Internal intentionalism and the understanding of emotion experience

Abstract

According to strong intentionalism, the phenomenology of a mental state is entirely explained by that state's intentional content. While this theory has received a great deal of attention in the literature on visual perception, most researchers in the emotion literature consider the qualitative features of emotions to go beyond their intentional content. As a result, strong intentionalism has rarely been defended for emotions. Emotions researchers have proposed different strategies to account for the phenomenology of emotions. These strategies have not been fully satisfactory. In this paper, we show that a strong intentionalist account of emotion can fully account for emotion experience without falling victim to the problems that it has been associated with, as long as the intentional content of emotions is properly characterized. Accordingly, we propose a new account of the intentional content of emotion as part of a new, internal intentionalism, and we show how our account avoids the problems traditionally associated with strong intentionalism. We also suggest that our proposed characterization of the intentional content of emotion may be usefully extended to intentionalist accounts of other mental states.

Introduction

Several accounts of the phenomenal character of mental states attempt to explain it fully in terms of intentional or representational content, that is to say, of what the mental state is directed at. According to intentionalism, representational properties determine the phenomenology of mental states: the phenomenal character of a perception of a red object, for example, is determined by the representation of a perceived red object. In this paper, we seek an understanding of the phenomenology of emotions. The phenomenology or feeling component of emotions is generally taken as one of their necessary features by emotion researchers. On an intentionalist view of emotion, such as Tye's (2008), emotional feelings would be explained by the representation of the emotion's intentional content.

However, the intentionalist account of emotion faces several challenges. Emotional phenomenology sometimes seems to come apart from the intentional content of emotion. Several authors in the recent literature provide examples that seem to show that the phenomenology of an emotion can change even when its intentional content remains constant.

In this paper, we show that a strong intentionalist account of emotion can fully account for emotion experience without falling victim to these problems, as long as the intentional content of emotions is properly characterized. Accordingly, we propose a new account of the intentional content of emotion as part of a new, internal intentionalism (hereafter ii), and we show how our account avoids the above problems. We also suggest that our proposed characterization of the intentional content of emotion may be usefully extended to intentionalist accounts of other mental states, as well.

In the first section, we begin by clarifying the notions of strong intentionalism, emotion phenomenology, and intentional content. In the second section, we show how existing strong intentionalist accounts, despite their initial appeal, face serious challenges in accounting for emotions. In the third section, we describe two attempts to account for the phenomenology of emotions by their intentional content– Kriegel's and Mendelovici's – and we lay out important objections to both of these accounts. We then review Tye's strong intentionalism applied to emotions and show important unresolved problems in his theory. In the last part, we propose a modified strong intentionalist view called "internal intentionalism", with an improved characterization of the intentional content of emotions. By showing how an internal intentionalist view of emotion can survive potential and existing objections addressed to intentionalism, we claim that it has the potential to explain the phenomenology of emotions in terms of a representation of the emotional object that is *indexed* to the emoter.

1. Strong intentionalism applied to emotions (SIe)

1.1. Conceptual clarifications

Intentionalist theories share the idea that the phenomenology of mental states has an intentional or representational content. This content usually designates what these states are about or what they are directed at: "the relevant idea behind intentionality is that of mental directedness towards (or attending to) objects, as if the mind were construed as a mental bow whose arrows could be properly aimed at different targets" (Jacob, 2019). Intentionalism is more commonly defended in one of its weak versions rather than in its strong version.

According to *strong intentionalism*, or *strong representationalism* (hereafter SI), the phenomenology of a mental state is entirely explained by that state's intentional content. SI has received a great deal of attention in the literature on visual perception. According to SI about perceptual states, the phenomenal properties of a mental state are fully accounted for by that state's intentional properties (Tye, 2007): the feeling of seeing a red tomato *is* a visual representation of a red tomato. On the contrary, weak versions of intentionalism leave room for some qualitative features to remain nonintentional, and potentially nonfunctional (Lycan, 2019): the sensation of seeing a red tomato depends on how the red tomato is experienced, which goes beyond the simple representation of the tomato.

Similarly, in the emotion literature, most researchers consider the qualitative features of emotions, their *phenomenology*, to go beyond their *intentional content*. As a result, in versions defended by Tye (2007) and Crane (2003), SI has been the object of numerous criticisms and has not been defended for emotions, except by Tye himself (2008)[1]. To see why, let us first clarify the notions of phenomenology and intentional content.

The phenomenology of emotions is also sometimes called "affectivity" (Colombetti, 2009, 2014), "experience" (Adolphs, 2017; Faucher & Tappolet, 2008), "phenomenal feel" (Rosenthal, 1999). Since the development of theories of core affect, many accept that emotion phenomenology is minimally constituted by two dimensions: valence (anger is rather negative, joy positive), and arousal or intensity (the energy level that attends the emotion) (Russell, 2005, 2009; Russell &

[1] We present Tye's SI applied to emotions in section 2.

Barrett, 1999). For the purposes of this paper, we accept that the phenomenology of emotions minimally encompasses valence and intensity as its two broad dimensions[2].

The characterization of the intentionality of emotions is less straightforward. It is generally accepted that emotions are intentional states—mental states that are directed at or about objects or states of affairs beyond themselves[3]. These objects are of different types[4]. Among them, two have been taken to be a part of the intentional content: particular objects, that are the target of emotion *occurrences*, or what each occurrence of emotions is directed at (it can be a person, an event, or a state of affairs); and formal objects that designate an evaluative component that distinguishes emotion *types* (De Sousa, 1987; Teroni, 2007).

