain mass or being a table. Presumably, these would be subject-independent physical properties that are at least sometimes had by the intentional objects of fear, frustration, joy, etc., such as dangerousness or threateningness. Call this the *ordinary properties view*.<sup>10</sup>

The problem with the proposal is that it is not at all clear which ordinary physical property scary dogs and scary economies can be said to have in common that can be identified with scariness. The physical properties that tend to elicit emotions form a complex and disjunctive set. These complex and disjunctive properties are foreign to the phenomenology of fear, which makes them poor candidates for the properties fear represents. Further, and perhaps more obviously, they are poor candidates for the contents of fear that determine its phenomenal character. Something similar can be said about directed elation, anxiety, and other emotions.

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<sup>9</sup> Recall that one reason to think that there are such distinctive phenomenal characters that outrun the phenomenal character of the ordinary representation of intentional objects is that phenomenally different emotions can be directed towards the same intentional objects. The same perceptual experience of the same dog barking in the same way can be provide the object of fear, the object of joy, or the object of irritation.

<sup>10</sup> The ordinary properties view encompasses views on which emotions represent evaluative properties and evaluative properties are understood as ordinary properties (e.g. as in Tye (2008)).



There are two standard moves that can be made to defend the claim that experiences represent properties that appear foreign from a phenomenological perspective: First, one might claim that the apparently foreign properties are represented under a particular (less foreign) mode of presentation.<sup>11</sup>

There are several problems with this strategy. First, we are now owed an account of the relevant modes of presentation. Modes of presentations are generally thought to be types of contents. For example, the distinct modes of presentation of our concepts morning star and evening star correspond to their involving distinct contents, namely last heavenly body to disappear in the morning sky and first heavenly body to appear in the night sky, respectively. But what contents play the role of modes of presentation for affective properties? The problem is that the intentionalist must find contents that plausibly account for emotions' phenomenal characters, which is just the challenge originally facing the intentionalist. By saying that emotions represent ordinary properties under a special mode of presentation we haven't made much progress. Note also that if this strategy can be made to work, then modes of presentation would be doing all the work in accounting for the phenomenal character of emotions, since *they* are what match the phenomenologically familiar intentional and phenomenal aspects of emotion. The representation of the affective properties themselves would be doing no work in accounting for the distinctive phenomenal characters of emotion.

Perhaps there are non-representational ways of understanding modes of presentation, for example as functional or other features of the states that do the representing. On one way of understanding this strategy, these non-representational modes of presentation do all the work in accounting for the phenomenal character of emotion. Representational content drops out of the picture. But this would no longer count as a version of intentionalism.

If, instead, we say that the non-representational modes of presentation *together* with

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<sup>11</sup> Although Goldie does not seem to have the present worry in mind, his view appeals to something much like modes of presentation. Goldie's "feelings toward" represent properties objects at least sometimes have, such as dangerousness and threateningness. But Goldie claims that the contents of emotions differ from the contents of thoughts attributing the same properties to the same objects. "The difference between thinking of *X* as *Y* without feeling and thinking of *X* as *Y* with feeling . . . [at least partly] lies *in* the content . . ." (Goldie, 2000, p. 60, italics original) These two contents, according to Goldie, have the same referent (Goldie, 2002), but they present their referents in a different way. One way of understanding this view is as claiming that emotions represent ordinary properties under special modes of presentation. An alternative way of understanding this is as claiming that emotions have something like descriptive contents that pick out ordinary properties.

representational contents do the work, then we have a version of impure intentionalism, since representational and non-representational factors together fix phenomenal character. The problem with this view is that much more will have to be said about how these modes of presentation transform the phenomenologically foreign representational contents of emotions into their phenomenologically familiar phenomenal characters. Whereas it's somewhat plausible that the content *circle* yields the phenomenal character associated with seeing circles, it's not at all clear how the phenomenologically foreign contents of emotion representations together with a special impure element yield the distinctive phenomenal character of emotions.<sup>12</sup>

The second strategy in defense of phenomenologically foreign content attributions is to claim that the relevant contents are represented *nonconceptually*. This strategy has been utilized by Tye (2000) to argue that color experience represents phenomenologically foreign surface reflectance properties and that pains represent phenomenologically foreign bodily damage, and is utilized by Tye (2008) again to argue for similar claims in the case of emotion. The basic idea is that nonconceptual representation allows us to represent contents that we do not have concepts for. Although Tye aims to remain somewhat neutral on how to understand the notion of nonconceptual content, he does suggest the following account: a state has *nonconceptual content* just in case its subject can entertain its content without possessing the concepts involved in specifying that content, where one *has a concept of P* when, perhaps among other things, one is able to identify instances of *P* on multiple occasions (Tye, 2000, pp. 62-3). For example, my perceptual representation of a particular shade of blue, blue421, has nonconceptual content because if I were to see blue421 again, I would not recognize it as the same shade of blue.

