An approach to the non-conceptual content of emotions

Una aproximación al contenido no-conceptual de las emociones

ALEJANDRO MURILLO LARA[a]

CARLOS MUÑOZ SERNA[b]

Abstract

There is the intuition that some emotions do not sustain a cognitively demanding reading of their representational content. However, it is not evident how to articulate that intuition—and the mere claim that the content of those emotions is not conceptual (or, alternatively, that it is non-conceptual; see, for instance, Tappolet, 2016) does not shed light on the specific way in which those emotions represent. We, therefore, develop a proposal with the aim of giving substance to the claim that emotions involve non-conceptual mental content. The thesis that we defend entails that certain emotions are intrinsically motivational, specifically that their content is action-oriented and presents the world in terms of intrinsically motivational possibilities for action. Then we delve into the way this thesis stands in regard to views according to which the essence of emotions lies in the attitude rather than in the content (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, 2015), or others in which emotions have to do with action-readiness rather than with action itself (Scarantino, 2014)—as well as in regard to doubts on the very notion of non-conceptual content. Finally, we examine some consequences deriving from the proposal (having to do with the so-called irrationality of some emotions and the notion of basic emotion, among others) and its position relative to notable approaches to emotion (cognitive, perceptual, attitudinal and motivational).

[a] Universitaria Agustiniana, Bogotá, Colombia. Doutor en Filosofía, e-mail: luis.murillo@uniagustiniana.edu.co

[b] Universitaria Agustiniana, Bogotá, Colombia. Magister en Filosofía, e-mail: carlos.munoz@uniagustiniana.edu.co

Resumen

Existe la intuición de que algunas emociones no permiten una lectura cognitivamente exigente de su contenido representacional. Sin embargo, no es evidente cómo articular esta intuición—y la mera afirmación de que el contenido de esas emociones es no es conceptual (o, alternativamente, que es no-conceptual; véase, por ejemplo, Tappolet, 2016) no aclara la forma específica en que esas emociones representan. Por tanto, desarrollamos una propuesta con el objetivo de dar sustancia a la afirmación de que las emociones involucran contenido mental no-conceptual. La tesis que defendemos implica que ciertas emociones son intrínsecamente motivacionales, específicamente que su contenido está orientado a la acción y presenta el mundo en términos de posibilidades de acción intrínsecamente motivacionales. Seguidamente, examinamos la manera en que esta tesis se sitúa con respecto a enfoques según las cuales la esencia de las emociones está en la actitud más que en el contenido (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, 2015) u otros en los que las emociones tienen que ver con la preparación para la acción más que con la acción misma (Scarantino, 2014)—así como con respecto a dudas sobre la noción misma de contenido no-conceptual. Por último, examinamos algunas consecuencias que se derivan de nuestra propuesta (relacionadas con la denominada irracionalidad de algunas emociones y la noción de emoción básica, entre otras) y su posición con respecto a reconocidas aproximaciones a las emociones (cognitiva, perceptual, actitudinal y motivacional).

Palabras clave*: Emociones. Contenido no-conceptual. Emociones recalcitrantes. Representaciones orientadas a la acción. Emociones básicas.*

Introduction

When we are afraid, disgusted or in anger, we are afraid *of a barking dog*, disgusted *by rotten food*, angry *with a despotic boss*. Emotions are thus about objects or facts. In the philosophical jargon, emotions are intentional, representational mental states—an idea that has dominated emotion theory for years (Scarantino, 2018, 2014; Deonna & Teroni, 2012). How do emotions represent? Claiming that the representational content of emotions involves propositions and concepts would lead to the conclusion that cognitively simple creatures (as infants or dogs) cannot have emotions, and does not seem to do justice to the simplicity with which even human adults experience some emotions. Since emotions are representational mental states but in some cases their content does not involve too sophisticated cognitive elements,

some theorists (Tappolet, 2000, 2016) have postulated that emotions have non-conceptual mental content.

Yet, this claim is not very informative. Conceptual content is the epitome of a cognitively sophisticated representational content, so—until we have given a substantial characterization of the non-conceptual way in which emotions represent—the claim that emotions have non-conceptual content only rehashes the idea that the content of some emotions cannot be too cognitively demanding. Besides, "non-conceptual mental content" does not refer to a unitary notion, but to a series of views about presentations of the world that would not involve the mastery of concepts. Those views sometimes differ in crucial aspects and might even be incompatible (Bermúdez & Cahen, 2015).

