

The Lens of Emotion: Wollheim's Two Conceptions of Emotional Colouring

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When Oberon squeezes the juice of the flower onto the sleeping Titania's eyelids in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, does this affect the way in which she comprehends Bottom when she beholds him upon waking up, or does it affect what it is like for her to look at him? Is there a difference? The question suggests that there are two ways of conceiving of a metaphor such as "seeing the world through rose-tinted glasses." When the colouring of emotion is conceived of as a form of looking, the metaphor resonates with the sense in which we think of emotion as colouring the world by imbuing our perception of it with some new phenomenological tone. The colouring metaphor can also take the form of comprehending the object in a new way, so that putting on the metaphorical rose-tinted glasses affects how we make sense of our experience of the world. It seems that in different contexts our intuitions support both ways of thinking about the metaphor of emotion's colouring. But how are we to unpack the metaphor? And when it is unpacked, which intuition does it provide theoretical support for?

Richard Wollheim's aesthetics and moral psychology involve him investigating different ways in which emotion colours our experience of the world. Wollheim, an Anglo-American analytic philosopher of the post-World War II generation, offers theories of art and emotion informed by the hypotheses of psychoanalysis. In *On the Emotions*, he conceives of emotion's colouring our experience of the world as a way of comprehending.¹ In *Painting as an Art*, however, he conceives of emotion colouring our experience in terms of a change in phenomenology.² So a study of Wollheim's philosophy might provide explanations for our two intuitions. In proposing such a study, I am interested in drawing out two implicit conceptions of the colouring metaphor rather than the concept of emotion that enables him to develop these conceptions. Even if the theory of mind that supports his approach to emotion is ultimately untenable, a recital of it will be useful in order to appreciate how he arrives at two conceptions of emotional colouring, conceptions which I shall suggest that any acceptable theory of emotion ought to explain.

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¹ Richard Wollheim, *On the Emotions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

² Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Philosophy of Emotion

There has been much written in analytic philosophy about the nature of the emotions since William James's famous *Mind* article argued that emotions are nothing more than our awareness of bodily changes.³ This was the first of the 'non-cognitive' theories in the modern debate about emotion. It invited numerous responses from theorists who reject the idea that emotion is a purely somatic phenomenon. And so a range of cognitive theories appeared in the literature in response to James. Emotions were analysed in terms of beliefs and desires,⁴ as feelings,⁵ and as evaluative judgments.⁶ The non-cognitivist approach did not go into retreat, however, having been given a boost by neuroscience, which seemed to provide the empirical evidence required for a less crude theory than James had initially offered.⁷

This literature gives the impression that one must choose between providing a cognitive theory of emotion or a non-cognitive theory. One thing that now seems clear, however, is that an emotion is a complex phenomenon that involves a number of cognitive and non-cognitive components.⁸ Even James can be read as acknowledging this in *The Principles of Psychology*.⁹ As Jesse Prinz has recently explained in *Gut Reactions*, the challenge for a contemporary theory is to find a way to incorporate the different components, whilst still explaining what is essential for regarding something as an emotion.¹⁰ This is not a new discovery. Aristotle observed in the *Rhetoric* that

³ William James, 'What is an Emotion?', *Mind*, vol. IX (1884), pp. 188-205.

⁴ Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (New York: Double Day, 1977) and Robert M. Gordon, *The Structure of the Emotions: Investigations in Cognitive Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁵ Michael Stocker and Elizabeth Hegeman, *Valuing Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷ Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994).

⁸ For a survey of recent approaches to emotion in analytic philosophy see Robert C. Solomon (ed.), *Thinking About Feeling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁹ William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1890). In *On the Emotions*, Wollheim argues that commentators have misinterpreted James's position by addressing only his account of emotion in Chapter XXV rather than reading this with Chapter XXIV on instinct. Wollheim thinks that James's position is only properly understood when both chapters are read together: see Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, pp. 118-128.

¹⁰ Jesse J. Prinz, *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Chapter 1 introduces his Problem of Parts and Problem of Plenty to which his proposed theory of embodied appraisals is offered as a solution.

“the emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure.”¹¹ The Aristotelian formula still provides us with a working definition of emotion: any theory that does justice to our experience of emotions will have to say something about the sense in which they affect our judgments, and the sense in which they are attended by pleasure or pain.