This appeal to nonconceptual content is unconvincing. It's unclear how representing a property in a way that doesn't allow me to reidentify it on multiple occasions entirely occludes its representational content from me, making it phenomenologically foreign. It's also unclear how, on a view like Tye's, the phenomenologically familiar phenomenal characters of emotions arise from the occluded representation of phenomenologically foreign properties. The problem here is the same as the problem facing the modes of presentation theorist who maintains that a combination of phenomenologically foreign content and non-representational modes of presentation accounts for the distinctive phenomenal character of emotions: It's unclear just how

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<sup>12</sup> The view that modes of presentation are qualia or "raw feels" is not open to the intentionalist for the additional reason that these are precisely the kinds of entities she seeks to avoid positing.

this proposal can be made to work.

Since being nonconceptual is arguably a non-representational feature of mental states,<sup>13</sup> Tye's view is a version of impure intentionalism. The problem is that it is hard to see how such impure elements transform the phenomenologically foreign representation of surface reflectance properties, bodily damage, and ordinary properties like dangerousness into the phenomenologically familiar phenomenal experience of colors, pain, and fear, respectively. The intentionalist focuses her efforts on showing that representational content is relevant to phenomenal character, but if she is to appeal to impure factors, she must motivate the relevance of those factors as well. In cases where the representational contents attributed to a state are phenomenologically foreign, she must make plausible the claim that impure factors can turn the phenomenologically foreign contents into phenomenologically familiar phenomenal characters. It's difficult to see how this can be motivated in the case of Tye's nonconceptual contents, and one might worry that it is likely to be similarly difficult to motivate other attempts to make impure elements do similar work.

The source of the problem with identifying the phenomenal character of emotions with phenomenologically foreign contents is, very simply, that the two seem distinct. Absent a plausible story involving impure elements, this results in an empirically inadequate account of emotion's phenomenal character. Of course, one might bite the bullet and maintain that despite appearances, emotion's phenomenal character is identical to phenomenologically foreign contents. The ordinary properties view might be supported by theoretical considerations, such as considerations arising from one's theory of mental representation. For example, *tracking theories of mental representation*, on which mental representation is a species of causal or other tracking relation (Stampe, 1977; Dretske, 1981, 1995; Millikan, 1984; Fodor, 1987), might predict that emotions represent ordinary physical properties, and this might motivate the ordinary properties view. However, this does nothing to address the apparent mismatch between ordinary properties and the phenomenal character of emotions. The ordinary properties view is still empirically inadequate, so we will resume our search for the contents of emotions that determine their phenomenal character.

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<sup>13</sup> Tye seems to have a state view of the conceptual/nonconceptual distinction, on which the difference between conceptual and nonconceptual contents has to do with features of the states doing the representing, rather than the contents of those states (though see Byrne (2001) for discussion). See Heck (2000) for the distinction between content and state views of the conceptual/nonconceptual distinction.

### 3.3.2 Response-dependent properties

Instead of identifying affective properties with ordinary physical properties, we might opt for a response-dependent account on which emotions represent objects as having some effect on us. For example, affective properties might be dispositions of objects to cause certain mental, behavioral, or other effects in us, or the manifestation of such dispositions.<sup>14</sup>

This account also seems phenomenologically inaccurate: when we experience a dog as scary, our fear does not seem to represent the dog as being disposed to cause certain states, reactions, or behaviors in us. Rather, our experience of the dog seems to qualify *the dog itself* independently of our relationship to it. The dog itself seems scary independent of any relation to us. Further, and perhaps more obviously, the phenomenal character of fear does not seem to be adequately captured by these fairly sophisticated dispositional contents.<sup>15</sup>

To be clear, I am not claiming that a response-dependent account of the content of emotion-related *concepts* is implausible. Emotion-related concepts are concepts such as the concept SCARY that is involved in the thought expressed by “*The Exorcist* is scary.” Perhaps the concept SCARY has as its content a dispositional property, such as that of being disposed to cause experiences of fear in certain subjects. My claim, however, is that a response-dependent account of the content of *emotions* is not plausible.