For instance, Peacocke (2004) proposes that perceptual experience has a non-conceptual content that should be specified in terms of the ways of filling out the space around the perceiver that are consistent with the content's being correct. This specification would give us the way the perceiver represents the environment. According to Tye (2006), Peacoke's view cannot capture certain features of the non-conceptual content of visual representations. Take a square lying on one of its sides and another lying on one of its vertices. Simply indicating ways of filling out the space does not grasp the fact that we can see the second square as a diamond. Thus, Tye has proposed that the non-conceptual content of perception includes further relations than Peacocke admits (as being vertical, horizontal, and so on). For his part, Cussins (1990) takes a different route and builds an ability-based notion of non-conceptual content. In his view, that content must be specified in terms of the "basic spatial and temporal tracking and discriminatory skills which are required to find our way around the environment" (1990, p. 400).

As can be seen, most prominent approaches to non-conceptual content have been devised for perception (*visual* perception, to be precise), whereby it is unclear what notion of non-conceptual content (if any) would be applicable to emotions.[1]

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[1] Perceptual experience has been taken as the paradigm of a mental domain with non-conceptual content. Arguments for the claim that perceptual content can be non-conceptual include that our discriminatory perceptual capacities outstrip our conceptual capacities (the 'fineness of grain argument'), and that the content of perceptual illusions cannot be conceptual (the 'argument from illusion'), among others (see, Bermúdez & Cahen, 2015).

In this paper, we want to put forward a view on non-conceptual content suitable to emotions and that deals with several issues identified in the literature. First, we articulate the general view, in which we draw from the notion of action-oriented representation and the notion of a possibility for action, and then show how it could be applied to certain of emotions. Next, we consider a number of possible objections to the proposed view, having to do with its necessity, its reference to the world, and its stance on key issues to which the discussion on emotion theory have called attention. In the third part, we look at some consequences of the view we propose: in regard to the motivational and phenomenal dimensions of emotions and concerning the relation primitive emotions would have to other mental states, as well as regarding recalcitrance and the notion of basic emotions. Finally, we try to pinpoint the place of our proposal in the large scheme of available philosophical theories of emotions.

A view on the non-conceptual content of some emotions

First: conceptual content

Conceptual content is typically said to consist of a proposition in which concepts are involved (Crane, 1998; Tappolet, 2000); for instance, the belief that the grass is green (whose content is the proposition "the grass is green") will involve the concepts "grass" and "*green*". In that sense, if Jane does not master those concepts, she could not form such a belief. But, how can we tell that Jane understands said concepts?

Bermúdez and Cahen (2015) recommend avoiding committing to views on concept possession that may be either too liberal or too conservative[2]. A widely accepted criterion for concept possession that seems to meet this requirement is known as the "generality constraint" (Evans, 1982, p. 104). According to it, a subject masters the concepts "*a*" and "*F*" involved in the proposition "*a* is *F*" if she is able to entertain the propositions "*a* is *G*", "*a* is *H*", and so on, as well as the propositions "*b* is *F*", "*c* is *F*", and so on[3].

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[2] Rather than committing ourselves with a view on concepts, we will focus on concept possession—which keeps us closer to the main goal of our argument. We will admit any view on concepts compatible with what we say about concept possession and conceptual content.

[3] The generality constraint is thus a criterion for the possession of particular concepts rather than a stipulation of conditions for concept possession in general.

As Cussins points out (2002, p. 134), the mode of presentation of conceptual content structures the world into objects (that is, reidentifiable particulars) and properties (which are seen as mainly context-independent). Enjoying that mode of presentation entails putting certain cognitive skills into play, as reidentification skills and an allocentric perspective.

According to the previous account, conceptual content is always propositional content, and vice-versa. That could be read as the claim that only linguistic beings can enjoy conceptual content—after all, it seems to be the understanding of a series of linguistic sentences what allows to establish that the generality constraint is met. Nonetheless, it could be objected that non-linguistic beings exhibit some conceptual skills (Hurley & Nudds, 2006) and thus might enjoy conceptual content, so that we should differentiate conceptual content (that could be enjoyed by non-linguistic creatures) from propositional content (that could be enjoyed only by linguistic creatures).