Aristotle’s approach to emotion in the *Rhetoric* has been taken up by two contemporary philosophers working in Wollheim’s tradition, each of whom develops a different component of the definition. In *Love and its Place in Nature*, Jonathan Lear develops the first component and discusses the sense in which emotion can affect our perception of the world by providing a framework through which we interpret our experience.¹² In contrast, Malcolm Budd sketches out, in *Music and the Emotions*, a possibility for how we might understand the second component to affect our perception of the world by imbuing it with different kinds of pleasure or pain.¹³

In the course of his interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis, Lear proposes a theory of emotion as a framework through which we view the world. This is offered as a means of explaining theoretically Freud’s clinical observations.¹⁴ In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle discusses the influence of emotion on reasoning.¹⁵ Lear develops this into “a *framework* through which the world is viewed.”¹⁶ This framework, or “orientation to the world,”¹⁷ is conceptually distinct from a feeling or bodily response which may also be part of the emotion. It is an attempt to make sense of these as well as beliefs, desires and phantasies. Making sense of oneself and one’s relationship to the environment need not be an entirely rational process: it may, for instance, involve

¹¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1378 a20.

¹² Jonathan Lear, *Love and its Place in Nature* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990).

¹³ Malcolm Budd, *Music and the Emotions* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

¹⁴ Lear offers an interpretation of the development of emotion in Freudian theory and practice. In particular, he charts the development of emotion from a quantitative conception through to emotion conceived as an orientation to the world. The first position is spelt out in Freud’s early theoretical writing. The final position emerges gradually through his practice. Lear is in search of a theoretical account of the final position which Freud arrives at in practice, but not theory. Drawing on Aristotle, Lear develops a theoretical structure to explain the position at which he believes Freud finally arrives. This allows Lear to develop his own conception of emotion drawing both on Aristotle and Freud. See, Lear, *Love and its Place in Nature*.

¹⁵ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II.1, 1377b31-1378a5.

¹⁶ Lear, *Love and its Place in Nature*, p. 47.

¹⁷ Lear, *Love and its Place in Nature*, p. 49.

phantasy.¹⁸ There are two key ideas that we can take from Lear's conception of attitude as a framework. First, he develops Aristotle's idea that emotion affects our judgments about the world into something *through which* we experience the world. Secondly, he takes from Freud a cognitive understanding of how the framework conditions the way we see the world. It affects the way we experience the world by introducing a claim to rationality, however, irrational that claim might be. It consists in ordering how we experience the world and brings with it the claim that this is the right way to make sense of the experience.

Budd suggests that a variation in kinds of pleasure or pain may be introduced as one means of understanding the emotions.¹⁹ He starts with Aristotle's idea that an emotion is a particular kind of thought plus "a positive or negative reaction to the content of the thought: a form of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, pleasure or pain, agreeableness or disagreeableness, delight or distress".²⁰ He suggests emotion might involve "differences in kinds of pleasure which are not a matter of differences in the kinds of thought the pleasures involve".²¹ According to this conception, an emotional state is not characterised by the presence of some unique thought-content alone. Rather, what is characteristic of the mental state is the particular variety of pleasure or pain. Budd gives a characterisation of fear as an example: "Fear is not merely distress at the thought of possible harm, but a particular kind of distress at the thought of possible harm."²² If we accept that each form of emotion involves a particular form of pleasure or pain not differentiated by the thought that is found pleasing or painful, then we must conceive of pleasure and pain in terms of variations in the phenomenology of the pleasurable or painful states.²³

¹⁸ Lear, *Love and its Place in Nature*, p. 37. In speaking of 'phantasy' rather than 'fantasy,' I am following Wollheim's usage of the psychoanalytic concept of 'phantasy' as unconscious mental activity that does not distinguish between reality and imagination, as opposed to the conscious activity of 'fantasy,' in which this distinction is made.

¹⁹ Note that Budd does not endorse this approach. He concludes that his project does not require him to commit himself to a particular conception of emotion.

²⁰ Budd, *Music and the Emotions*, p. 5.

²¹ Budd, *Music and the Emotions*, p. 11.

²² Budd, *Music and the Emotions*, p. 12.

²³ Budd argues that if each emotion involves a different kind of pleasure or pain, this may or may not be a discrete component of the emotion. This would depend on whether the particular kind of pleasure that attends upon a particular emotion can be explained without reference to the emotion. If it could be, it would be a discrete concept. Alternatively, if the particular kind of pleasure could only be understood in terms of the emotion in the context of which it is experienced, then it can only be understood as a constituent of that emotion. This problem is not critical for us as either way there would be a variety of phenomenologies. See Budd, *Music and the Emotions*.

If, like Aristotle, we conceive of emotion as involving two components, we might regard Lear as offering the kind of account that we require of the first component and Budd as offering the kind of account that we require of the second component. The effect of Oberon's flower on Titania would then be twofold: it would involve her perceiving Bottom through the lens of Lear's framework and through the lens of Budd's peculiar pleasure. Her experience might then be coloured in a different way by each lens. Wollheim's philosophy, I suggest, can offer an account of how our experiences are coloured differently by these two lenses.