If formal objects constitute emotions' intentional content, the intentional content of anger – as a type of emotion – and of its different occurrences designates the offensiveness, the one of fear, the dangerousness, the one of sadness, the loss, etc. (Kenny, 1963; Lyons, 1980; Teroni, 2007). According to Lyons' definition, a formal object designates an "evaluative category under which the appraisal or evaluation of a particular object, material or intentional, falls on a particular occasion" (Lyons, 1980, p. 100). It then seems that the representation of the formal object may explain what emotions feel like: a representation of the offensiveness would explain the negative and intense feeling of anger, the one of the dangerousness, the one of fear, and the representation of a loss would explain the negative and calm feeling of sadness. This is the view defended by Tappolet who explains that emotions are representations of values (Tappolet, 2000).

Such a view seems to be perfectly compatible with SI. In fact, applied to emotions, SI would mean that the *phenomenology* of an emotion is entirely explained by its *intentional content*. The experience of being angry for example, this intense and negative feeling of anger, would be entirely captured by what the anger is directed at, that is, if objects are emotion intentional content, by the formal and the particular objects. In this view, the feeling of anger would be explained by the offensiveness of something or someone. But as we now show, this explanation is not as straightforward as it first appears.

The next section is dedicated to the explanation of the problems that SI applied to emotions (hereafter SIe) has been said to encounter.

2. Objections to SIe

2.1. The intentional content is not "genuine"

[2] For the purposes of this paper, we accept that this two-dimensional picture captures at least one aspect of emotion phenomenology. Though we leave it open that valence and arousal might not be the only dimensions; we take it that our treatment of SI is compatible with views that would attribute other dimensions of emotional phenomenology, as well. If other features of emotion phenomenology were to be discovered, we would have to investigate if our theory can account for them.

[3] For a non-conventional take on the question of emotional intentionality, see (Whiting, 2011).

[4] For a categorization of emotional objects, see (De Sousa, 1987 Chapter 5).

If SI is already controversial for perception[5], its application to emotions faces even more serious challenges. The first one comes from the definition of emotions' intentional content in terms of formal objects. The formal object is supposed to be "part of the concept of an emotion" and "non-contingently related to it" (Lyons, 1980, p.101). But as Lyons notices, it cannot always distinguish between different evaluative aspects, for example, the representation of dangerousness could be the value of both fear and excitement. If this is the case, the represented dangerousness is not sufficient to account for the negative and intense feeling of fear, because it cannot distinguish it from the positive feeling of excitement. One could object that "dangerousness" is too broad to capture the formal object of fear. But we suspect that any attempt to find the adequate formal object may run into the same problems: threateningness for fear could also be the value of anger, impatience for excitement could be associated with eagerness, anxiety, etc. The representation of a value and its application to a particular object seem to be determined by more than the formal object.

This suggests that formal objects do not just track properties out in the world, but are a function of the emoter's interpretation of and relationship to the external world. De Sousa proposes that formal objects are qualities that are attached to situations rather than "genuine" objects (1979, p. 26), implying (as we understand it) that they are not to be found out there in the world but are constructed categories. Lyons acknowledges that they are not descriptive but evaluative (Lyons, 1980, p. 103), differentiating here objects that can designates states of affairs, situations, with a truth value (particular objects), from normative categories (formal objects).

If so, one still needs to explain what this other part of the formal object is, where it comes from, and therefore what the intentional content is, if it is not "genuine". This is a major objection for SIe: if the intentional content of emotions is non-genuine, the notion of intentional content needs more explanation, it remains incomplete. Indeed, according to the aforementioned definition, fear would not depend on the *real* danger, but on the danger understood in a different way. What is this way and how do we explain it?

Moreover, in most cases, the formal objects of emotions are not represented by the emoter[6]. It could seem that they are therefore not necessary a part of emotion's intentional content. As Kriegel notes:

> it is implausible to suppose that the relevant special properties show up in the emotional experiences' contents. On the face of it, one fears a dog, not the dog's dangerousness, just as one admires one's spouse, not the spouse's admirability. It would be very strange indeed to admire a person's admirability rather than the person herself, and it would be likewise strange to fear a thing's dangerousness rather than the thing itself (Kriegel, 2009, p. 6).

[5] These controversies come from the fact that the explanation of the feeling component of perception, as its conscious experience, could not be fully explained by a simple representation of an object, according to some researchers. This problem is beyond the scope of this paper, but for more details, see (Papineau, 2016).

[6] Here, the idea is that they are not *consciously* represented. When we talk about representations, we are not separating it from consciousness: we are only considering emotion phenomenology. However, debates about SI are closely related with the ones on consciousness, and this would necessitate more development.

It seems in fact that emotion feelings can occur without the formal object being represented. If so, emotion feelings would not be explained by emotions' intentional content. And if phenomenology is not accounted for by their intentional content, SIe has to be rejected. A second reason to doubt SIe lies comes from variations in emotion phenomenology that do not seem to be explained by variations in emotion objects. We will now consider these cases.

2.2.The intentional content cannot explain variation in phenomenology

Numerous examples have been used in the literature to show that the phenomenology of emotions is at odds with their intentional content.

First, there is no one-to-one correspondence between emotion's intentional contents and emotion types: a same external situation can give rise to different emotions for different people, and it can even not trigger any emotion at all for one while triggering one for someone else. For example, you might judge that it is dangerous or risky to not pay your bill, but nevertheless you might not be afraid or anxious. You might just have too much else going on to have much emotion at all, while you at another time or someone else in similar circumstances would be very anxious. It seems in these cases that dangerousness is not sufficient to trigger fear. Cases of recalcitrant emotions also show that one can represent something as not being dangerous and still be scared of it, as it is the case with people who are scared of heights even when they know they are in no risk, or of spiders that they know to be inoffensive[7]. The attribution of the dangerousness to an object is not either necessary for fear to occur.

