

Problematizing Tye's Intentionalism: The Content of Bodily Sensations, Emotions, and Moods

Juan J. Colomina

The University of Texas at Austin

Intentionalism claims two different assumptions. On the one hand, it defends that every mental state is directed to an object external to one's mind, which is the content of the mental state. On the other hand, the content of every mental state is always a proposition. Since some of our mental states are about something, the requirement of intentionality of our mental states seems adequate. The problem is that, when we attend to mental states such as pain, to feel love, to be sad, and other related sensations, their content seems to be non-propositional. The aim of this essay is to provide an alternative to Tye's intentionalist thesis about mental states regarding our own bodies, emotions, and moods. First, Tye's theory advocates that the content of our conscious states is identical to the representational, propositional content that an individual possesses when she is in a certain perceptual state. Second, I analyze the problematic nature of the conclusion that the content of every mental state (including our conscious states) has propositional content. Finally, Tye's thesis about the transparency of the phenomenal content of some bodily states and other related sensations is in contrast to my argument: the idea that there are some mental states that are about non-propositional objects.

Keywords: representation, mental content, propositionalism

There is a commonly accepted idea, an idea that Tye assumes, about the relational nature of mental states. Mental states are usually considered in the

I am deeply indebted to the 1st Workshop on Language and Emotions audience, held in Granada, especially to Fernando M. Manrique and Jesse Prinz, and the 2012 Meeting of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology audience for their detailed comments. I would like to acknowledge the conversations with Juan José Acero, Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, Manuel Liz, David Pérez Chico, Vicente Raga, Michael Tye, and Margarita Vázquez, and the comments from an anonymous reviewer, that have improved previous drafts of this article. Special thanks to Ray Russ for his help and work with the final version. The research was partially supported by the Spanish government-funded projects (Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad) FFI2008-01205: "Points of View: A Philosophical Investigation" and FFI2011-24549: "Points of View and Temporal Structures." Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Juan J. Colomina, Department of Philosophy and the Center for Mexican American Studies, The University of Texas at Austin, 2505 University Avenue, Stop F9200, Burdine Hall 574, Austin, Texas 78712. Email: Colomina-Alminana_Juan@austin.utexas.edu

binary relationship between psychologically endowed subjects and their contents. Propositional attitudes make clear this particular relation. Mental states such as beliefs, desires, and some perceptions suppose the relation between a subject (who possesses them) and a certain kind of object: a proposition (the content of the particular mental state). Propositions are usually characterized as abstract entities that have some particular constituents. They can be understood as concepts (in a Fregean sense) or as the objects of the world and their properties themselves (in a Russellian sense). [There is also a third option that characterizes propositions as abstract entities with functions that determine truth-conditions according to the possible world we talk about; nevertheless, I avoid this interpretation here].

In other words, mental states are characterized by showing intentionality:
 Intentionality (I): mental states are directed, in a representational way, to their contents.

As Tye says, mental content accomplishes the condition of aboutness claimed by Brentano and Meinong: “mental [states] generally involve a primitive, unique, nonphysical relation of aboutness . . . among its relata” (Tye, 2000, p. 109).

Then, intentionality usually accepts representationalism:
 Representationalism (R): the content of every mental state is characterized by the relation between the subject and the particular way the perceived object is experienced.

In other words, “your awareness of what it is like, of the phenomenology of your experience, is not *de re* awareness of the experience or its qualities. It is *de dicto* awareness *that* you have an experience with a certain phenomenal character” (Tye, 2003b, p. 165). So, when one contemplates a picture, for instance, she is experiencing an external object with its particular characteristics as relevant for the individual according to the properties that she predicates of the picture through propositions. This assumption implies proposition-ism:

Propositionalism (P): the role of mental content, which always is a proposition or something proposition-like, will depend on its relation with its object.

Or, expressed differently, “ways things look to people are typically expressed by predicates . . . and predicates express qualities” (Tye, 2003b, p. 165).