### 3.3.3 Edenic properties

So far, we have examined and dismissed views on which the properties represented by emotions are everyday physical or dispositional properties on the grounds that such views are phenomenologically inadequate. My suggestion, instead, is that affective properties are *sui generis*, perhaps primitive or basic (scariness, annoyingness, joyfulness, and so on). By describing affective properties as “*sui generis*,” I mean that, as a group, they are not reducible to other types of properties.<sup>16</sup> This view takes emotions at face value and attributes to them

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<sup>14</sup> One of Tye’s (2008) components of the contents of emotion is response-dependent: emotions represent their intentional object as causing or accompanying a certain physiological or bodily disturbance.

<sup>15</sup> As in the case of the previous proposal on which affective properties are ordinary physical properties, one might appeal to modes of presentation or nonconceptual content. But these strategies are unsatisfactory for the same reasons as those mentioned above.

<sup>16</sup> It is an open question whether some affective properties reduce to other affective properties. It is also an open question whether these *sui generis* properties can be organized in a representational space and how many dimensions such a space would have.

representational contents that exactly fit the intentional/phenomenal bill. Affective properties are exactly those familiar qualities we experience when we are angry, sad, etc. They are akin to David Chalmers' (2006) Edenic color, shape, and sound properties. Chalmers argues that the phenomenal content of experience—a type of content that is intimately related to phenomenal character—involves the properties our experiences, taken at face value, present us with, e.g. primitive redness, primitive squareness, primitive loudness. My suggestion is that the kind of contents that can be identified with the phenomenal character of emotions are analogous *Edenic affective properties*. Call this the *Edenic view*.<sup>17</sup>

Objects need not actually have the affective properties our emotions represent them as having. On Chalmers' view, objects do not really have Edenic colors. Instead, they have properties that reliably cause us to have color experiences. In the case of emotions, it is quite implausible that objects ever actually have Edenic affective properties. Though Edenic affective properties are phenomenologically familiar, they are foreign to our scientific understanding of the world and we have no emotion-independent evidence for their instantiation. The most plausible view here is that they are never actually instantiated. Instead, some kind of *projectivism* might be true of our emotion experiences. On one version of projectivism, which Sydney Shoemaker (1990) calls *literal projectivism*, we mistakenly attribute properties of ourselves or our mental states to represented objects. On a different version, which Shoemaker calls *figurative projectivism*, we mistakenly attribute to objects properties that they don't really have, but that we only represent them as having as a result of our own interests, mental features, or constitution. On literal projectivism, the properties in question are instantiated, although not where we represent them to be instantiated, while on figurative projectivism, the properties in question need not be instantiated at all. One might argue that there is no good reason to attribute *sui generis* affective properties to ourselves, and so figurative projectivism is preferable. In any case, the intentionalist should opt for figurative projectivism, since the affective properties the literal projectivist posits look a lot like qualia and it is hard to see how we might offer an intentionalist-compatible account of them.

To put it somewhat metaphorically, we can think of represented affective properties as qualifying our internal world in ways that do not veridically reflect external reality, but that are

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<sup>17</sup> Views on which emotions represent evaluative properties that are not reducible to ordinary physical properties or other kinds of properties count as versions of the Edenic view.

only relevant to us, much as when we highlight important lines of text in documents based on our own needs and interests. When we highlight lines of text, the highlighting signifies importance, but the highlighted lines need not have any objective property of importance. Similarly, dogs, governments, landscapes, and the like are “highlighted” as scary, irritating, or euphoric, but they need not actually have the property we highlight them with. We can think of different types of emotions as analogous to different highlighter colors. Although the highlighted objects have significance for us and are important for us to keep track of, the world itself need not contain these highlights. As long as our highlighting objects (e.g. as scary) allows us to react appropriately to them (e.g. with avoidance), it does not matter if they do not actually have this property, but instead only have other properties (such being disposed to harm us).

The case of emotions is one of *reliable misrepresentation*: emotions misrepresent, but they misrepresent in the same way all or most of the time. This misrepresentation is *reliable* because the same emotions are caused by the same kinds of environmental features on different occasions. These environmental features are something like the ordinary physical properties discussed in §3.3.1. In other words, while emotions might represent uninstantiated Edenic affective properties, they quite plausibly *track* complex and disjunctive actually instantiated properties that are important for survival and flourishing. These tracking relations help account for why emotions are so useful despite misrepresenting.<sup>18</sup> As long as our mental highlighting *corresponds* to features of the environment that are important for our survival and flourishing, we can use our highlighting to appropriately guide our behaviors. For example, while our emotions might misrepresent a dog as scary, they might also track certain properties the dog actually has, such as the property of being likely to cause harm. As long as we react to scary things in the way that it is appropriate to react to things that are likely to cause harm, our misrepresentation can be just as useful as a veridical representation of the dog as likely to cause harm. Indeed, perhaps it is more efficient for us to misrepresent the dog as having the simpler property of scariness rather than to veridically represent it as having the more complex property of being likely to cause harm.