Secondly, it has been argued that changes in the phenomenology of emotions can occur without changes in their intentional content. For example, one's feeling can get more intense and positive without any changes in the object that they are attached to. Lutz suggests: "Consider a new father who is happy about the birth of his first child. As he rocks his baby to sleep in his arms, his happiness deepens or intensifies" (Lutz, 2015, p. 71). The intensity of the emotion increases even though the intentional content of the emotion—the arrival of the child (particular object), and the admirability towards her (formal object)—has not changed. Because the intensity of an emotion is taken to be a part of its phenomenology, Lutz takes this to show that the phenomenology of the emotion can vary while the emotion's intentional content remains unchanged. If this is right, it is a problem for SIe.

These examples show that if the intentional content of an emotion were limited to the emotion's particular or formal objects as these objects are usually understood, it would be insufficient to explain the emotion's phenomenology. Since emotional experiences are more than detached value judgments, their experiential character still needs to be explained.

As a result, most emotion researchers generally adhere to alternative accounts of intentionalism (Aydede & Fulkerson, 2014; Montague, 2009), or they propose weaker versions (Averill & Gottlieb, 2019). In both cases, their accounts reject SI based on examples that seem to show that the phenomenology is not fully accounted for by the state's intentional content, and that it goes beyond their content.

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[7] On recalcitrant emotions, see Döring (2015) and Brady (2009).

2.3.The explanation of phenomenology in terms of intentional content is circular

A last important objection to SIe is rooted in the difficulty in explaining the experiential character of emotion in terms of representation, given that emotions seem to vary quite a bit across different people. This makes the formal object very hard to define. As Mitchell explains: "I often experience something as *dangerous for me*, such that in paradigmatic cases of fear the relevant intentional content approximates to *danger for me*" (Mitchell, 2017, p. 70). How can this *for-me-ness* be accounted for? In cases of aesthetic emotions or nostalgia for example, what is represented seems to be vague. The formal object is not definable in a way that seems to capture the complexity of what is felt.

To explain emotion phenomenology in terms of intentional content, SIe could extend the notion of intentional content from *representations* to *impressions*. To say that the emotion is directed as the *impression* of danger for example, and not at the danger for everyone, would explain that there is danger for me that can differ from the danger for you because we have different impressions of danger. It would enable the intentional content to be more complex than a mere evaluation because it would depend on one's feeling of it. It would therefore account for inter and intra-personal variations of feelings while exposed to a same formal object. According to Montague, "emotional experiences are more than just evaluative *representations*, they are also evaluative *experiences*" (Montague, 2009, p. 187). According to her, SI cannot account for emotions because its explanation relies on representations only.

However, the notion of intentional content becomes trivial and even circular if it means that the emotion has a representation but is not explained or captured by it. Saying that the intentional content is somehow experiential still leaves this experiential part unexplained. And saying that the experiential component explains the phenomenology is circular. With such a loose definition of intentional content, anything goes. The intentional content does not clearly differ from qualia if it is explained in terms of impressions. Impressions designate no more than an undefined effect that something has on someone, a subjective feeling. If this is how we should understand the intentional content of emotion, it would appear that SIe cannot give a satisfactory account of emotional phenomenology. Impressions, like qualia, seem to be another term for phenomenology, rather than constituting an explanation of it. Without a satisfactory explanation of these qualitative features, these accounts remain incomplete.

A possibility is to abandon SI for emotions and to accept that what emotions are directed cannot account for what emotions feel like. And if one wants to avoid the conclusion that the phenomenology of emotion warrants a novel explanation, distinct from the explanation of the phenomenology of other mental states, one can even bite the bullet and accept that the experience of perception, emotion, or any other mental state, also depends on what Crane thinks a non-intentionalist theory implies: "a supposedly non-intentional state or property [which is purely mental and] has no intentional structure: it is not directed on anything, it has no intentional object, no aspectual shape" (Crane, 2003, p. 9). These non-intentionalist theories have to accept that something like "qualia" is at the irreducible basis of the phenomenology of experiences.

It seems to us that rather than being fully demonstrated, the inadequacy of SIe is often taken for granted or only relies on few canonical examples. If so, it is not yet time to abandon SIe. SIe has

the advantage of offering a naturalist-friendly account of mental states that explains their phenomenal character in virtue of their intentional content. However, in order to defend SIe, we must meet the foregoing objections that. We will now consider the inextricable link between phenomenology and emotional content before presenting Tye's SIe.

3. The inextricable link and Tye's SIe

At this stage, if SIe is the best candidate to explain emotion phenomenology, it has to avoid the aforementioned problems. To do so, it still has to explain how the intentional content of emotions can both be genuine and explain changes in phenomenology. Both Mendelovici and Kriegel have been defending what Lutz (2015) calls the "inextricable link", according to which the intentionality of emotions and their phenomenology are closely bound together. Their accounts consist in redefining the intentional content outside of formal objects, situating the object of representation "internally". We will describe these accounts and show why they cannot save SIe, and that these accounts do not constitute a satisfactory alternative to SIe. To our knowledge, Tye's SIe is the only SI theory of emotions defended. It consists in explaining the part of the intentional content in terms of bodily changes. We will then describe his theory and show that it fails to adequately explain emotion experience.

3.1. Kriegel and Mendelovici internalism: the "inextricable link"

Kriegel (2002) proposes to save intentionalism by describing the intentional content of emotions in terms of the causal power of particular objects (p.223). The content of anger for example, is the power that something has to trigger anger for some people. According to this view, the representation of this potentiality in a given situation is what elicits the emotion in question and its feeling. The phenomenology of my anger corresponds to the representation of a particular object – say, my sister's action – as causing me anger. In this case, the intentional content of my anger is the actualization of the potentiality of my sister's action to cause me anger.

This view explains some of the possible variations in phenomenology: it first responds to the problem of the non-correspondence between emotion's intentional contents and emotion types. The absence of fear while still representing the danger of not paying one's bill would simply come from a non-attribution of a causal power – causing one's fear – by the emoter. The dangerous aspect of not paying one's bill is represented by you when you are scared (or by me in some instances) but not by me when I am very busy, where I only represent that not paying my bill can be dangerous, without representing that it is actually dangerous. It also avoids the problem of recalcitrant emotions: one can represent the potential danger in a spider – spiders are potentially dangerous – even if the actual spider is not dangerous.