Intentionalism claims, then, two different assumptions. On the one hand, it defends that every mental state is directed to an object external to one’s mind,

which is the content of the mental state (as expressed by I and R). On the other hand, the content of every mental state is always a proposition (as expressed by P). Thus, intentionalism claims that every mental state has as object, is about, or is directed to something that is not just a physical object or a particular feature of the world, but is or involves some descriptive, discursive verb-embedded abstract object expressed in a representational way by a natural language sentence. As Tye's says, "phenomenal character is one and the same as a certain sort of representational content" (2009, p. 112).

Therefore, according to intentionalism, we can explain Nicole's belief of having done a good work as the existing relation between Nicole's certain mental state as a subject and the propositional content "to have done a good work" (usually expressed by the designation BEL(Nicole, *p*), where BEL stands for the propositional attitude of believing that Nicole has and *p* stands for the particular propositional content associated to this concrete belief). We can explain David's desire to drink a beer as the existing relation between David's mental state as a subject and the propositional content "to drink a beer" (usually expressed by the designation DES(David, *p*), where DES is the particular propositional attitude of desiring that David has and *p* is the particular propositional content associated to the particular desire). Thus, we can also explain Jordi's perception of a red tomato as the existing relation between Jordi's mental state as a subject and the propositional content "seeing a red tomato."¹

Now imagine that we are trying to explain Pablo's state of pain after he has hit his finger with a hammer. Intentionalism, as does Tye's theory, accounts for this feeling as the existent relation between Pablo's state and the propositional content "to feel pain in my finger." But this is counterintuitive. It seems that this state of pain cannot just be reduced to this relationship because of the difficulty that just such a proposition expresses exhaustibly the sensation of pain. Then, since the nature of certain mental states such as bodily sensations but also emotions and moods, one can assume, cannot be explained by propositional content, propositionalism should be abandoned. My purpose is to clarify what kind of content these mental states have, how they differ from propositional attitudes, and what implications my conclusions have for representational theories about mind.

Since Tye's theory about the content of our conscious states has become a paradigm of intentionalism, I will analyze the problematic nature of his conclusion that every mental state (including our conscious states) has propositional con-

¹Some defenders of the Russellian content of mental states say that, because of the difficulty of characterizing the content of perceptual experiences, we should understand the content as directly describing the properties of the objects. Tye assumes this particular interpretation. Nevertheless, as I will explain below, since it is controversial what nature the content of perception has, the relation between a subject of perception and its object can be considered as a border-case. Therefore, the designation PER(Jordi, *p*) to refer to this relationship should be avoided.

tent. I will focus specially on Tye's thesis about the transparency of the phenomenal content of some bodily states and other related sensations, such as pain, to feel love, or to be sad. I argue that the particular nature of these phenomenal states problematizes every representational account about mind that claims propositions as the content of every mental state because of the same nature of propositions. As I will advocate, an alternative view will accommodate propositional attitudes as well as phenomenal states. This view claims content as an expression of the particular perspective adopted by the individual to access the world.² In other words, some of our states are not relations to propositions at all, but relations with things; some states just show the way that the things really are.

In this way, my view also characterizes the content of propositional attitudes as related to propositions. Content has the following characteristics. First, an individual can have a perception about something unreal or illusory and, nevertheless, there still is some content, even though the particular object that the proposition describes does not exist.³ Second, since one can have a belief whose content is false, the fact that one possesses a certain mental state with a typical content can simply assert the truth-conditions of the particular proposition but says nothing about how to satisfy them. Third, the fact that someone possesses a mental state with certain content depends on the proposition adopted by the individual. Fourth, the fact that someone possesses a certain mental state with certain content has a causal power on her behavior.