It should be clear that this argument stems from a mistake. The previous account does not refer to sentences but to propositions (what sentences express), so it does not follow (at least not directly) that only linguistic creatures can enjoy propositional content. On the other hand, there will hardly be propositions in which no concepts are involved. Conversely—unless what it represents are monadic, unarticulated concepts instead of states of affairs—conceptual content needs to be (propositionally) articulated. Accordingly, in what follows we use the expressions "conceptual content" and "propositional content" interchangeably, except when if nuance is required.

Non-conceptual content: a positive version

According to the above, "content" can be seen as the way in which some aspect of the world is presented to a subject in experience or thought, and according to which she usually acts (Cussins, 2002, p. 133). Along these lines, whereas conceptual content presents the world as divided up into objects and properties (a structure that demands putting conceptual skills into play), non-conceptual content would refer to ways in which the world can be presented to a subject that are not

structured into objects, properties, and so on (so that they do not demand the mastery of concepts). But what are those latter ways in which the world is presented?

Theorists as Clark (1997) and Wheeler (2005) have developed approaches seeking to explain the fluid, flexible, real-time, and context-sensitive adaptive responses that are often labelled "online cognition". They posit the existence of a specific kind of representation involved in online cognition, in which it is more likely that the environmental items are presented in terms of possibilities for action in a particular context—they call them 'action-oriented representation' or AOR (see, Clark, 1997, p. 149; Wheeler, 2005, p. 195). That mode of presentation not only appears to be enough to accomplish the task, but also cognitively cheaper than others. As Clark puts it, it is more cognitively demanding to first have a detailed, objective model of the environment and then to define a behavioral procedure based on such a model.

However, what does it mean that representational content may be structured in terms of possibilities for action? The notion goes back to Gibson's ecological approach to perception. According to Gibson (1966, 1979), the way that the environment is available to the animal is not neutral. Instead, perception is relevant to us because of its salience to action, and the way that perception does this is in virtue of the body-specifying information that is 'co-perceived' with information about the environment. This insight is crystallized in the notion of "affordance", which according to Gibson (1979) refers both to the organism and to the environment. Affordances are described as properties resulting from their interaction, which provide the organism with actions it might carry out in its environment.

Even though affordances are the clearest way to apprehend the informational structure of a possibility for action (at the same time environment-specifying, body-specifying, and action-oriented), it cannot be overlooked that Gibson (1979) devised the concept of affordance as a theoretical alternative to representational content. So, it cannot be just assumed that some mental content is affordance-like.

Nevertheless, according to Evans (1982), mental content can be specified by referring to those abilities of the organism that characterize his distinctive ways to respond to an object. According to Cussins (2002), this is due to the fact that the

cognitive significance of those contents consists in the availability to the subject of intrinsically motivational means of finding his way in the world (p. 143). Therefore, mental content could indeed be structured in terms of intrinsically motivational possible actions on the environment[4]. If so, this content will probably have an informational structure analogue to that Gibson attributes to affordances.

According to the above, content structured as possibilities for action in a specific context only needs to present the environment in terms of what is relevant to the ongoing activity (see Clark, 1997, p. 151; Wheeler, 2005, p. 198)—for which it suffices presentations of things as what summons certain action in a context at a time. In other words, in order to fulfill its role, that content does not have to label environmental items as elements of a set or allow for reidentification—characteristic traits of conceptual content. Thus, the strong dependence on the context of activity that AORs' content has, conduces to an enormous deviation from the objective, general, context-independent conceptual contents. As Cussins has argued, content's context-dependence by virtue of which it can have direct connection action, does not fit the generality and objectivity of conceptual content (1992).[5]

Consequently, despite claims that there cannot be mental content without concepts and presentations of the world in terms of objects and properties, it seems that the environment may be nonconceptually available to a subject as possibilities for action that are intrinsically motivational, as in the content of AORs[6].

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[4] That content would refer to the abilities of the organism by presenting possibilities for action that are intrinsically motivational and that the organism is able to perform.