The main advantage of the Edenic view over other versions of intentionalism about emotions is that it gets the phenomenology right. By taking emotion experiences at face value, it delivers affective properties that are phenomenologically familiar. Another advantage of the Edenic view

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<sup>18</sup> In Mendelovici (forthcoming), I have argued that reliable misrepresentation can be just as useful as veridical representation for performing certain tasks.

is that it can automatically account for the phenomenal difference between emotions and emotion-related thoughts. Consider the cases of fearing a dog, on the one hand, and believing that a dog is scary, on the other. On both the ordinary physical properties view and the response-dependent view, both mental states arguably attribute the same properties to the same object. We have a case of two experiences that are intentionally alike but phenomenally different, which is a counterexample to intentionalism. A typical response to this kind of counterexample is to restrict intentionalism so as not to apply to thoughts on the grounds that factors other than intentional content are relevant to phenomenal character and those factors are absent in thoughts, that is, to adopt an impure version of intentionalism. For Tye (2000, 2008), having *nonconceptual* content is one such further requirement for having phenomenal character that thoughts do not satisfy. Someone like Goldie (2000, p. 60) might instead appeal to differences in modes of presentation to partly determine phenomenal characters. Both strategies, however, end up invoking extra ingredients whose relevance to phenomenal character might be challenged in the ways outlined earlier. My version of intentionalism about emotion, in contrast, naturally allows for the view that emotions and thoughts involving emotion-related concepts have different contents: emotions represent *sui generis* Edenic affective properties, while thoughts represent dispositional or ordinary physical properties. This neatly accounts for the phenomenal difference between the two states without appealing to non-representational factors.<sup>19,20</sup>

In summary, I have argued that the Edenic view offers the most viable intentionalist account of emotions. On the Edenic view, emotions represent intentional objects as having *sui generis* affective properties. The representation of affective properties accounts for the distinctive

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<sup>19</sup> The pure intentionalist about emotions faces a few challenges. It seems that she must implausibly maintain that we cannot represent Edenic affective properties in thought, for if we can, they should give rise to the phenomenal character distinctive of emotions, and it seems that thoughts never give rise to such phenomenal characters. My preferred response to this worry is to agree that Edenic affective properties are never genuinely represented in thought. However, they might be *derivatively* represented in thought, in much the same way that sentences derivatively represent in virtue of their relations to non-derivatively representational states (Bourget, 2010; Mendelovici, 2010, Ch. 10).

Another worry is that pure intentionalism about emotions does not allow for nonconscious emotions. Again, I think the intentionalist should bite the bullet here and either claim that nonconscious emotions are merely derivatively representational (Kriegel, 2012), or that they are not representational at all (Mendelovici, 2010, Ch. 7).

<sup>20</sup> For the pure intentionalist, however, this is only a minor victory, since the same kinds of problems arise for intentionalism about perceptual experiences. For example, it seems that color concepts and visual experiences of colors represent some of the same contents, but differ phenomenally. For a treatment of these problems along the same spirit as my proposed treatment in the case of emotions, see Mendelovici (2010, Ch. 7 and §10.5).

phenomenal character of emotions.

#### **4 Moods**

Moods are affective states that seem not to be directed at any intentional object.<sup>21</sup> They tend to last longer than emotions and lack isolable causes. Most moods have a corresponding phenomenally similar emotion. For example, a happy mood is phenomenally similar to directed happiness (e.g. happiness about an upcoming event), and generalized fear is phenomenally similar to directed fear. Such similarities suggest that it might be possible to offer a unified intentionalist account of moods and emotions. However, unlike emotions, moods don't seem to have intentional objects, and so, it might be thought, they don't represent at all.

Some intentionalist treatments of moods maintain that they do in fact have intentional objects. These intentional objects might be bodily states or unusual external objects. I will consider these views before offering an account on which moods need not have intentional objects at all.