To establish natural laws that explain the relation between mental and physical states becomes, then, necessary. There are two different ways of approaching nomological explanations. On the one hand, there are those who think all mental states are essentially different from physical states, and that the mind links elements with their propositional content depending on intrinsic properties (for instance, Fodor, 1975, 1983; Millikan, 1984; Searle, 1983). These properties

²This distinction between propositional and non-propositional content renews the classical polemics: if the content of our mental states has an objective character or, contrarily, if the content is not so-clearly-objective. Evans's (1982) intention to introduce the distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual content (see footnote 4 below) was precisely to deny the existence of subjective content in our mental states as interpreted under a Fregean sense. As the reader has realized, I avoid the designation *subjective* to refer to the non-propositional content of certain mental states. I am not defending the idea that some mental states refer just to objects that just I (individually) have the capacity to see. What I am advocating for is the broader idea that some mental states just express how the things are from the perspective one accesses the world, and this will be available to everyone who adopts the same perspective. See Grzankowski (2013) for further explanations about non-propositional content.

³In other terms, since existence is not a property, the only thing that we can say is that "someone that experiences such-and-such exists," but neither that "the object experienced exists" nor "the experience *x* exists." Notice that this interpretation of content is the preferred Fregean characterization, in which concepts understood as functions map the possible truth-values. I use quotation marks to refer to propositional content, as is customary.

are in a way totally independent from external conditions, though these conditions might cause them.

On the other hand, there are those who think the inner view cannot adequately explain the mental content because intrinsic properties are too narrow and restrictive. But the propositional content is linked to the subject's mental states through external facts (Burge, 1979). My alternative view argues for the second kind of approach to propositional attitudes. But I will adopt a different way than traditional externalist accounts do to explain other mental states, such as bodily sensations, emotions, and moods, because externalism still claims that content is propositional. Some exceptions can be found. This is the case of Dretske (1980, p. 354; 1997), who explicitly rejects the fact that every mental state possesses propositional content. I will assume some of his conclusions (see Montague, 2007 for further non-propositional views).

There is a subsequent distinction about the nature of mental content that I would like to focus on before analyzing Tye's position. When we attend to propositional attitudes, the content can be expressed according to conceptual terms. But mental states such as bodily sensations, emotions, and moods have a not-so-clear conceptual content. This second type of mental state is directly linked with our neurobiological distribution and our particular cognitive history: the so-called non-conceptual content.⁴ Tye characterizes the content of bodily sensations, emotions, and moods as non-conceptual, something that I agree with. Unfortunately, Tye also accepts that this content is always directed to propositions.

Tye's Characterization of Conscious Content

Tye advocates intentionalism as an explanation for the content of propositional attitudes as well as the content of our conscious states. According to Tye, the phenomenal character of our conscious experiences is identical to the representational, propositional content that an individual possesses when she is in a certain perceptual state. For Tye, the content is instantiated by the activation of a certain physically functional structure in the particular individual.

⁴It is more or less controversial whether the content of our mental states has a conceptual or a non-conceptual nature. For instance, Fodor (1983) defends that every mental state is conceptual. Differently, Bermudez (2003) argues that every mental state has non-conceptual content. Tye (1995) says that we can find both types of content in our phenomenal states, but Tye (2003b, 2004) claims that they can just have non-conceptual content. Beyond this interesting polemic, I would like to note that both conceptions still understand the nature of content as propositional. This mistake resembles the way that Evans (1982) introduced the notion of non-conceptual content to explain the nature of certain experiences. As we will see below, this presents some problems. As the reader has noticed, this distinction is close to the previous differentiation between either to understand the content of our mental states as Fregean or to understand it as Russellian. For additional details, see Toribio (2007).

Tye claims the identification of representations with some genotypic elements. However, he does not claim a reduction of phenomenal experiences to these physical elements because content (understood as propositions) simply expresses contingent truths (Tye, 2003a), clearly distinguishable from other approximations that consider them as a priori truths (as, for instance, Jackson, 2000).

According to Tye, these experiences have non-conceptual content because they are our ordinary sub-personal level of referring to objects in Russellian terms, and not according to particular descriptions (Tye, 2000). Since the particular context will reconstruct the components of the functionally dependent content, the content is externally individualized. Only this way might we explain how two functionally identical subjects can differ in their phenomenal content when presented with the same experience, even though it is the very same conscious experience.