[5] It could be objected that those modes of presentation could indeed be seen as conceptual. According to McDowell (1994) voices like *"that shade"* can be the expression of a concept (a 'demonstrative concept') which, unlike typical general concepts, would be context-dependent and capable of capturing the detail with which our surroundings are given to us. Nevertheless, together with several reasons to doubt about the very possibility of demonstrative concepts (Kelly, 2001; Raffman, 1995), since the context at issue is one of activity it is hard to see how demonstrative concepts could grasp the mode of presentation of content structured as possibilities for action (environmental items as what summons certain action)—in other words, its specific kind of context-dependence.

[6] There can be a worry in regard to the use of sub-personal terminology in discussions of online cognition (see Clark, 1997; also, Wheeler, 2005). However, this use is not disengaged from the personal-level characterization of its content. The informational format of online cognitive activities, at the subpersonal level, easily correlates with the personal-level structure of the relevant [non-conceptual] content: the kind of coding (just enough to enable action on environmental items) coincides with the mode of presentation of the content (things as what summons one to act in certain ways).

It is not difficult to see how this conception of non-conceptual content can be applied to emotions. Some emotions can be clearly described as forms of online cognition: they take place in real time, and guide responses that are flexible and contextually adaptive (Plutchik, 1980; Nesse, 1990; Cosmides & Tooby, 2000, Scarantino, 2014). Think, for instance, of some forms of fear, disgust, and anger. In those cases, objects are presented as dangerous, threatening, or repulsive, so that those emotions are not only intentional states but such that in them their objects are valued. However, the kind of valuation those states involve is not separable from the very way in which the object is given, which also has an intrinsically motivational relation to action. In other words, the inherently evaluative way in which objects are presented in those emotions summons the subject to perform certain kinds of action in her immediate environment.

The way objects are given in those emotions could be construed as follows: in fear, for instance, something dangerous could be construed as something one is summoned to ward off from, whereas in disgust something repulsive would be something that needs to be repelled. Of course, one can experience the urge to ward off from something without grasping it as a reidentifiable particular or objective property —it is enough to grasp its relational, contextual aspects to experience it as dangerous[7].

Possible objections
Conceptual animals?

If propositional-conceptual contents are different from linguistic contents, and since young humans and some nonhuman animals lack the latter, could they have the former? The answer depends on the conditions that are sufficient for concept possession and those that are sufficient for language use[8]. It might occur that both

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[7] Things may not be that simple, however, when it comes to emotions as sadness, happiness or surprise, insofar as these emotions do not seem to involve specific patterns of action. Although these emotions are associated with particular patterns of facial muscle activations (Ekman, 1992) and with other expressions as laughter or weeping, those do not seem of the same complex kind as aversive, evasive or aggressive actions. Nonetheless, sadness, happiness, and surprise can still be said to be closely related with possibilities for action, even though not by means of specific patterns of action, by constraining the set of actions available to a subject (See Scarantino, 2014).
[8] Are inferential capacities necessary or sufficient? What about what could be called bedrock concepts, as the concept of self? The same happens with the ability to have an allocentric

set of conditions are identical. In that case, only linguistic beings would be able of enjoying conceptual content, but not be because conceptual and linguistic content are the same. If a nonlinguistic creature could possess concepts (for empirical work suggesting that it could be so, see Andrews & Beck, 2017, and Shettleworth, 2010), we would need behavioral criteria allowing to decide when they understand the propositions leading to meet the generality constraint (instead of having a different, non-conceptual understanding of their surroundings).

What if they satisfy a comprehensive set of such criteria? Why keeping the notion of non-conceptual content? As we have endorsed, there are emotions and other forms of cognition for which inference, reidentification, and the like, are neither necessary nor sufficient condition: immediate, strongly context-dependent, flexible and adaptive action-oriented forms of cognition that do not involve an allocentric perspective or going beyond the current context of activity in any way. Thus, as such, that some non-human animals could be concept users is not an argument against non-conceptual content, for the nonconceptualist shall reply that what we need to ascertain is the kind of content in play, whether the subject is a human adult or not.

'Non-objective' content

A different worry regarding our view on non-conceptual content is that it is not about the surrounding world since it does not present objects. Ours could turn out to be a somehow anti-realist version, which contrasts with the common characterization of it as a content that the subject need not possess the concepts necessary to specify. Is that stronger version well motivated?