Wollheim's Philosophy of Mind

To understand how Wollheim conceives of emotion contributing to our practical life and aesthetic contemplation, we need to appreciate something of his approach to the philosophy of mind. This approach draws a fundamental distinction between mental states and mental dispositions. This is not a distinction between two ways of thinking about the same phenomena. It is a claim that our mental life involves the interaction between two different kinds of phenomena which are defined as follows:

Mental states are those transient events which make up the lived part of the life of the mind, or, to use William James's great phrase, 'the stream of consciousness.' They occur at a time, though the duration of a mental state seldom admits of precise determination...

Mental dispositions are those more or less persisting modifications of the mind which underlie this sequence of mental states. They have histories, and these histories can vary greatly in length and in complexity.²⁴

Mental states and mental dispositions share three common properties: intentionality, or thought-content; grades of consciousness (they may be conscious, preconscious, or unconscious); and psychological reality.²⁵ A further property which mental states have, but which mental dispositions do not, is phenomenology. Mental states are the stream of events that form the lived part of our life. What it feels like for the subject to undergo an event, or to have the mental state, is its phenomenology. One way in which I shall suggest that a mental state can colour our perception of the world is by fusing

²⁴ Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, pp. 1-2. Wollheim takes from Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) the fundamental distinction between mental states and mental dispositions. Having adopted this distinction, he then proceeds to make entirely his own use of it.

²⁵ Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, pp. 4-8. This is what distinguishes him sharply from Ryle who takes dispositions to be tendencies which can be predicted, but not psychologically real mental phenomena.

with it. For Wollheim, mental dispositions cannot have phenomenology because they are not part of the stream of events that we undergo. They underlie this stream. It is for this reason that they are only ever experienced indirectly through the mental states in which they manifest themselves.²⁶ It might be objected that Wollheim simply stimulates that mental dispositions do not have phenomenology.²⁷ My purpose is not to defend this contentious claim. Rather, I am interested in how it enables him to develop one particular conception of emotional colouring.

Wollheim distinguishes different kinds of mental dispositions from one another based on their different roles. The role of a disposition is the way it modifies the person.²⁸ It might do this by constraining the possible mental states that the person can have; by reinforcing existing mental dispositions or initiating new ones; or regulating behaviour. These modifications might be achieved indirectly by a mental disposition manifesting itself in a mental state, but mental states themselves do not modify the person. Again, this might seem like a contentious claim, but what matters is to appreciate how it enables Wollheim to develop a second sense of colouring. The second way in which I shall suggest that a person's experience of the world can be coloured, in Wollheim's system, is by the way in which a mental disposition modifies the person's experience.

In *On the Emotions*, Wollheim firmly states that emotions are mental dispositions. In *Painting as an Art*, it seems that he treats them as mental states. In this article, I do not propose to enter into a debate about what kind of mental phenomenon emotion should be identified with. That is not required in order to understand emotional colouring. If Wollheim's account of emotion can offer anything to the current investigation, it is the thought that our emotional life involves mental dispositions which colour the way we perceive the world, and which manifest themselves in different mental states; initiate other mental dispositions; and find expression in behaviour. All of this can be asserted without resolving whether the mental disposition that is the attitude in *On the Emotions* should be identified with the concept of emotion.

²⁶ Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, pp. 6-8. Note that Wollheim distinguishes between subjectivity and phenomenology; phenomenology being the fusion of subjectivity with intentionality. Because this distinction is not important for my purposes, I adopt the more general usage of phenomenology as the 'what it is like' although in Wollheim's writing this is referred to as subjectivity.

²⁷ Indeed, it might further be objected that the lack of phenomenology is inconsistent with his own claim that mental dispositions are subject to three different grades of consciousness.

²⁸ Richard Wollheim, *The Thread of Life* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 49-56.

For this reason, the major break with Wollheim that I propose is that, whilst we should retain his conception of a particular kind of mental disposition that colours the world, we should not identify this with emotion. Rather, we should conceive of emotion as an interaction between certain mental dispositions and mental states. Our emotional life is an economy or organized system of parts. The parts of that economy are the mental dispositions and mental states described by Wollheim, and they interact with each other in the ways he suggests. Whilst the idea of an emotional economy might seem like a claim about what an emotion is, it is more fundamentally a claim that emotion is to be identified with how particular mental dispositions and mental states interact rather than being identified with either the mental dispositions or the mental states. It does not need to succeed as an ontological claim about emotion. It is enough for an account of emotional colouring that it offers us a way of thinking about emotional experiences that takes account of both the mental dispositions and mental states as constituents of those experiences.