However, his account does not seem to explain changes in the intensity that occur without changes in the emotion content: in the case of the father's increasing happiness for his baby, exposed by Lutz, the intentional content would be the baby represented as instantiating the property of being admirable to the father. To account for an increasing feeling of happiness, Kriegel would have to say that the intentional content is *more represented* than before, or that the representation can get more intense. But how could the representation of this property intensify? This needs further explanation. The possibility for the admirability towards the baby to trigger more happiness or a more intense emotion is not accounted for by Kriegel's analysis.

Moreover, if his view avoids the problem of a non-genuine aspect of intentionality by removing the notion of formal object from the explanation of the intentional content, the problem of circularity reappears. Here is why: according to Kriegel, whether the causal power of an object is represented –i.e. whether the potentiality of something to be angering is part of the intentional content of someone's mental state– is relative to the emoter (p.222). The question of the for-me-ness reappears. As Lutz notices: "the phenomenal character of anger would be due to the fact that it represents an object as angering where being angering is analyzed as causing anger" (Lutz 2015, p.324). What explains the fact that sometimes or for some people only, these dispositions are actualized and create a phenomenal character of anger? These differences cannot be accounted for in terms of experiences or feelings when they are supposed to explain emotional feelings. It would be to say that the disposition to cause anger is actualized and creates anger in someone when someone feels angry. This feeling would then be the cause of the actualization of the disposition of anger. If this disposition is supposed to explain the phenomenology of anger, this is indeed circular.

Kriegel proposes to assess the physical reality of this intentional content (and therefore of the phenomenology) by describing it as a set of "dispositions to elicit neurophysiological states" (Kriegel, 2009, p. 93). This is similar to Mendelovici's (Mendelovici, 2014) account of the phenomenology of emotions, according to which the content of the representation is constituted not by objects in the world, but by "edenic affective properties", properties that she recently describes as phenomenal, because being "literally in our head" (Mendelovici, 2018). We think that the idea of an internalist view of emotional content is the path to follow. We will develop an internalist theory, according to which the nature of the representation of the emotional content is indexed by the emoter.

However, if Kriegel and Mendelovici's explanations break the circle, they are still incomplete: what are the conditions for some of these states to be realized? Why are some of them elicited in some circumstances or for some people when others are not? To answer these questions, more has to be said about the emoters themselves. Moreover, neither of them defends a SIe: they both consider that the phenomenology of emotions cannot be entirely explained by the representation of their object. However, it will become clear, this is a strong obstacle to an integrative account of the phenomenal character of mental states.

To avoid this circularity and to ensure the genuine aspect of the intentional content, while offering an account of the phenomenology of emotions consistent with the one he develops for visual perception, Tye's SIe consists in adding the representation of one's bodily changes in the intentional content of emotions. We will now discuss this solution.

3.2. Tye's SIe: the intentional body

According to Tye (2008), emotions are intentional states and their phenomenology is fully determined by their intentional content. His view is a SIe. Tye's strategy to apply SI to emotions is to count the bodily changes involved in emotions as some of the objects of representation--that is, as part of the intentional content. This allows him to account for the variances in phenomenology in terms of intentionality. According to him, the intentional content of an emotion is constituted by the representation of:

a) the object, typically external to the emoter's body, that has a certain value (it seems that Tye considers the emotion object as encompassing both the particular and the formal object)
b) the bodily changes that occur in the emoter
c) the relation between both of these components

So, for instance, on Tye's view, if I feel angry at my friend, the phenomenology of my emotion comes from (a) the representation of what my friend did to me as being offensive, (b) the representation of my heart pounding and my muscles tensing, and (c) the representation that (a) is causing (b). According to Tye, the representation of all these features constitutes the intentional content of an emotion and entirely captures the emotion's phenomenal feel. My representing (a-c) fully accounts for my angry feeling and nothing about my feeling of anger is left unexplained or goes beyond the explanation of these (a-c) intentional features.

Tye's strategy to explain the phenomenology consists in describing the subjective aspect of the intentional content as a representation of one's body in relation to the formal object of an emotion. It has this advantage in responding to the problem of the non-genuine aspect of formal objects without facing the problem of circularity: it explains the phenomenology in terms of an 'external' representation, a representation of a state of affairs that could be externally observed; that is a representation of the bodily changes. So, the formal object is only a part of the intentional content, which accounts for the *reality* of the danger, and the representation of one's body adds some richness to the intentional content. It can account for the vague aspect of some aesthetic emotions (the representation of the body is itself vague) or the subjective aspect of nostalgia (the feeling depends on how the body reacts).

Tye's SIe could explain some of the variation in phenomenology in absence of variations in the formal object, as when the thought of not paying one's bill triggers fear in one person and no emotion in someone else: in the first case, there is no representation of bodily changes (it is an absence of b) or no representation of the relation between these changes and the fact of not paying the bill (no c), and that explains the absence of feeling scared. It can also account for recalcitrant emotions where one would otherwise represent heights as being safe but while feeling their body react in front of a cliff, starts to relate this reaction to the heights and considers it dangerous.

The phenomenology is not explained by a mere feeling or an impression. Instead, it is explained in terms of bodily changes (b), and their relation to the evaluative component of the emotions (c). Such a view could then account for the change in intensity of the father's happiness: rocking his baby to sleep in his arms triggers new or more intense bodily changes in the father who feels his body reacting, and this accounts for the fact that his happiness intensifies.