Tye further claims a strong, non-reductive, non-conceptual, and externalist representationalism. Why say that this is intentionalist? According to Tye, the content is the representation of objects, the objective properties that the individual predicates upon the external circumstances in which the experience occurs. The content thus is always directed to objects, and represents certain specific qualities of them rather than particular concepts that the individual possesses. This means that there is always an objective, publicly observable element characterizing and individualizing a certain experiential state: the particular natural language sentence that represents the characteristics claimed by the proposition. And this objective element should be *transparent*: the properties we are aware of in perception are predicated upon the objects as perceived (Tye, 2010, in press). However, as I will show, this conclusion presents several problems.

The Characterization of Bodily Sensations

According to Tye, the content of every conscious state is a non-conceptual, propositional, and intentionally directed representation that refers to the most relevant qualities of the object perceived as predicated by the individual. Thus, representational content depends on an objective view that allows for the acquisition of certain content: the proposition. But then, how can we explain experiences such as bodily sensations, emotions, and moods habitually considered subjective if it seems impossible to relate them to propositions? This is to say, since some experiences appeal to the way the subject feels them rather than through the objective predication of features, how can we characterize these states?

Take the case of perception of colors. For Tye, experiences of color seem to be subjective since they tend to be defined at least partially for their purely phenomenal aspect. But, Tye says, if this is the case, then two individuals can possibly perceive two different colors from the same experience of color, in spite

of the fact that the color has an objective reality. And this is something undesirable.

How to explain these cases from a representational theory? According to Locke's classical approach, something turns out to be red, for example, and it is therefore interpreted as such. The particular observed object has a disposition to be seen as (having the property to be) red by a normal individual in a normal situation. However, this interpretation presents a basic problem: it explains the quality of red from a disposition but assumes without explanation both that there must be something red and that the individual really has the concrete skills to grasp subjectively this particular feature.

Jackson (1977, 2001) assimilates this theory by assuming a Lockean interpretation, which considers colors as intrinsic and subject-embedded qualities. In this particular approach, colors also are subjective-dependent dispositions; they do not remain with the objects when we stop contemplating them. The experience of color is subjective, and has no real existence in the physical world. The color exists because the subject gives it reality.

Unlike Jackson, Tye argues that color appears as something phenomenal, as an invariable quality of objects. If this is so, then our visual system grasps the phenomenal features predicated. What happens when two different subjects perceive different hues from the same object? If we accept that "the color of an object" (its propositional content) is a vague expression, Tye says, the content of the same perception can vary across individuals according to lighting or other physical variables, allowing different descriptions of the same perception. Then, two functionally identical individuals can have different perceptions of the same object depending on the particular external conditions under which both individuals have the same experience (as shown by the description of *biting the bullet* in Tye, 2000). Therefore, what really counts as the color of an object is the particular wave spectrum that instantiates in our visual system, exciting particular cells in our eyes that causally explain the experience, in the sense that there will be a propositional content in accordance with the relevant characteristics predicated. In the same way, the flavor of a certain object will not depend on the individual perception of the flavor, but on the substances that stimulate the adequate taste buds and other related physical events as predicated by the propositional content.

According to my view, color experiences and other secondary qualities are border-cases because, though it is true that phenomenal content completely depends on perception, some objective system of instantiation is always required to determine the existence of experiences and to catalogue the different sensations. In the case of colors, for instance, some researchers contend that the human cognitive visual system distinguishes countless different hues, and directly depends on the vision spectrum of the human eye. Yet we just have a scant number of names to refer to all of them (Maerz and Paul, 1950). What this tells us, according

to Tye, is that our non-conceptual phenomenal content is more richly explained by not appealing to conceptual content. If the explanation of our mental content were held in conceptual terms, then it would be impossible to differentiate the huge amount of different hues.

We have the capacity to do so by directing our attention to the different properties of the objects of the world. And one proof is that we can differentiate among different colors and hues by using some technological devices capable of discriminating different light spectra. The sensation of temperature functions similarly. Even though the content can differ between individuals from their diverse inner thermal sensations that indicate that one feels cold or warm, there are some devices, such as thermometers and thermostats (or even some machine capable of measuring the speed of molecular movement), which indicate in an objective way the temperature of an object, a room, and so on. But there are some other cases where the reference to an external object becomes much more complicated.