##### **4.1 Us and our bodies**

We rejected the bodily states view of emotions on the grounds that it fails to capture the phenomenal character associated with the directedness of emotions towards their intentional objects, which are usually not bodily states. However, moods fail to exhibit such directedness, so perhaps an analogue of the bodily states view can work for them.

According to the *bodily states view of moods*, the phenomenal character of moods is determined by the representation of bodily states. Tye (1995, p. 129) endorses a version of this view: Emotions represent departures from the “range of physical states constituting functional equilibrium” (p. 129). When our bodies are in functional equilibrium, we don't experience any moods. When our bodies depart from functional equilibrium, we represent this, and this accounts for the distinctive phenomenal character of moods.

It is plausible that we are sometimes aware of the bodily changes that are involved in moods. However, as in the case of the bodily states view of emotion, it's not clear that there are enough bodily states to account for all the distinct moods we experience. This problem is exacerbated by

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<sup>21</sup> Depending on how we distinguish moods from emotions (see fn. 1), it might turn out that some emotions apparently lack intentional objects. The discussion in this section would also apply to such cases.



the fact that many of the bodily changes that are strongly linked to moods are changes we do not seem to represent at all. While we are sometimes aware of our hearts racing, we are not aware of the secretion of hormones, such as cortisol, which play a central role in certain moods. Even if such changes are in fact represented in some way, they do not seem to match anything in the phenomenal character of moods; they are phenomenologically foreign to experience, and so they are not of much use to the intentionalist.<sup>22</sup>

A closely related worry is that at least some of the distinctive phenomenal characters of moods don't seem to be matched by the bodily changes we are aware of. For example, in an anxiety attack, one might experience difficulty breathing, sweating, and a racing heart. However, representation of such bodily states does not fully capture the *anxiousness* present in the experience, something like a feeling of unsettledness or urgent discomfort. If there are phenomenal characters involved in moods that do not seem to be matched by any contents involving changes in bodily states, then such contents cannot account for them.<sup>23</sup>

Another problem with the bodily states view is that, if we accept the view of emotions I have proposed, it doesn't easily accommodate the observed phenomenal similarity between moods and their corresponding emotions. Unless we accept the bodily states view of emotions, moods and emotions have different contents, so we would expect them to have different phenomenal characters, which is contrary to our observation.<sup>24</sup>

Another possible view is that moods represent not our bodies, but *us* as having certain properties. For example, one might feel oneself as *afraid*. However, representing oneself as afraid is not the same thing as being in a fearful mood. Representing oneself as afraid might involve, say, a reflective awareness of oneself and one's fear, while being in a fearful mood needn't involve any such awareness. While there is plausibly such thing as feeling oneself as afraid, this does not account for all the cases of apparently undirected fear.

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<sup>22</sup> One might claim that moods represent the likes of cortisol levels *nonconceptually* or *under a certain mode of presentation*. This is unsatisfactory for the reasons listed in §3.3.1.

<sup>23</sup> The worries with the bodily states view of moods described in this section also apply to the bodily states view of emotions.

<sup>24</sup> Recall that I aim to defend a type identity version of intentionalism. A token identity version of intentionalism, however, can allow that phenomenal character types can be realized by distinct representational content types, so such a view is compatible with the observed phenomenal similarity between moods and their corresponding emotions. However, it does nothing to *explain* this similarity, and as we will soon see, other views are able to offer an explanation.

## 4.2 Special intentional objects

Another intentionalist strategy is to maintain that moods have a special kind of intentional object. For instance, one might maintain that moods represent *everything*, *something*, or *the world as a whole* as having certain properties. Variants of this strategy are proposed by Goldie (2000), Seager (2002) and Tye (2008).<sup>25</sup> A pervasive feeling of elation might represent the world as a whole as positive or good. An apparently undirected fear might represent something, though nothing in particular, as scary. Another related suggestion is that at least some moods have frequently changing intentional objects (Tye, 2008).<sup>26</sup> For example, road rage might be best understood as an affective state directed at different cars or drivers at different times.

A virtue of these suggestions is that they explain the observed similarity between moods and emotions. Moods and their corresponding emotions represent the same affective properties. The representation of these affective properties accounts for their distinctive phenomenal characters. This explains why moods and their corresponding emotions have the same distinctive phenomenal characters.