Is our view on non-conceptual content somehow anti-realist? It is certainly non-objective. As we argued, enjoying an 'objective' mode of presentation demands putting into play conceptual skills. However, the whole point of non-conceptual content is that mental content can be about the world without it being presented as having a structure of objects and properties. In order for the criticism to succeed, it would have to be first shown that the only presentation one's surroundings can have

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perspective on the environment, as well as with reidentification (in particular in light of the reidentificatory capacities that are required for conceptual content and exhibited by many nonlinguistic creatures). Making reidentification sufficient for concept possession may face the risk of trivialization, even more if one grants a too liberal definitions of it—given the wide range of creatures that can be described, say, as recognizing stimuli.

is as an objective realm. Some anti-realist anxiety might still rise because of the claim that non-conceptual content has the structure of possibilities for action—after all, they are not strictly 'objective': they exist not only in virtue of properties of the environment but also of properties of the agent. But, even in that case, there is an unavoidable environmental component whereby there is always a reference to the subject's surroundings.

How different is our view on non-conceptual content from the "common characterization"? That the subject does not need to possess the concepts necessary to specify its content means that said concepts do not play a role in the mode of presentation she enjoys (i.e., the subject does not enjoy an 'objective' mode of presentation). So, the common characterization entails that a subject enjoying non-conceptual content does not enjoy an objective mode of presentation of the world—and we have argued that it could enjoy a presentation in terms of intrinsically motivational possibilities for action. At most, although it goes beyond the common characterization, our view can be said to draw from it (and thus sharing much of its motivation).

The non-conceptual content of emotions, attitudes and action

Two further objections may arise, this time to our contention that the content of some emotions must be sufficient to bring actions about: First, why reference to action must be part of the content of the emotion, instead of being something built into its attitude (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, 2015)? Second, if there were some reference to action in the content of the emotion, why would that content have to be sufficient to bring actions about? In view of the plethora of factors involved in bringing actions about, the milder claim that emotional content primes the subject for actions would appear to do the job (Scarantino, 2014, 2018).

After the model of 'propositional attitudes', intentional mental states have been seen as 'attitudes' towards contents. Attitudes, the relations in which a subject may stand to contents, would capture the 'cognitive mode' of the mental state given the purported neutrality of the content. Similarly, Deonna and Teroni (2012, 2015) propose that bodily dispositions towards states of affairs could also be thought of as

attitudes. Here too, it would be the "attitude" that is supposed to grasp differences in cognitive significance since content is likewise thought of as neutral (2012, p. 76-78).

Nonetheless, we have argued that the content of some intentional mental states—some emotions included—cannot be properly characterized as neutral. In some instances of fear, for example, things would be immediately given simply as what summons one to ward off from in a specific context. In those cases, cognitive significance is rather built into content, and it is closely related to action (and, *eo ipso*, the body). If so, we would not seem to need an independent account of the cognitive significance of that content, and the separation of an attitude from a content would end up being artificial and idle there.

On the other hand, the reason for positing that the content of some emotions must be sufficient cause of actions, derives both from binding phenomenological considerations and from others of parsimony. First, we experience the connection between certain emotions and action as something that does not need reasoning or deliberation, as in the examples we have been discussing. The way things are given in those emotions seems to us to inform action by themselves, without further personal-level conditions being required—hence, as it would be sufficient to bring actions about. Second, if the only relation emotional content could bear to action was priming the subject for certain actions, something would be left out in regard to those primitive cases (in particular, the initiation of action). This objection seems to have in mind emotional responses in rather complex cases, in which several factors are certainly involved. Such complexity, we maintain, is not to be taken as ubiquitous.

Some consequences
The motivational dimension of emotions

We presented a strong reading of the relation the emotions we dealt with bear to motivation, a reading in terms of an intrinsic motivational character those emotions would have. To that extent, our view would seem close to Scarantino's motivational theory (2014). However, instead of the teleosemantic theory of content advocated by him, we endorsed a view according to which the content of those emotions presents things as non-conceptual possibilities for action that summon the subject to act (thus being intrinsically motivational). That difference allows to explain why in the cases we

focused on emotions are experienced as sufficient conditions for actions and not just priming the subject to act in certain ways. Besides, unlike the teleosemantic view on the content of emotions, in our view reference to the environment does not end up being mediated by reference to bodily changes (see Deonna & Teroni, 2012, p. 86), even though the content of those emotions can at the same time inform about one's body[9].