I shall suggest that the nature of emotion as a mental disposition provides Wollheim with an explanation for why one component of emotion can colour experience by offering an interpretation of it. Similarly, the nature of emotion as a mental state provides an explanation for why another component of emotion can also colour experience by imbuing it with a distinctive phenomenology. If we conceive of emotion as a composite phenomenon that involves both a framework that affects our judgments, and as a distinctive form of pleasure or pain, then perhaps when Wollheim treats emotion as a mental disposition he is giving an account of the first component, and when he treats it as a mental state, he provides an account of the second component. Again, in suggesting this, I am not primarily concerned with establishing whether emotions are more fundamentally mental states or mental dispositions, or whether they necessarily involve both. Rather, I am primarily interested in the sense in which features that Wollheim ascribes to mental states and mental dispositions allow him to explain how emotions can colour our experience in different ways.

Emotion and Practical Life

The first sense of emotional colouring, cognitive colouring, is analysed in Wollheim's *On the Emotions*. Wollheim's project in this work is to provide an account of the role or function that emotion has in our psychology. He explains that emotion's role is to provide "an *orientation*, or an *attitude to the world* ...

emotion tints or colours it: it enlivens it or darkens it as the case may be.”²⁹ So the task is to explain precisely what this tinting or colouring metaphor means. Wollheim provides an account of emotion as an attitude that colours our experience by memorializing the past in which the emotion originates.

Characteristically, emotions originate in some desire. We perceive or imagine the desire to have been (or to be in prospect of becoming) satisfied or frustrated. Consciously or unconsciously, we ask ourselves how this satisfaction or frustration comes about and identify some person, thing, or fact which we take to precipitate the satisfaction or frustration of the desire. We develop an attitude towards that object. The attitude is usually either positive or negative and accordingly either attended by pleasure or unpleasure. The attitude persists and it manifests itself in various mental states, generates a variety of mental dispositions, finds expression in behaviour, and may indirectly generate action.³⁰

The attitude is at the core of the emotion. It is because we develop a particular attitude towards an object that certain mental states, dispositions, and behaviour follow and our lives take the course that they do. But what is it to perceive a person, fact, or thing through an attitude? We are told that the attitude develops when we shift our attention from thinking about a perceived or imagined experience of satisfaction or frustration of desire to thinking about the object that is perceived or imagined to have precipitated it. We focus on the person, thing, or fact that we have identified as the precipitating factor. We now experience this object in light of the satisfaction or frustration of desire that we previously perceived or imagined it to precipitate. This is experiencing the object through an attitude.

Wollheim’s attitude is a particular way of characterizing Lear’s claim to rationality.³¹ The claim to rationality is an attempt by the archaic mind to make sense of itself and its relationship to its environment. It claims to be the correct framework through which to make sense of the world. Wollheim’s attitude is such a framework. Specifically, it is a framework constructed out of the experience of satisfaction or frustration of desire in the life that the individual has lived. It is the claim that the way to make sense of a particular person, fact, or thing, is in light of the satisfaction or frustration of desire that it is perceived or imagined to have precipitated.

When Jay Gatsby kisses Daisy just once, he perceives his desire that he be loved exclusively to have been satisfied. His vivid imagination works

²⁹ Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, p. 15.

³⁰ Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, pp. 15-16. This is a summary of Wollheim’s nine-stage characteristic history.

³¹ Wollheim cites Lear’s approach with approval: Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, p. 74, n. 7.

non-stop over the next five years and although he does not see her again during that time, he comes to comprehend her in light of the desire which he imagines that she has satisfied. He convinces himself that this transfiguration of the past is the right way to understand her: “No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man can store up in his ghostly heart.” He builds up a framework through which he makes sense of her, “decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way.” This attitude to her becomes the – ultimately destructive – driving force in his life: he forms new beliefs, desires, takes action, changes his behaviour, all in response to how he comprehends her. That Gatsby’s love is able to modify the course his life takes in this way is due to the fact that emotion is a mental disposition. As a mental disposition, it possesses the capacity in Wollheim’s system to modify the course that the stream of consciousness takes.³²

When Wollheim discusses attitude, he is at pains to point out that although it involves comprehending the world, it is a matter of doing so through perception and imagination rather than belief and evaluation, just as the archaic mind’s attempt to be rational is said to involve an irrational form of rationality.³³ Having established the sense in which attitude involves makes sense of the world, what matters from my perspective is a different distinction. We can contrast emotion as a way of trying to make sense through imagination and perception – a loosely cognitive activity, however irrational it may be – with emotion as a feeling that is not even in the broadest sense cognitive, a change in phenomenology.

Emotion and Aesthetic Contemplation

For Wollheim, the supreme achievement of painting as an art is that it enables the artist to explore his emotions through paint. When looking at a painting, the spectator is able to recreate this process of emotional investigation that terminated in the painted surface before which he stands. Such emotional investigation through engaging with a painted surface is possible because both artist and spectator possess the capacity for what Wollheim calls “expressive

³² “Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams – not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man can store up in his ghostly heart,”: F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (London: Bloomsbury Classics, 1994), p. 97.