These suggestions might account for a broad range of cases, but there are also cases that escape their characterizations. While some cases of apparently undirected anxiety are, upon closer examination, directed at the world as a whole or frequently changing intentional objects, other cases don't seem to be directed at anything at all. They are cases of merely feeling anxious. And while some cases of sudden elation represent the world as a whole as good, other cases of sudden elation don't seem to be directed at the world or anything else, not even an unspecified object. One just feels elated. Such experiences appear to lack an intentional object altogether. They do not seem to "say" that anything has the relevant affective properties. These are *undirected moods*. Undirected moods not only *appear* to be undirected; they *are* undirected.

The intentionalist might deny that there are undirected moods and maintain that the states I have in mind do indeed represent the world as a whole or some such, but this overintellectualizes

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<sup>25</sup> One might complain that existential and universal generalizations do not have intentional objects. This issue is merely terminological. I choose to count existential and universal generalizations as having intentional objects since they predicate properties of things that may or may not exist.

<sup>26</sup> Tye considers these states to be types of apparently undirected emotions, rather than moods. This terminological issue is irrelevant for our purposes, which is to offer an intentionalist account of apparently undirected affective states, regardless of how we choose to classify them. See fn. 1.

the states in question. In order to experience moods, one must be able to represent particular objects, the world as a whole, or unspecified objects, which seems to be too sophisticated a requirement for having the states in question. Further, it seems that there is a phenomenal difference between mere elation and elation directed at the world as a whole (the kind of state that is expressed by, “Everything's great!”). The most natural explanation of this difference is that the former state is an undirected mood whereas the latter is a directed mood whose intentional object is the world as a whole. It is not clear how the intentionalist who denies the existence of genuinely undirected moods can comfortably account for this difference.

#### **4.3 Unbound affective properties**

While I think there are many cases of moods that are directed at ourselves, the world as a whole, or indeterminate or changing objects, I also want to allow for genuinely undirected moods. Undirected moods seem to be a lot like directed moods and emotions, except that they lack intentional objects. I suggest that we accept this appearance at face value. My proposal is that moods are what we get when we have an emotion without an intentional object: a representation of a mere affective property.

My suggestion is that, unlike, e.g., the contents of color representations, the contents of affective representations can occur without attaching to any object. In the case of color representations, we typically cannot experience a color property without experiencing something as having that property, but in the case of affective properties, we *can* experience free-floating, or *unbound*, instances of the properties. Undirected moods can be thought of as analogous to the color of the ink in the highlighter. When we experience moods, no particular thing or group of things is “highlighted,” but we experience the mere color of the ink. We feel the fear, elation, or anxiety, but we don't feel it as bound to or qualifying anything.

The claim that we can represent mere properties might seem strange. We are used to thinking of representational states as having an object-property structure: they attribute properties to objects. I am claiming that some representational states represent mere properties, without attributing them to objects. At this point, it is worth reminding ourselves that despite our experiential and perhaps theoretical familiarity with the representation of properties qualifying objects, we do not yet have a fully satisfactory psychological account of just how representational

states come to represent properties as binding to objects.<sup>27</sup> Our lack of a fully satisfying account might suggest that our relative comfort with mental states having an object-property form and our relative discomfort with mental states lacking such form doesn't track explanatory difficulty or costliness, or metaphysical queerness.

In any case, there are familiar cases of representation of unbound properties. The contents of concepts can occur unbound. We can use our concept *CAT* to think *cat* without thinking that anything is a cat. This would presumably involve tokening the concept *CAT* without binding its content to the contents of any other representations. Thus while the capacity of affective representations to have their contents occur unbound is very unlike the capacities of most perceptual representations, such unbound occurrences occur regularly and unproblematically in the case of concepts. More controversially, some perceptual experiences might arguably involve unbound representations. For instance, the experience of Mark Johnston's (2004, p. 141) brain-gray, the color we experience when our eyes are closed, might be an example of an experience of an unbound color property.<sup>28</sup>

Amy Kind (this volume) objects that it is unclear just what it is to represent unbound properties. She suggests that the representation of unbound scariness might amount to the representation of the content *there's scariness around*. However, she rightly claims that this would be a case in which scariness is "bound to something unidentified or unidentifiable" (p. xx) rather than a case of genuine unbound representation of scariness. This is not what I intend. Instead, I intend the representation of unbound scariness to be just like the representation of unbound cathood. In the case of the unbound representation of the content *cat*, what "runs through our heads" is just *cathood*, where cathood is the same feature that sometimes binds to our representation of particular cats. Similarly, when we represent unbound scariness, we represent *scariness*, where scariness is the same feature that sometimes binds to dogs, snakes, and possible election results.