However, a major challenge for Tye's SIe involves explaining why bodily changes are necessarily accompanied by a representation during an emotion episode. It might well be the case that emotions always involve bodily changes[8], and it is plausible that these changes are sometimes represented. Such a representation of one's body can even trigger a feeling in some

[8] So we are not arguing against the fact that bodily changes are necessary components of emotions and of emotion phenomenology.

circumstances (as when one becomes (more) scared because suddenly realizing that her body is shaking for example). But all this only means that the representation of bodily changes might sometimes explain part of our emotional experiences, and that an emotion's intentional content might in those cases be partly explained by the representation of bodily changes. However, it seems very plausible that during some emotional episodes, one is not aware of representing one's body reacting to something, or that one is not aware of representing it this way, even one's body is reacting.

These feelings or representations of bodily changes are not always in the picture. More than a mere plausibility, emotions researchers have shown that an emotion can occur without being represented (Tsuchiya & Adolphs, 2007), or even felt (Adolphs & Andler, 2018; Prinz, 2005), *while the bodily changes that they are associated with are still present*. In Tye's picture though, in order to corroborate SI, SIe requires these features not only to occur but to be accurately felt or consciously represented.

Furthermore, Tye's description of intentional content implies that emotion phenomenology corresponds to highly complex representations. Lutz explains:

> I believe that many would agree that this conception of the intentional content of emotion is highly doubtful. It seems quite implausible that in the intentional content of my anger, the friend's delay is represented as angering and as causing the fastening of my heartbeat and the other bodily changes that typically accompany anger. (2015 fn,. p. 323)

A possible response to these two objections would consist in considering that the representation of the body is a broad impression rather than a complex or even an accurate one. This response would avoid the problem of complexity described by Lutz, and show that bodily changes do not have to be represented at a fine-grained level, but rather in a more subjective way. It would then even be compatible with Jamesian views of emotions according to which the feeling of anger comes from a feeling of one's body.

But this picture replaces the problem of representing the formal objects by the problem of representing bodily changes, and brings one back to the dilemma between the non-genuine aspect and the circular explanation of the representation of emotional content. Here is why: if the representation of the body does not depend only on actual changes (one cannot represent *accurately all* of one's bodily changes, after all), but also on whether and how accurately the emoter represents the bodily changes, then the intentional content consists in a representation of an impression (the way my body is *for me*) rather than a representation of a genuine entity (the way my body *really is*). So we are again facing this circle that can be broken only if this for-me-ness is explained. Tye considers the representation to be an objective one, therefore he does not provide such an explanation.

Secondly, it is not clear how the representation of changes in the body can explain emotion valences: what in the representation of one's bodily changes would possibly account for someone's negative feeling of fear or positive feeling of happiness? Why would it be my representation of my body's reaction that explains these aspects? Bodily changes do not seem to be what the emotion is about or directed at.

Finally, if one's representation of oneself is involved in the intentional content of one's emotion, why would this representation be only about how one represents one's own body, and not about other aspects of oneself, such as one's own choices, beliefs, desires, etc.? Adding these components might make the content too complex to be easily describable, but one still has to give reasons to choose the body over other possible component parts. The explanation of the for-me-ness in terms of physiology seems to be a convenient explanation to account for the bodily changes that occur during an emotion episode. But without further justification, it seems to be ad hoc.

If the intentional content of emotion is neither a value judgment nor a representation of the body, the subjectivity of emotional experience is still lacking an explanation. Can emotional phenomenology still be explained fully by the emotion's intentional content?

We suggest that it can. To show how, we need to first see that the intentional content of emotion is different than most in the literature on emotions have thought. It does not necessitate anything more than the attribution of a formal object to a particular object. However, there is a subjective aspect to the story of attribution. If this is true, the solution to the difficulty of SIe lies in the explanation about the way one attributes a value to an object. We propose a modified strong intentionalist theory of emotions, called "internal intentionalism" (hereafter ii). Our account explains how an emotional feeling is fully determined by the emotion's intentional content, even in cases where the valence or the intensity of emotional phenomenology seems to be at variance with the emotion's intentional content.

4. SIe modified: internal intentionalism (ii)

From the previous developments, we can now assess that a satisfactory account of SIe will have to explain both how the intentional content can be genuine and how inter- and intra-subjective variations in phenomenology can occur, without being circular (i.e. without referring to impressions or differences of phenomenology in its explanation).

4.1. A new characterization of emotional intentionality

We suggest that *the intentional content* of any emotional experience is the emoter's representation of the formal object specifically attributed to a particular object, where the attribution of the formal object to the particular object is determined in part by the emoter's concerns in the shaping of the evaluation. In other words, the intentional content of an emotion is the result of an important matter for a particular object that creates an evaluation highly *dependent on* the emoter.

First, this definition implies that the intentional content encompasses the particular object, it is not a representation of the formal object on its own, independently of its object. The formal object is a value *attached* or attributed to the particular object, but not necessarily represented on its own. That allows ii to answer Kriegel's objection according to which the formal object is not always represented by the emoter. In other words, the formal object is attributed to the particular object without being itself represented *independently of the particular object*. Following Kriegel's example, when one fears the dog, it is the dog that is represented, as Kriegel noticed, and the danger is only represented as being inherently attached to the dog.

Secondly, following Crane (2003) and Tye (2008), we can say that this intentional content is not necessarily propositional. The evaluation or categorization that leads to the experience can be very minimally cognitively demanding. A baby can distinguish a tomato from its surrounding stimuli and represent the tomato as a distinct entity without representing a proposition. Similarly, it might turn out that one can admire a piece of art or regret some old times without representing any proposition about them. Contrary to Lutz' claims, this process is not particularly cognitively demanding.

Thirdly, and this is where our view differs from the previous explanations of intentionality of emotions; this characterization encompasses two important ideas. The first idea is that 1). the representation is *specific,* meaning that it is about the impact that an object or a situation has for the emoter at the present moment, for a particular person or group of people, rather than *general,* (where the emoter judges it as impacting people in general, at any time). Accordingly, on our view the intentional content of my anger towards my friend is the representation of the wrongdoing my friend committed against me, at the present moment, that makes my friend's action "actually offensive for me", rather than the simple representation of her wrongdoing that makes it "offensive in general". The evaluation of the wrongdoing can be understood as a formal object – offensiveness –, where offensiveness means "wrong-for-me-now".