³³ Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, p. 77: “it is how the object is perceived or imagined – rather than how it is thought of or evaluated, which are the aspects that modern philosophers have emphasized – that is crucial to the formation of an emotion.”

perception.” Expressive perception is explained as a twofold experience in which a perceptual component fuses with an affective component to create an experience that is quasi-affective and quasi-perceptual.

In his account of expressive perception, Wollheim offers an entirely different approach to how emotion colours the world, from that developed in *On the Emotions*. Expressive perception occurs when we perceive “correspondences.”³⁴ Correspondence is a match between the appearance of some part of the world and an emotional condition of the perceiver. The tendency to find such correspondences can be traced to our earliest experiences of the world.³⁵ The engine for correspondence is projection, a psychoanalytic defence mechanism through which a benefit is derived by imagining that psychological phenomena are physically expelled in archaic mental functioning.³⁶

What does it mean for an emotion to fuse with a perception, and in what sense might this colour our experience of the world? Wollheim tells us that fusing is not merely a matter of association, but of condensation of mental states, and when the states are condensed, the perception becomes saturated with the emotion:

In the present case, the mental state integrates with the perception: and for this a parallel might be with the association of a colour to the sound of a vowel, where there is not mere association, there is also condensation. And secondly, the effect of the mental state integrating with the perception is that the mental state conditions how we perceive the landscape or what we perceive it as. Much as, though a colour could not affect how we think of a number, or could not

³⁴ Wollheim’s concept of correspondence combines the idea of *correspondance* in French symbolist poetic theory (which was itself influenced by the mystic philosopher, Swedenborg) with projection in psychoanalytic theory, which he regards as providing the basis for correspondence.

³⁵ In making such claims, Wollheim draws on the hypotheses of psychoanalysis and the evidence for these which the psychoanalysts claim to find in their clinical work. However, their claims remain contentious as does Wollheim’s use of them. For a critical evaluation of his position, see Malcolm Budd, ‘Wollheim on Correspondence, Projective Properties, and Expressive Perception’, in *Richard Wollheim on the Art of Painting*, ed. Rob van Gerwen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 101-111.

³⁶ In psychoanalysis, projection is a defence mechanism. Wollheim distinguishes between two forms of projection: simple projection and complex projection (e.g. Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, pp. 82-84). He argues that in addition to its primary function as a defence mechanism, complex projection can generate projective properties which serve as the basis for expressive perception.

saturate our thought, we could come to hear, say, the vowel *U* as green.³⁷

The idea of an emotion merging with a perception could provide a basis for understanding how emotion can colour the world. But it seems to be a very different sense of colouring to the sense considered in the previous section. The condensing and merging that Wollheim speaks of seems to be a condensing and merging of phenomenologies. Just as colour-hearing synesthesia involves the integrating and merging of what a chord sounds like and what a hue looks like, so expressive perception involves the merging of what an emotion feels like with the phenomenology of a sense perception. Given Wollheim's theory of mind, the emotional phenomenon this involves must be a mental state rather than a mental disposition. This is evident not merely from the fact that he refers to it in the passage cited as a mental state (he might have been using this term interchangeably with "mental phenomenon"), but because in his theory of mind, mental states, but not mental dispositions, possess phenomenology.

What is it that Wollheim thinks fuses with the perception? Can it be the attitude that we have seen is at the core of his conception of emotion? The attitude, we have seen, is a framework through which we perceive an object, and which interprets the object in light of the past. How could a way of making sense fuse with a perception in the way that a colour might fuse with a sound? Evidently, Lear's claim to rationality is not what Wollheim has in mind in this instance. Earlier, we considered the idea that the different emotions might each involve a unique kind of pleasure or pain. Can we conceive of a feeling of pleasure or pain fusing with a perception? If we can conceive of a colour fusing with a sound, then it seems that by analogy we might conceive of a feeling of pleasure or pain fusing with a sound, hue, or perception of a host of golden daffodils. So it seems to me that when Wollheim talks of emotions fusing in expressive perception, we should take him to be thinking of something like Budd's distinctive kinds of pleasure and pain fusing with the perception.³⁸

The metaphor of colouring might be employed metaphorically to describe the effect of this merging. When an emotion fuses with a perception, it colours the perception. However, when the feeling of pleasure or pain fuses with the perception, this is not a matter of changing how we make sense of the perception. Rather, it changes something about the feeling of the perception by

³⁷ Richard Wollheim, 'The Sheep and the Ceremony', in his *The Mind and Its Depths* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 5.

³⁸ Although there is no evidence that Wollheim conceives of different kinds of pleasure, he does say that pleasure or displeasure usually attends an attitude: see Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, p. 95.

condensing the sense perception with the feeling of pleasure or pain. When Charlie Brown observes that nothing takes the taste out of peanut butter quite like unrequited love, he is not saying that unrequited love changes his attitude to peanut butter, or that he now makes sense of it in a new way (although this might also happen). What he means to draw our attention to is the change in the phenomenology of eating peanut butter when the particular kind of pain that attends unrequited love fuses with the taste of peanut butter. This change can be explained by Wollheim because he conceives of the emotional phenomenon that does the colouring as a mental state rather than a mental disposition.