The unbound properties account of undirected moods explains the similarity between undirected moods and their corresponding emotions. Since both kinds of affective states involve the representation of the same affective properties, and affective properties determine

<sup>27</sup> This problem has various facets, including the problem of the unity of the proposition and the binding problem.

<sup>28</sup> This case is controversial. One might suggest that brain-gray is experienced as qualifying a particular region of space-time. It's not clear to me which account is correct.

phenomenal character, moods and their corresponding emotions have the same distinctive phenomenal characters.

The unbound properties view is arguably quite attractive regardless of one's independent attraction to intentionalism. The view explains the phenomenal similarity between moods and emotions, the directedness of emotions and directed moods, and the lack of directedness of undirected moods. The phenomenal similarity between moods and emotions is explained by the fact that they literally share components. These shared components are representations whose contents can occur unbound. Since these shared components are *representations*, they are of the right format to bind to object representations to yield directed emotions. And since these shared components *can occur unbound*, they are able to occur in undirected moods, which do not involve intentional objects.

In conclusion, while some moods might in fact be directed at intentional objects of some sort, some moods lack intentional objects altogether. Undirected moods involve the unbound representation of the same affective properties that are represented in emotions. Unlike emotions, these affective properties are not represented as qualifying any objects, and this accounts for the apparent lack of directedness in undirected moods.<sup>29</sup>

## 5 Objections

### 5.1 It just doesn't seem that way

Kind (this volume) argues that the unbound properties view has trouble accounting for changes in the force or intensity of one's undirected moods. Our undirected moods wax and wane. For example, an undirected feeling of sadness can get stronger or weaker throughout the day. On my view, this change is a change in the representation of unbound properties. Kind claims that this is implausible. It just does not seem that we undergo such representational changes when our moods change. Kind considers an example of a father experiencing undirected happiness after the birth of his newborn daughter. As he rocks his newborn to sleep, his happiness deepens. Yet it does not

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<sup>29</sup> Could there be undirected emotions? I take emotions to be affective states that seem to be directed at intentional objects. I suppose there could be cases where these appearances are misleading, though I cannot think of such a case. (Of course, on other definitions of "emotion," such as on a definition on which emotions are short-lived affective states, there are clear examples of undirected emotions.)

seem that he goes from representing *happiness* to representing *strong-happiness*.<sup>30</sup>

A first reaction to this objection is to insist that the father's representational state does in fact change as required. Of course, he needn't come to represent a new way that the world is. For instance, as Kind rightly points out, he needn't suddenly come to see his daughter as more wonderful. And he needn't come to see the world as a whole as a better place. On my view, undirected moods don't represent full-fledged propositions, so a change in mood doesn't imply a change in which propositions are represented. Still, changes in mood involve a representational change analogous to the change one undergoes when one thinks *cat* and then thinks *octopus*. The property before one's mind's eyes changes.

## 5.2 The transparency of experience

Kind (this volume) argues that the transparency of experience, one of the main motivations for intentionalism, fails for moods, making intentionalism about moods implausible. I agree with Kind that the transparency of experience does not *directly* support intentionalism about moods. However, I claim that, on a suitable construal of transparency, it *indirectly* helps to support the view.

Everyone agrees that moods have certain salient affective qualities that are available to introspection and that we call "sadness," "happiness," etc. The disagreement between the intentionalist and the opponent of intentionalism is over whether these affective qualities are represented contents, as the intentionalist claims, or "raw" phenomenal characters, as the opponent of intentionalism claims.

In the case of visual and other perceptual experiences, the intentionalist claims that introspection supports her view that the qualities of experiences are represented contents. For example, when we introspect on our visual experiences, it seems that the color-related qualities we are aware of are qualities of external objects, if anything. If this is right, then introspection

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<sup>30</sup> Kind's worry is not that changes in intensity will require multiple distinct *sui generis* unbound properties, e.g. mild-elation, elation, strong-elation, very-strong elation, etc. But for those readers who are worried about the plethora of affective properties that will be required by my account, this can be rendered less bizarre if we suppose that these affective properties can be organized in an affective space with a limited number of dimensions, in much the same way that color properties can be organized in a color space with a limited number of dimensions. Being amenable to this kind of organization does not prevent affective properties from being *sui generis* any more than it prevents color properties from being *sui generis*.

supports the view that color qualities are represented contents, rather than mere phenomenal characters. This is one way, though not the only way, of understanding the transparency of experience and how it is supposed to support intentionalism. In short, we can tell from introspection that color qualities *behave* like represented contents—they qualify represented objects. This supports the claim that they *are* represented contents.<sup>31</sup>