Think of the case of pain, for instance. Tye examines the way in which our brain establishes an image of our body because individuals indicate how pain is located in the part of the body that hurts. I agree with Tye that some studies that investigate certain alterations in the distribution and functionality of the brain (identifying chemically altered states, physiological diseases, and cerebral injuries, for example) show how the total image of the body changes, upsets or, even, gets lost any time that the particular subject feels pain.

For some scholars, our brain articulates a global sensation and then a unified image of the body. The concrete sensation that one has in a determined moment in a part of his body shows that the individual has a representational image of the way in which he feels his body and the space that it occupies in time. According to Tye, this explains the phenomenal unity of bodily sensations. But, according to my view, this explanation presents some problems. What kind of unity does pain show? How do we explain the different sensations that someone has and feels through time? Where can we locate the pain?

According to folk psychology, the experience of pain is necessary and essentially private and subjective. One cannot feel your pain and you cannot feel the pain of another. The most commensurate explanation considers pain as a sensation understood as a mental object. But this interpretation presents some problems. For instance, since the particular sensation of pain is thought of as some mental object, when the thing that hurts is your left arm, where is the pain located? Is it located in your mind? If, for example, a person has a pain in his back, the pain seems to be in his back. But if it is thought that the pain is a mental object, one cannot say simultaneously that it is located both in his back and in his mind because we said that pain is a mental object (an abstract entity) that should be placed in his mind rather than a material object that can be placed somewhere in his body.

Folk explanations argue that in cases of pain the content can also be placed in the concrete part of the body that hurts, even though it is a mental object. This deals with a special, causal sense because the pain and the sensation of pain in, for instance, the individual's back are one and the same thing. This explanation is not very useful, for two reasons. First, someone could only know her pain in an a posteriori way from empirical observation of the particular part of her body that hurts. This conclusion is in conflict with the previous assertion that the individual would have a direct, a priori knowledge of the phenomenal content of her mental states. Second, the sense of "placed *in* the body" here employed is a multicausal notion, far away from the ordinary use, making it hard to locate the origin of the particular experience or sensation involved.

Other representationalist theories also consider pain as being *in* the body. Such accounts claim that the representation of pain is what the individual really feels rather than the pain itself. But, according to my view, this conception implies absurd situations: suppose a person has a pain in the thumb of her right hand. Imagine that she has hit her finger with a hammer when fixing a nail. As a reflected act, she introduces her finger to her mouth with the intention of calming the pain. According to the representationalist, the pain as a representation is projected *in* her finger, but as her finger is *in* her mouth, where really her pain is located is *in* her mouth and not *in* her finger (Jackson, 1977), something implausible because we bi-locate the source of pain. The pain, therefore, should be understood as an epiphenomenon without causal power on behavior.

In addition, this thesis also fails when we attend to problems relative to certain sensations of pain from cases like the phantom limb. As it is known, many people who have lost some part of the body, a leg for instance, often feel pain in the leg that they no longer have. If one thinks that the representation projects *in* the affected member where the pain is felt, the argument fails when the part of the body is absent. In other words, the thesis is false if the individual no longer has the member *in* which the sensation of pain should be located.

Another related problem appears when the individual misrepresents the pain that he feels. Suppose that one has a pain in his left arm. According to the representationalist interpretation, the pain is a representation that he projects to the mental image of his arm. Imagine that the pain in his arm is not linked to any wound or any anomaly in his arm, but to a problem derived of a cardiac dysfunction (for instance, to a heart attack). Unlike the defended premise, we should say that the pain *in* his left arm is not derived *in* his arm but is really derived *from* his heart.