Wollheim's Two Conceptions of Emotional Colouring

What we have now is an account of two different ways in which emotion can colour the world. It can change the way we make sense of something, as Jay Gatsby's attitude causes him to comprehend Daisy in light of the satisfaction of his desires which, he imagines, she brought about before and is capable of doing once again. It can also change the way we feel about something, as Charlie Brown's feeling of unrequited love fuses with the taste of peanut butter to take the taste out of it. These are two different ways in which emotion colours our experience: it can be filtered by an attitude or by a feeling of pleasure or pain.

I have endeavoured to show how Wollheim's approach to emotion draws out the difference between these two forms of colouring because his theory involves two components: a mental state and a mental disposition. The mental disposition is a framework through which we comprehend the world, and the mental state is a feeling of pleasure or pain. When Wollheim provides an account of attitude, he explains how the first component of emotion can colour the world by convincing us that making sense of it in light of satisfaction or frustration of a certain desire is right. When he provides an account of expressive perception, he explains how the second component can colour the world in a different way, by fusing it with a feeling of pleasure or pain. If we approach Wollheim's philosophy as addressing different components of emotion, then the features of the different kinds of mental phenomena involved in each case can account for the different ways in which these components are able to colour our experience of the world.

It is through his exploitation of the differences between the properties of mental states and mental dispositions that he is able to articulate the different ways in which emotion as mental state and mental disposition is able to colour our experience. However, one might conclude that Wollheim does not provide compelling arguments for the claims that mental states but not

mental dispositions possess phenomenology, and that mental dispositions but not mental states have roles in our psychology. Even if we find his theory of mind unsatisfactory, we might still maintain that any satisfactory account of our emotional life would incorporate the two conceptions of colouring that he employs.

In writing about the two different approaches to emotional colouring that we find in Wollheim's philosophy, I have concentrated on love as an example, and endeavoured to show how love might colour our experience of the world in two different ways. This could equally have been applied to other emotions, however. Wollheim discusses the way loneliness and despair can fuse with our perception of an estuary, and so we might also consider how loneliness and despair might form a framework through which we perceive the world.³⁹ Indeed, he discusses how a particular experience of frustration of desire might give rise to attitudes of despair, jealousy, regret, remorse, or sadness, depending upon the direction in which one's thoughts turn.⁴⁰ So we might consider how jealousy, regret, remorse, or sadness could fuse with perception in aesthetic contemplation, as well as forming a framework through which we attempt to make sense of our experience in practical life. So there is a wide range of emotions that might colour our experience in the ways that he suggests. However, these then to be the higher cognitive emotions. Where his approach is, admittedly, less convincing, is with the lower instinctive reactions, emotional impulses such as startle.

Two Requirements of a Theory of Emotion

Wollheim offers us an account of two different ways in which emotion can colour the world. The account of cognitive colouring is given as part of an explanation of the role the emotions play in our practical lives. The account of phenomenological colouring is found in his explanation of how our capacity for expressive perception contributes to aesthetic experience. It is not a coincidence that his full account of how emotion colours the world is spread across two separate spheres of enquiry: that emotion is capable of colouring our experience in different ways explains why it is able to make different contributions to different aspects of our lives.

As a claim to rationality, or an attitude through which we attempt to comprehend the world, an emotion is able to initiate new mental states, generate other mental dispositions (including desires, and indirectly through these, actions), and modify behaviour. In all these ways, emotion has the ability to affect our practical lives by moving us on in life. But emotion also

³⁹ See Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, p. 81.

⁴⁰ Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, p. 74.

has the ability to colour the world in another way that draws us back and pulls us into aesthetic contemplation. As a feeling of a particular kind of pleasure or pain, an emotion is able to change the phenomenology of our perception of the world by fusing with the perception. In this way, emotion intensifies our experiences in a way that enables them to sustain our interest without directly having any practical consequences.

Charlie Brown is not going to be moved on in life one way or another simply because the pain of unrequited love fuses with the taste of peanut butter. Of course, he might also perceive the peanut butter through the lens of attitude, and this may well give rise to desires or aversions that affect the course that his life takes. Emotion provides two lenses through which Charlie Brown might perceive the peanut butter: the lens of the attitude of perceiving his love is unrequited, and the lens of the particular kind of pain that attends unrequited love. The consequences of perceiving the peanut butter through one lens or the other – or both – are different. Similarly, Jay Gatsby finds that in addition to the life-changing consequences that occur when he comprehends Daisy through the lens of a particular attitude, the distinctive bitter-sweet pleasure of his feelings for her fuses with the green light at the end of her dock on the other side of the bay. Looking into it gives rise to a particularly dense experience that draws him in and sustains his attention into the small hours of the night.