The second idea is that 2). what makes this representation (i.e. this specific attribution of a formal object to a particular object) possible, is that the evaluation is indexed to the emoter. An evaluation is always shaped by an individual. But in the case of an emotion, the emoter's evaluation is *significantly dependent* on the emoter's identity rather than *trivially dependent* on her. The intentional content of my anger at my friend is not only my evaluation of an objective wrongdoing[9], but also the evaluation of the wrongdoing shaped by my particular interests. This evaluation is shaped by my self, who I am, what I value. Being angry at my friend is an evaluation that is significantly shaped by me.

This implies that the difference between a non-emotional evaluation and an emotional one depends on the degree to which the identity of the emoter is shaping her representation. A judgment or a belief imply evaluations that depend only trivially of the cognizer, whereas an emotion implies an evaluation that significantly depends on her.

Saying that the representation of the formal object applied to the particular object depends on the emoter does not commit us to appealing to bodily reactions – which would be externally, objectively measurable components – but rather on one's personal characteristics at the time of the attribution. The representation of the formal object is shaped by one's past experiences, personality traits, identity, and other current mental states; in other words, internal components. These components have a role to play in the representation of the formal object that triggers the emotion. This is why we call our view "internal intentionalism" (hereafter ii).

[9] Our view is compatible with a realism about values, though it does not necessarily imply it. "Objective" here could be replaced by "inter-subjective agreement" without changing our view or its conclusions.

Take your judgment that you are going to die one day. You might not feel any death anxiety right now, even while reading this. But it is possible that if we were making you imagine it more vividly, asking you to take time to consider what it means for you, trying to make you represent yourself while dead, and making you really reflect on this impossibility of representation, you would likely experience anxiety. This possibility depends *on who you are.* If you do not get emotional, according to our view, it is because you do not really envision such a situation through your own perspective. Perhaps you are phlegmatic, or you believe in reincarnation, or you're just too bored or distracted to seriously entertain thoughts about your own death. Each of these explanations can in turn be explained by features of you: some personality traits (you are phlegmatic), other general characteristics (you believe in reincarnation), specific current mental states (you are bored by this paper), actual circumstances that are impacting you (you just survived a near-death experience), etc. All these properties may make you *detached* from the belief that you are going to die one day. Hence, you may represent this belief in a way that is comparatively *independent* of your cares and concerns. Because you are not particularly considering this situation from your perspective, the evaluation that you are making is generic: it is the same at any time about anyone. An important consequence of our view of formal objects is that once they become vivid and embedded, our evaluations necessarily become emotional.

To summarize, the intentional content of an emotion is a representation of an object in the world that acquires a specific value because the emoter is strongly implicated in the shaping their representation of this evaluation. The evaluation of the intentional content of an emotion depends significantly of the emoter. The phenomenology of emotion experience is captured by this representation. For example, ii entails that the intense and negative feeling of anger towards my friend is captured by the representation of my friend's action as being offensive towards me.

4.2. How ii avoids the aforementioned objections

4.2.1. On the genuine aspect of the Intentional content of emotions

Our definition of the intentional content can account for the experiential character of emotions in terms of representation without remaining incomplete. The intentional content of emotion is understood as a representation of a value on a particular object, where this representation is an active attribution, that comes from a subjective point of view. The intentional content, that is the formal object – the offensiveness – therefore depends on the emotional object and a value on the one side – my friend's wrong action –, and on who I am on the other. Both this valued object and myself are genuine entities.

What is mind-dependent however is my attribution of "offensiveness". But it is genuine in the sense that it corresponds to a publicly-observable object or event. In fact, the offensiveness means "wrong-for-me-now". The physical reality of this for-me-ness can be understood as the one of my biological and social self, composed by a set of actual neurophysiological states (and not just as "dispositions to elicit neurophysiological states" as Kriegel suggests. It means that, depending on who I am – understood in the sense of who I am with my current mental states –, I might not represent the wrongdoing as specifically offensive, and a threat might not be represented as being specifically dangerous. The valued object constitutes the content of the emotion experience. Because the formal object is one's attribution of this value-for-one-now to a

particular object, the formal object is not a mysterious entity. Attributions can be explained by one's past experiences, biological constitution, social and cultural background, etc., and all these features are explainable in terms of neurophysiological states.

Inter-individual differences can then also be accounted for: most of the time, most people will be scared of the same object. But some individual differences can explain interindividual differences in emotional responses to common stimuli. For instance, a military education can prevent fear from occurring in front of danger, or a drug consumption can prevent anger from being present while facing a wrongdoing.

This even leaves room for misattribution. Most of the time, we attribute offensiveness to actions that most people would agree are wrong. But it is possible that there is a mismatch between the two. Let us now consider these cases.

4.2.2. On how the intentional content accounts for the phenomenology and its changes

In the case of recalcitrant emotions, one can evaluate that something is generally not dangerous but still be scared by evaluating a specific danger. In this case, according to ii, this evaluation is not a representation of something in the world that can or will impact one: I know this dog is not dangerous in general, even for me. It is rather a representation of this thing as actually impacting one. This dog could bite me, jump on me, kill me; so it is dangerous for me now.