In spite of these difficulties, Tye considers the problem of pain from a representational perspective. In his view, as with colors and other secondary qualities, the argumentation refers directly to the qualities predicated through propositions. According to Tye, sensations externally depend on the sensory structure of individuals. From this view, unlike inner representationalists, the experience of

pain must recount qualities. These qualities are not from the experience itself but from disagreeable features in the body that concern the affected regions where they occur. Therefore, the experiences relative to the body have two dimensions: a sensitive element (that refers to the way in which pain is felt), and an affective element (relative to the way in which the experience is evaluated). Though it is true that there are cases that lack evaluative elements, for instance in cases of dissociation or in instances of a split-brain individual who has lost all aversive sensations of pain, Tye assumes that individuals are always able to perceive both elements. Take the example of a two-month-old child who tastes chocolate for the very first time. The child responds in such a way that her behavior *indicates* that she wants more because the chocolate tastes good. The “goodness” experienced provokes the child “asking for more.”

According to Tye, the child’s gustatory experience represents a certain flavor (the sensitive component) and the child experiences the flavor “being good” (the evaluative component) without previous experimentation or conceptual content. In the same way, a young child who experiences pain for the very first time yields a similar sensation. Previous to the experience of pain, the child avoids experiencing it because the child recognizes it as “being bad.” Pain is a certain experimentally represented quality, in indicative terms. This is to say, the individual predicates certain properties that characterize the object perceived, and this explanation, according to Tye, avoids such problematics.

In explaining the experience of pain relative to phantom limbs, Tye says that the individual can represent a certain experience as pain (or having the property “to be painful”). Thus, this pain would be representationally experienced as bad, independently of the real existence of the particular limb represented. Unlike the previous cases of misrepresentation of pain that one would feel in the left arm but that really comes from a heart attack, according to Tye, we should say that we do not need to locate the pain in a certain place, because it is abstract and subjective. Again, the individual will represent a certain experience as painful, and this pain would be experienced as something bad. The difference here is that it would not be necessary to locate the experience in the bodily image. It would be enough to know that these experiences refer to different parts of the body. In these cases, the experiences represent some features (in a sensory/indicative and an evaluative sense) that refer to certain parts of the body.

The main problem here, I think, is that Tye argues for representational content of phenomenal experiences as something understandable from an indicative perspective, and this supposes a cognitive closure (Block, 2006; Noordhof, 2006), an epistemological impasse that constrains the individual to be always aware about the content of her mental states. Tye supposes that what counts as a phenomenal experience is the particular object (the Russellian proposition) that fits into our sensorial system in a determinative way. The sensorial substructure will

respond to a certain stimulus, as an output from the adequate input, and this will be tried as a particular mental state with the content required, causing other mental states and behavior (saving the requirement that every mental content has to be poised, as expressed by his PANIC theory. See Tye, 2000).

From my view, this thesis renews some classical issues in functionalism, such as the problem of causal over-determination (the same stimulus could be explained by more than one cause), or the problem of dualism of properties (presupposing the presence of something, even though this something was postulated as physical, in a sub-personal level that can be considered as both a sensation and an experience). Because, at the end, there is no room either to determine adequately the concrete mental state that this particular experience instantiates or to establish the nomological role of this state in the complete explanation of behavior.⁵

Another issue concerns the alleged incoherence of representationalist positions. Tye's intentionalism affirms that the phenomenal content of an experience is identical to its representational content, and this is the requirement for the transparency of content: the idea that the properties we are aware of are attributed to objects perceived. According to Tye, as we saw, the content identifies a proposition with respect to the objective relevant characteristics that the experience represents. In this sense, Tye's theory claims that the subject always knows that the particular content that the state represents is the object perceived as having these particular properties. How can we identify a *what-it-is-like* experience with a proposition if a proposition always is an abstract entity and a *what-it-is-like* experience is the quality of an experience (a singular thought)? This weakens Tye's thesis because, at the end, a certain kind of state (as, for instance, states of pain) does not seem to be transparent in the same way that other states are.⁶

One can say that Tye is claiming that an experience only has a certain phenomenal character if it has a certain intentional content. Thus, Tye would not

⁵As Martínez (2011) says, probably the problem of representationalist theories about content, as that defended by Tye, is that these theories analyze phenomenal character in terms of indicative content rather than as imperative representational content, which according to Martínez provides a solution to the difficulties presented by representationalists. According to my view, this is not correct because the main difficulty is to consider all content as propositional, and this imperative interpretation still maintains this characterization.