The phenomenal dimension of emotions

Does our view account for the phenomenal or feeling aspect of emotions? It could be said that we only address the intentional and perhaps motivational aspect of emotions. This concern, we submit, derives from a spurious divide between the phenomenal and the intentional that our view purports to avoid. Consider the following question: if the emotional experience of something was fully accounted for, would the account be about the phenomenology of the emotion or about its intentionality? Arguably, it would be about both. In other words, if the way in which something is given to one has been accounted for, both the phenomenal and the intentional must have been taken into account—being summoned to ward off from something would account for the phenomenal and for the intentional aspects of the discussed forms of fear. As Goldie puts it, "an adequate account of an emotion's intentionality (…) will at the same time capture an important aspect of its phenomenology" (2002, p. 242). That is what we hope to have achieved within a limited scope of emotions.

Emotions with non-conceptual content and their relations with beliefs and other mental states

It is not hard to think of cases in which beliefs (true or not) justify emotions. However, according to McDowell's (1994) influential argument, rational relations (as justification) can only hold between mental states with conceptual content. The idea is that those relations should be describable in the form of a reasoning showing the inferential process that can take place from the content of one state to the other

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[9] Attempts to account for the intentionality of emotions in teleosemantic or causal terms clearly show one crucial difficulty of those views on content: they entail disjunctive contents (emotions are about bodily states or about environmental items) when they should not (Fodor, 1987, 1990).

(which requires those contents to be propositional). If the content of one mental state follows by correct inferential process from the content of the other mental state, we are entitled to say that the former justifies the latter. So, to the extent that emotions are involved in rational relations (as being justified by beliefs), it would follow that their content must be conceptual.

Are the kind of primitive, online emotions we have been discussing justified by beliefs? It seems that they do not. Instead, they seem to arise in the face of elements of the environment, with which they can have evidential or even logical relations (Bermúdez & Cahen, 2015; Heck, 2000; Vision, 2009). Unlike justification, those evidential or logical relations would not require the content of the relevant states to be conceptual, so that they could even be in effect when primitive emotions serve as input for other mental states.

Recalcitrant emotions

We agree with D'Arms and Jacobson (2003) and Tappolet (2012) that recalcitrant emotions are the product of two confronted modes of representation. However, as we remarked, it is necessary to specify the structure of these two modes of representation and how they interact to produce recalcitrance. If some emotions have a non-conceptual content that presents the environment in terms of intrinsically motivational possibilities for action, recalcitrance would appear when two things happen at the same time:

(a) A subject (S) represents something in his environment that calls her to start some action X.

(b) Given the properties of the situation, S infers that the appropriate action is different from X (or even $\neg$ X).

This would explain recalcitrant disgust, like that exhibited by people who refuse to drink a beverage after seeing it had come contact with a sterilized cockroach (Rozin et al., 2000): at level (a) the subjects see the beverage as something that must be avoided. However, at level (b) they know that the cockroach is sterilized and do not believe that the beverage is contaminated, leading them to the conclusion that they do not have to reject the beverage. As consequence, these two levels clash in the context of action.

It could be objected that because our proposal deals with the kind of recalcitrance that involves online emotions, it is unable to deal with recalcitrance including inferential processes that involve emotions (such as survivor's guilt). It is, however, unclear whether these latter are indeed cases of recalcitrant emotions (Greenspan, 1995). Thus, when facing something like recalcitrance in emotions that involve inferential processes, we should ask whether an alternative explanation is available.

Basic emotions

Some emotions seem to be more complex than others—compare the bare fear of facing a loose wild animal with indignation— and some emotions prompt the subject to perform some actions, while others do not necessarily lead the subject to act. According to our view, that may be due to the fact that those latter emotions involve conceptual contents (which are not intrinsically motivational). Besides, emotions that are simpler are more or less the same set of emotions that are directly related to action (and more or less the same set of emotions that are described as having a higher adaptive value; see Cosmides & Tooby, 2000; Nesse, 1990; Plutchik, 1980; Ekman, 1992). Thus, the difference between basic and non-basic emotions could be seen as a difference of content: between emotions with action-oriented non-conceptual contents, and emotions with conceptual contents.