The opposite case is possible too: recall that one's evaluation can lead to no emotion at all, as in the example of not paying one's bill. This illustrates a difference between cold-blood judgments and emotional ones. According to ii, the represented attribution of the formal object to the particular object does not just amount to attributing a general property to a particular object. In order to trigger an emotion, the evaluation has to be specific: the intentional content is then constituted by a value attributed to an object at the present moment for someone. When I judge that it's dangerous not to pay my bill, even though I am not afraid, the two states—judging the situation as dangerous and being afraid of the situation—do not have the same intentional content. In the first case, I represent not paying my bill as being dangerous for me, but I do not represent this danger towards me at the present moment; or I represent it as being dangerous right now for people in general who do not pay their bill, but not specifically for me. In the second case, the emotional one, I represent the danger towards me, specifically now, while I am not paying my bill at this present time where I could be doing so. It is this representation that constitutes a negative valence and an intense feeling of fear associated with not paying my bill[10].

But what can explain the difference? Why can I have some cold-blood judgments about actions that I am performing right now which I believe are dangerous? Why don't I evaluate them as impacting me at the present moment, and so fail to have an emotion? We suggest that in the first case, the evaluation is not (or is insufficiently) indexed to one's identity. One's particular interests, narrative, personality traits, current mental states, etc. are not shaping (or at a low degree) the representation. In a cold-blooded judgment, what is represented as significant is the situation, more than the cognizer herself. Therefore, I can evaluate that a situation is dangerous

[10] This does not rule out that judging that something is dangerous might still have a phenomenology, an experiential component, but the question of the phenomenology of thoughts or judgments is beyond the scope of this chapter.

without being scared. By contrast, in the emotional case, the evaluation is indexed to the emoter. The emoter is a part of the intentional content of the emotion more than she is in the case of a cold-blood judgment.

If the emotional feeling comes from an attribution of a formal object to what a particular object is doing to one, a change in the intensity of a feeling towards a particular object should imply a change in the intentional content of the emotion experience.

In the father's change of feeling towards his baby, feeling happier can be the result of representing more joy, because of a new action of the particular object towards him: the baby now sleeping in his arms. In this case, there is a change in the particular object that is represented. But it can also be that the father is more implicated in the representation of the adoration or the joy associated to the baby. He has greater adoration for his baby as a result of having more preferences and particular interests at play than previously. The intentional content is now an admirability towards his baby that is way more specific, because it is more indexed by his own self.

It is no longer ad hoc to say that the intentional content of the emotion changes: the father's delight in his baby is precisely the representation of the joy associated with what his baby is doing to him. Saying that the adoration is changing means that the representation changes – the baby is now in his arms, – or that the value attributed to his baby towards him intensifies – they are now having a more meaningful interaction because his own self has changed. The intentional content is changing in the sense that the value – adoration – takes another dimension for the emoter – it becomes stronger for him, and as a result, more specific. This variation corresponds to a change of intensity in the feeling. In this case too, a change in the emotion's intentional content corresponds to a change in the represented value.

4.2.3. On how ii avoids the problems of Tye's SIe

ii can also respond to the problem of Tye's SIe. Recall that following Tye's SIe, the bodily changes had to be represented for an emotion to occur. This view could go both ways: it could mean that actual bodily changes had to be systematically represented by the emoter, which was unlikely; or that it had appearances of circularity if the actual bodily changes and their representations where only corresponding in a weak sense, in terms of mere impressions (in this case, Tye's SIe did not account for the subjective aspect of impressions that are supposed to explain the phenomenology of emotions).

So how can the for-me-ness be accounted for by ii? How can it be integrated to the intentional content of an occurrence of fear, or of an aesthetic emotion, without relying on some purely phenomenal properties not explainable in terms of representation?

According to ii, the subjective aspect of an emotion's intentionality comes from the reflexive representation of the emoter in the attribution of the formal object to the particular object. Saying that I represent the dangerousness specifically means that I represent it as moving *me, or*

someone else as if it were me[11]. I represent something as threatening given my preferences, my past experiences, my personality traits, my identity, physiology, etc. Individual differences in these dimensions of the way an emoter represents themselves will explain how one and the same particular object can give rise to different emotions in different people. The intentional content of each person's emotion will differ according to their background, identity and personality[12]. It is now immune to the problem of circularity. It entails that the valence and intensity of an emotion are only defined by the attribution of the formal object of an emotion type to a particular object, where the attribution captures the relationship that the emoter takes the particular object to bear toward her.

4.3. Advantages of ii: its application to visual perception

One could object that ii is not more justified than Tye's SIe, and that if it is not intuitive that the body is actually represented for our emotions to occur, it might well be the case. One could also hope that something compatible with Tye's SIe could still be found and explain the subjective aspect of the intentional content. However, Tye's view makes the intentionality of emotion a special "affective" kind of intentionality that has to differ from the phenomenology of other mental states. On the contrary, an important advantage of ii is that it entails a version of representationalism that is not specific to emotions: it can be equally applied to other mental states, like perception.

Tye's SIe is different from his SI of perception: in perceptions, the representation of one's body and the representation of the relation between the body and the world is not present; the feeling of a red tomato is explained by the representation of the red tomato, not by how the perceiver represents her body towards it.

If ii was applied to visual perception, the representation of the intentional content of a red tomato would be what gives the phenomenal or experiential character to the visual experience of a red tomato. The intentional content would be defined by the red tomato that is visually affecting oneself, which means it would be a representation of something to which one attributes redness and other potential characteristics of tomatoes (and maybe the concept "tomato"). Like in emotions, ii does not stipulate any representation of a value or a quality independently of the particular object; like the dangerousness was not represented independently of the dog, the redness is not represented independently of the tomato. But it is still part of its intentional content and attributed to the tomato.

As for emotion, ii can hold that this evaluation in visual perception is always indexed by the perceiver (trivially, without a perceiver who is seeing red, something can still be red but there is no red experience), but also that it can be highly dependent on her in some circumstances, and that this dependency is what shapes the phenomenology of visual perception. A visual experience of red necessarily implies a perceiver able to see something red as red. A red object is not

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[11] ii can therefore capture emotions that are sometimes felt for other people, like in certain cases of embarrassment for someone else, or cases of empathy for example. We cannot develop an account for these cases here. But we believe that in these cases, the emotion includes a representation that is highly indexed by the emoting individual. That has the potential to explain why empathy is more felt for others that "resemble" us (REF).