But the affective qualities of undirected moods don't introspectively seem to qualify anything at all. So it seems that introspection cannot be used to support intentionalism about undirected moods in the same way in which it can be used to support intentionalism about color experience. This is why it might seem that the newborn's father's undirected moods can change without any of his representational states changing. From introspection alone, we have no reason to think that his changing mood is a matter of a changing representational state.<sup>32</sup>

I fully agree that introspection of undirected moods and transparency intuitions do not directly support intentionalism about moods. Instead, I think they play an indirect role as follows: The reason to take the affective qualities of undirected moods to be represented contents is that (1) the very same affective qualities involved in undirected moods are also involved in (directed) emotions, and (2) in emotions, these qualities seem to qualify objects (this is the transparency observation about emotions). Only represented properties can qualify represented objects in the way observed, so affective qualities are represented properties. Intentionalism about moods does not rest on the transparency of moods, but it is indirectly supported by the introspection of moods and the transparency of emotions.

### 5.3 Objections to *sui generis* properties

Another type of objection concerns my claim that affective properties are *sui generis*. One might worry that appealing to the *sui generis* involves positing new entities and thereby inflating our ontology, something that should generally be avoided. However, this objection is mistaken. I am merely claiming that our experiences *represent* these Edenic affective properties, not that they are

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<sup>31</sup> See Harman (1990) and Tye (2000) for defenses of transparency and Kind (2003, this volume) for a critique.

<sup>32</sup> In other words, introspection provides positive evidence for a quality's being a represented content, but a lack of such evidence cannot tell us very much on its own. If we encounter a quality that qualifies a represented object, then this is evidence that the quality is a represented content. But if we encounter a quality that does not qualify a represented object, this is easily compatible both with its being a "raw feel" and with its being an unbound represented quality.

actually instantiated or even that they exist. If the objection to the *sui generis* stems from resistance to positing new entities, then it does not apply to my proposal, since my proposal does not posit any new entities.

One might instead object that, all else being equal, content attributions appealing to familiar instantiated properties are preferable to content attributions appealing to unfamiliar uninstantiated properties. However, it's not obvious why our view of mental contents should be constrained in this way. And even if we accept this constraint, it is not clear that it offers a basis for rejecting the Edenic view. As I have argued, all else is not equal. Edenic affective properties are well equipped to play the role required by intentionalism about moods and emotions, and other candidate properties are not.

#### **5.4 Objections to reliable misrepresentation**

One might object to my claim that emotions reliably misrepresent on the grounds that it entails that our affective properties are in error: They represent objects other than as they are. This may be thought to be problematic for several reasons. First, it is contrary to common sense. Second, it might appear to fail to account for the usefulness of emotions. I have already addressed the second worry in arguing that reliably misrepresenting emotions can be useful for survival and flourishing, so I turn to the first worry.

The first worry is not very troubling. It's not clear why we should expect our common sense view of emotions to be correct. In any case, even if being contrary to common sense weighs against a view, it's far from clear that it outweighs the virtues of the view, including that it respects the phenomenology.

One might further object that classifying all emotions as non-veridical obliterates useful normative distinctions between different token emotions. For example, one might be *appropriately* afraid of a rabid doberman, but *inappropriately* afraid of a sleeping three-legged poodle. One way to cash out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate emotions is in terms of veridicality: The first emotion is veridical, while the second is not. This way of cashing out the distinction is not available to the view I'm defending, since it claims that all emotions are nonveridical. However, there are other ways to cash out the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate emotions. In the first case, one's emotion is in line with one's interests and well-



being, while in the second case, it is not. In the first case, one's emotion is triggered by environmental features that fear usually tracks, while in the second case, it is not. For those who insist on distinguishing between the two kinds of cases on the basis of veridicality, there are some strategies available that are compatible with my view. While I have focused on emotions' representational content that determines their distinctive phenomenal character, I allow that emotions have other intentional contents. For example, they might regularly include beliefs or judgments. The relevant beliefs or judgments might be veridical in the rabid doberman case but not in the sleeping poodle case.

## 6 Conclusion

I have proposed and defended an intentionalist view of the phenomenal character of moods and emotions. My view takes phenomenal character at face value. Moods and emotions represent Edenic affective properties. These affective properties can be represented as qualifying a wide range of intentional objects, yielding emotions and some kinds of moods. They can also be represented without being bound to any intentional objects, yielding undirected moods.<sup>33</sup>

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