

Value Relations – Old Wine in New Barrels*

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ABSTRACT: In Rabinowicz 2008, I considered how value relations can best be analyzed in terms of fitting pro-attitudes. In the formal model presented in that paper fitting pro-attitudes are represented by the class of permissible preference orderings on a domain of items that are being compared. As it turns out, this approach opens up for a multiplicity of different types of value relationships, along with the standard relations of "better", "worse", "equally as good as" and "incomparable in value". Unfortunately, though, the approach is vulnerable to a number of objections. I believe these objections can be avoided if one re-interprets the underlying notion of preference: Instead of treating preference as a 'dyadic' attitude directed towards a pair of items, we can think of it as a difference of degree between 'monadic' attitudes of favouring. Each such monadic attitude has just one item as its object. Given this re-interpretation, permissible preferences can be modelled by the class of permissible assignments of degrees of favouring to items in the domain. From this construction, we can then recover the old modelling in terms of the class of permissible preference orderings, but the previous objections to that model no longer apply. Thus, what we get is the old wine in new and hopefully tighter barrels.

* This paper is dedicated to a fine philosopher and a good friend, Kevin Mulligan, on the occasion of his 60th birthday. I hope he will find it congenial.