[12] These components are not necessarily conscious or noticed, they probably rarely are.

sufficient to constitute the intentional content of a perception, and different types of perceptions are a function of the perceiver' relationship to the external world. Merely representing that something is red doesn't amount to having an experience of red. A colorblind person can know that a tomato is red, because other people told them so, but nevertheless does not have an experience of red. For this experience to occur, one needs to represent the red properties through one's vision. When one experiences a red tomato, what is represented is the tomato, and the redness, and so this representation depends on one's physiology, one's concepts, etc. And this representation gives the visual perception its phenomenology.

Visual perceptions are not less subjective than emotions in virtue of their intentional content. These representations vary across people. And if it is less obvious for ordinary cases of visual perception than for beliefs, desires, and judgments, colorblindness offers a clear case of the genuine aspect of the subjective and internal – as opposed to out there or external – intentionality of perception. The differences we see in colorblindness show that even visual perception is indexed to the perceiver in a sense functionally analogous to the way that emotions are indexed to the emoter. Variations in phenomenology in both cases depend on the degree to which the mental state (the belief that can be an emotion in one case, or the visual perception in another) depends on the cognizer. In the same way, it allows hallucinations, illusions, or mistakes, to be understood as types of representations and cases where the indexation of the cognizer makes the perception highly dependent on her compared to ordinary cases where the perception is only trivially dependent on her. It can also be the case with ordinary thoughts: "You and I can be thinking about the same person, but you think of him as Cicero and I think of him as Tully" (Crane, 2003, p. 130).

As one might believe something is wrong without being offended (therefore not angry), or not be scared of a situation that they judge to be dangerous, most of the time, one will see red while experiencing red phenomenal properties; but some individual differences can explain a different perceptual experience: being colorblind can prevent you from experiencing red even when you see something that has red properties.

Conclusion

This paper proposes a new SI view of emotion, called internal intentionalism (ii), where the intentional content of emotion is understood as the emotional value that a particular object has for the subject. We argue that ii solves problems that face other strong intentionalist accounts of emotion. We consider objections to Tye's account in particular and show how our modified SI about emotion can meet them. In our treatment, we show that while Tye's characterization of the intentional content of emotion is not satisfactory, there is still room for SI about emotions.

Our modification shows how SI can explain emotional phenomenology. In contrast with Tye's attempts, our characterization of the intentional content does not have to be specific to emotions. By avoiding the use of an ad hoc solution that exclusively accommodates emotion experience, our internal intentionalism is a candidate to account for the phenomenology of other types of mental states. It could notably account for the phenomenology of visual perception, since it is compatible with Tye's SI about perception.

ii raises issues that call for further discussion. First, for emotion research, our description of the intentional content of emotions implies that we should distinguish between values and formal objects. As a consequence, the words "danger" and "frightening" for example cannot be used interchangeably: a detached value judgment of danger is not what *the frightening* is. The danger gives its intentional content to an experience of fear (and becomes *the frightening*), when it is represented by an individual as attached to what the particular object of the emotion bears towards her. Without the representation of danger being specific, an action can still be considered as dangerous, but not *frightening*[13]. This highlights another important conceptual consequence: the frightening aspect of something exists only if one feels scared; and the offensiveness is there only and only if one feels angry. There might still be a danger or a wrongdoing without anybody representing them emotionally (our view does not commit to this view nor to its contrary), but there won't be any frightening nor offensiveness. Without the emotion of fear, an object can be dangerous, but not frightening. Without anger, a situation could be wrong, but not offensive. We grant that people will often describe something as offensive even if no person seems yet to be angered by it. In these cases, we suggest, the speaker is suggesting that the thing they describe as offensive is the sort of thing that is likely to offend or anger someone, even if it has not yet upset anyone. It seems incorrect to describe something as offensive without an imagined or expected person who might be offended.

Secondly, similarly for perception, the baby who does not associate anything about the color red to what she sees is not experiencing red. In order to experience red, she minimally needs to treat red as distinct from the other surrounding colors in her environment. If she cannot even distinguish a tomato from the other surrounding components of her environment, while she might be looking right at the tomato, she is not visually experiencing the tomato. Our view account for this fact.

More generally, ii suggests that even SI about perception should be modified. SI advocates claim that that phenomenal qualities of our awareness of external objects are properties of external objects, rather than properties of our mental state. However, external, mind-independent objects do not have intentional properties on their own. It is mental states that have intentional properties. This comes out when we attend to SI's treatment of cases of non-veridical perception or hallucination. SI needs to say that the phenomenal features of non-veridical experiences (like hallucinations) are the same as those of veridical perceptions, though there is no object out in the world that has the properties the colorblind person or the hallucinator would attribute. Hence, SI comes out looking much more like a species of indirect realism than we might have expected[14].

Our account suggests another important route of inquiry. The debates surrounding strong intentionalism have been associated with the claim that perception is transparent. The transparency thesis posits that the intentional content of a state explains or captures its phenomenology. Contrary to the idea that there would still be something left in the phenomenology that goes beyond the representation of the emotion content, our view could allow the possibility of transparency of emotions: nothing in the feeling would not already be captured by the representation of the content of the emotional episode. Our view could therefore come as a support for the transparency thesis applied to emotions and contradict the view that emotions are

[13] We take it here that the frightening implies that an individual is frightened, contrary to the dangerous.

[14] For a more detailed treatment of this issue, see Zigman (2018, p. 49).

not transparent in the way that perceptual states are supposed to be. Finally, if emotional content is always a representation which fully explains the emotion's feeling, as we claimed, this will have consequences on the possibility for emotions to occur unconsciously. Therefore, our view also has implications for theories of emotional consciousness.

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