Wollheim also shows us that the different ways of colouring our experience contribute to different aspects of our life. When Oberon anoints Titania's eyelids with the juice of the flower, it may be that she comprehends Bottom in a new way, or it may be that the feeling of looking at him changes. Perhaps both occur. But we can distinguish two different forms of emotional colouring rather than merely two perspectives from which the same colouring phenomenon can be described. Love's ability to change how Titania comprehends Bottom through the lens of an emotional attitude will have repercussions in Titania's practical life. Love's ability to fuse a particular feeling of pleasure with her perception of him might draw her into aesthetic contemplation of the donkey-masked Bottom. Wollheim was equally interested in emotion's contribution to how we live our lives and how we appreciate art. He also understood that emotion makes different contributions in each case, both of which are important for human flourishing.

In this article, I have argued that an account of the contributions of emotional colouring to different aspects of our life needs to begin with a conception of emotion that is expansive rather than constricted. I have suggested that Wollheim's conception of emotions as involving dispositions that manifest themselves in mental states offers the kind of starting point

required for this purpose. The thriving contemporary literature on the definition of emotion has not featured in this account. This contemporary debate can be seen as a response to James's theory of emotion. That debate takes James to identify the concept of emotion with the feeling of changes in bodily states. His critics then argue that this is the wrong mental phenomenon with which to identify emotion. An emotion is variously conceived of by them as a thought, a desire, a feeling, or a value judgement.⁴¹ In response to such cognitive conceptions of emotion, the neo-Jamesian positions reassert the claim that emotions are essentially somatic states.⁴² So the debate takes the form of arguing about whether emotion is essentially cognitive or somatic; and then if it is cognitive, what kind of cognitive phenomenon is it; and if it is somatic, how James's approach needs to be revised to account for the cognitivists' claims. The debate is further complicated by the claim that emotion is not a natural kind, but an umbrella term that incorporates a range of different phenomena. Theorists pick and choose which they will give an account of, depending upon the mental phenomenon in terms of which they choose to analyse emotion.⁴³

But the attempt to identify emotion with a particular kind of mental or somatic phenomenon flies in the face of common sense. For, if there is one thing that is generally accepted about the emotions, it is that they seem to involve a range of different phenomena. As we noted earlier, Aristotle long ago observed that the emotions are susceptible to analysis in terms of different phenomena: the dialectician will define anger in terms of something like a desire for revenge, whereas the natural philosopher will define it in terms of a

⁴¹ For the various cognitivist accounts of emotion, see the landmark works on emotion in terms of belief and desire, see Solomon, *The Passions*; Gordon, *The Structure of the Emotions*; or as feeling, see Stocker and Hegeman, *Valuing Emotions*; Goldie, *The Emotions*; and for emotion as evaluative judgment, see Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*. A convenient survey of contemporary positions in analytic philosophy may be found in Solomon, *Thinking About Feeling*.

⁴² For the most influential neo-Jamesian defences of emotion as a somatic phenomenon, see Ekman's work on expression of basic emotions, e.g. Paul Ekman, 'An Argument for Basic Emotions', *Cognition and Emotion*, vol. 6 (1992), pp. 169-200; and Paul Ekman, *Emotions Revealed* (New York: Henry Holt, 2003); Lazarus's appraisal theory, e.g. Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Damasio's work in neurology, e.g. Damasio, *Descartes' Error*.

⁴³ See Paul E. Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997) for an account of the deconstruction of emotion through a study of the life sciences and a distinct critique of the category of emotion through the history of philosophy in Amélie O. Rorty, 'Aristotle on the Metaphysical Status of *Pathé*', *Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 38 (1984), pp. 521-546; and Amélie O. Rorty (ed.), *Explaining Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

boiling of the blood.⁴⁴ The philosophical challenge is not a matter of deciding whether to side with the dialectician or the natural philosopher, but to work out how to provide an analysis of anger that accounts for its propensity to be understood both as a desire for revenge and a boiling of the blood.⁴⁵ On this point, Aristotle and James are of like mind. James is aware of the need to explain both the dispositional and phenomenological aspects of an experience such as fear or anger. The error of the current debate now seems to be that rather than reading Chapters XXIV and XXV of *The Principles of Psychology* together, James's interpreters have attended only to one aspect of his account and then assumed that their task is to assess whether this phenomenon – or some other one – is synonymous with the emotion. The debate between the contemporary cognitive theorists and neo-Jamesians is as ill-founded as a debate between the dialectician and the natural philosopher on anger, or an interpretation of fear exclusively in terms of James's concept of instinct or his concept of emotion.