Closing remarks

Given that some emotions seem to be still representational despite being cognitively simple or 'primitive' so to speak (which includes some instances of anger, fear, disgust, and perhaps others), we introduced a view according to which their content represent the world in terms of intrinsically motivational possibilities for action in specific contexts. Such representational content, we argued, does not require that the subject possesses the concepts required for its specification. Our contention was that that content does not require the distinction between content and attitude, is sufficient to the production of emotional action, and might encompass the phenomenal dimension of emotions. The proposal also provides a reading of recalcitrant emotions, the relation 'primitive' emotions would bear to other mental states, and the notion of basic emotions.

Our view clearly distinguishes itself from the classical cognitive approach, according to which the intentionality and evaluability of emotions is explained by making them consist in judgments or involve beliefs (Solomon, 1980; Nussbaum, 2001). Despite allowing for taxonomies of emotions and for an easy integration of emotions to our cognitive economy, the classical cognitive approach faces unsurmountable difficulties our view does not: it is highly cognitively demanding and is unable to satisfactorily explain recalcitrant emotions (D'Arms, & Jacobson 2003).

We also take distance from the view that emotions are the recognition of patterns of bodily or physiological changes and also about worldly items (Prinz, 2004, 2008). Despite Pinz's assertion that "if those changes in the body are reliably caused by the instantiation of core relational themes, then our perceptions of the body may also represent those themes" (2004, p. 55), we aligned ourselves with Deonna and Teroni rebuttal that "the body ends up being the intentional object of the emotions even if, as Prinz argues, we could be in indirect contact with evaluative properties by being directly aware of bodily changes" (2012, p. 86).

In regard to the view that emotions are perceptual experiences of evaluative properties (Tappolet, 2000, 2016), we deemed that even though Tappolet points out that the approach implies that emotions have non-conceptual mental content (2000, p. 178; 2012, p. 210), she never pinpoints that content whereby the claim ends up being rather uninformative. Furthermore, she completely overlooks the arguments against non-conceptual content, as that coming from McDowell (1994): instead, she just states that neither perceptions nor emotions are involved in inferential networks or figure in reasoning (2002, p.158; 2016, p. 21). Finally, the way she understates the connection between emotions and action is rather sloppy, as if that connection implied automaticity and rapidity (2016, p. 52; for a criticism, see Scarantino, 2014, p. 165).

We also considered the view of Deonna and Teroni (2012, 2015), according to which an emotion is an attitude towards an object, which it is appropriate when the object exemplifies a given evaluative property (and an attitude that consists in specific types of felt bodily stances towards objects). In that regard, we contended that the distinction between an attitude and a content would be artificial and idle in the cases we focused on. This discrepancy derives from what is actually the main divergence

between our view and theirs, namely, that in their view content is neutral. They assume that content is not evaluative to the point that they make it a constraint on an explanation of the intentionality of emotions (2012, p. 70 - 71). Yet, neither they provide support for this assumption nor for the thought that emotions are either about values or about their bearers—or why cannot they be about objects as having a certain value[10].

Finally, we mentioned that our view may seem close to Scarantino's (2014, 2018). Indeed, we share some intuitions that are elaborated in his approach: that emotions are essentially tied to action (which he reads through the notion of action tendencies with control precedence drawn from Fridja), and an inclusive reading of the claim that emotions are related to action (which he elaborates distinguishing between action or in-action, focused or unfocused tendencies) that allows accommodating emotions as joy and sadness (see also Deonna & Teroni, 2012, p. 80). Furthermore, his understanding of the aspects of emotional motivation (2014, p. 157 - 159) is enlightening. However, as we saw, the way the former intuition is articulated leads to major differences between Scarantino's approach and our view on the motivational character of certain emotions, largely related with differences concerning the underlying view on emotion content.

Some questions still remain for further, research: Can the present proposal be somehow extended to more complex emotions? If we could, how far? There could also be the worry of how to draw distinctions between types of emotions in a way consistent with the proposed view on the non-conceptual content some of them. In this vein, it remains to be seen what keeps together an emotion-type (like fear) if instances of it can have representational contents as different as the primitive fear of facing a loose wild animal and the fear that the stock market crashes. In other words, what lies ahead is devising how to integrate the posited view to a general theory of emotions.

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[10] Also, for a discussion of their problematic notion of emotion's (that is emotional attitude's) correctness, see Rossi and Tappolet (2018).

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