Whatever the correct answer to the analytic question is, it is this broader approach that we have seen the current project demands. We are equally interested in investigating the different ways in which anger colours our experience of the world as a boiling of the blood, and as a desire for revenge. If the analytic theorists were able to conceptualize emotion in a way that enabled us to combine the various associated phenomena, a definition would not have to reduce emotion to a single mental phenomenon. In this case, the concept of emotion would be sufficiently broad to account for the different ways in which emotion's constituent phenomena colour experience. Having surveyed the current literature, Jenefer Robinson argues that rather than choosing between the alternative pretenders to the title of emotion, the solution is to conceive of emotion as a *process* that involves all of these phenomena.⁴⁶

The process involves four components: an affective (i.e. non-cognitive) appraisal which initiates an emotional response to an object; the bodily feelings thus initiated; cognitive monitoring of these responses; and emotional feelings. Robinson argues that once the emotion is identified with the process, we can see why any of the phenomena that comprise the response

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 403 a2-403 b19. A translation may be found in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Vol. I, pp. 641-692.

⁴⁵ Aristotle's treatment of the emotions is spread across the *Rhetoric* (see 1378 a20-1380 a4), *De Anima*, and *Nicomachean Ethics* (e.g. 1125 b26-1126 b9). Translations of these texts may be found in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II, p. 2152ff and p. 1729ff respectively.

⁴⁶ Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper Than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 59.

do not count as emotions if they are not initiated by the appropriate affective appraisals: such phenomena are not part of the process that constitutes the emotion. Likewise, an affective appraisal that has not initiated a response is not an emotion because, regarded as such, it is not yet a component of the process that is the emotion. Robinson's approach explains why each of the theorists has hit on some truth about what emotion involves without having managed to provide a comprehensive analysis of it.⁴⁷

What are the affective appraisals that initiate the emotional response? Robinson identifies four ways in which they have been characterized in the scientific literature:⁴⁸ the preference/aversion approach (e.g. Zajonc),⁴⁹ in which the affective appraisal is identified with an innate preference or aversion to certain stimuli; the component approach (e.g. Scherer),⁵⁰ which identifies the affective appraisal with a cluster of stimulus evaluations, some of which are present at birth and others of which develop; the goal-orientated approach (e.g. one reading of Lazarus),⁵¹ which identifies affective appraisals with the congruence or incongruence of the object with the promotion of a goal of the agent; and the basic emotion approach (e.g. an alternative reading of Lazarus), which identifies affective appraisals with the basic emotions that can be distinguished physiologically. Each of these meets with certain difficulties which mean that, in Robinson's opinion, no one approach on its own can account for affective appraisals.

It will be apparent that there is some similarity between the relationship between the affective appraisal and the somatic response in Robinson's process and the relationship between the mental disposition and the mental state in Wollheim's theory. The affective appraisal is said to initiate the response and the mental disposition manifests itself in a mental state. So it might be thought that the process theory could serve as a basis for understanding our intuitions about emotional colouring in the same way that Wollheim's theory does. There is, however, an important reason for preferring Wollheim's theory to Robinson's. Whichever approach (or combination of approaches) to affective appraisals Robinson settles on, in no case will there be a diachronic aspect. The mental disposition that is Wollheim's attitude is said

⁴⁷ For a similar proposal that combines cognitive and non-cognitive components in the form of an embodied appraisal rather than a process, see Prinz, *Gut Reactions*.

⁴⁸ Robinson, *Deeper Than Reason*, pp. 61-70.

⁴⁹ R.B. Zajonc, 'Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences', *American Psychologist*, vol. 35, no. 2 (1980), pp. 151-175; Sheila T. Murphy and R.B. Zajonc, 'Affect, Cognition, and Awareness: Affective Priming with Suboptimal and Optimal Stimulus', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 64, no. 5 (1993), pp. 723-739.

⁵⁰ Klaus R. Scherer, *Facets of Emotion: Recent Research* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1988).

⁵¹ Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*.

to colour the world with the lens of the past. It can do this because the attitude has its origin in an earlier experience of satisfaction or frustration of desire which develops into the attitude through the characteristic history. In this way the attitude is a transfigured memorialization of the past. It is because the mental disposition has this diachronic dimension that it can provide a framework which enables Gatsby's perception of Daisy to be coloured by his past. Because Robinson's affective appraisals lack the diachronic dimension, they lack the ability to colour experiences in this way. For this reason, we should prefer the theory of emotional economy to the process theory.

The utility of Wollheim's approach to the nature of emotion for our understanding of emotional colouring suggests that we should either revisit his theory of emotion in order to refine it, or look to how we might revise another account of emotion in order to accommodate these insights into the different ways in which emotion contributes to our practical life and aesthetic contemplation by colouring our experience in different ways.