⁶In some sense, this criticism about the thesis of transparency of mental states is similar to the thesis of anti-luminosity defended by Williamson (2000). Someone can defend the idea that arguments against luminosity fail in four different ways (Ramachandran, 2009), but this interpretation is based again on a characterization of the mental content as propositional, even though it is reflected in a Fregean conception of propositions (Ramachandran, 1993). Independently of my sympathies for this favored type of interpretation of propositions, I think it is a mistake to characterize the content of every mental state as propositional because most of our phenomenal states are non-propositional.

be defending the transparent character of content. But this option is even worse. To assert that an experience has a phenomenal character supposes that it is identical to the possession of certain content. Nevertheless, the same problems remain because the content is still understood in a propositional way by claiming the features predicated as belonging to the object perceived. Since the fact that pain is felt as something negative, it does not seem to be representational at all, because it is not possible to take a concrete content that represents adequately this character of pain in every particular situation.

This disadvantage might be avoided by insisting on the possibility that the pre-conceptual content presupposed in phenomenal experiences can be interpreted from a different non-propositional perspective. In other words, the previous problems can be solved if everything that individuals feel is interpreted from the point of view of the ordinary way that we, conscious beings, perform and react to stimuli. Because our experiences do not represent the way that we predicate characteristics of the things in the world, we show how they really are. Then, the behavior of the two-months old child with the “good” experience of tasting chocolate and “asking for more” can be explained as the usual way in which conscious beings normally act in these situations. What I claim is not for some particular subjective content that the individual has when she perceives. What I advocate is for the necessity of appealing to the particular point of view from which the individual accesses the world explains the way that her experiences directly relate her with the things of the world.

Think, for instance, of the following scenario. Someone can scream, cry, take her hand to her cheek, or even utter the sentence “I have a toothache.” All are instances of usual behavior when one experiences a toothache. We can imagine even more performances of this pain that the individual can enact when she experiences a toothache. We can see these different acts as interchangeable. But they are simply the normal, standard way that conscious beings behave in these situations. And it does not mean that the content of the performative must be understood as propositional. Some states, as I said, have propositional content. In other cases, the informational flow of our internal and external senses is just stimulated by these sensations in a non-propositional way.

The View of Emotions and Moods

According to Tye, the content of emotions and moods is directed to propositional representations that predicate concrete characteristics of a particular experience. This is true not only in human beings but also in other creatures, in two different ways (Tye, 2008, p. 31): either through perceptual experiences or in thoughts about them. These thoughts are not necessarily endorsed in beliefs. When an emotion is felt, Tye says, the individual attributes some properties to the particular object of emotion.

Hence, emotional experiences are also directed towards objects external to the mind, and they have evaluative features as well as a distributed, sensitive causal bodily disturbance. The external object is initially represented either by a perceptual state or by a non-perceptual thought. Thus, the emotional state s represents the concrete object o , through its evaluative features, causing the particular representation r . Thus, the phenomenal feeling of an emotional experience is determined by its representational content. Emotional experiences are, then, representational states.

To prove this thesis, imagine the following scenario. You were so absorbed in your reading of the latest papers about consciousness that you have not realized that it has gotten dark. You decide to go home. You go to the parking lot to pick up your car. It is a really dark night. There is no moon and the clouds are thick. The street lights on campus are not enough to illuminate the area. In addition, the street light closest to your car does not work. You hear a strange noise. Turning, you observe a strange, threatening silhouette that comes closer and closer. You are shaken by a distressing sensation of fear and you accelerate your steps, walking faster, hastily extracting the keys of your car from your pocket and rapidly getting into the car. Once inside, you observe that the thing that scares you really was a colleague from the department who also left her office late.

What has happened? According to Tye, your experience was informed by your representation of both the noise and the silhouette. This experience has been represented as dangerous (because you attribute to it the property "to be dangerous"), which provoked your (sensation of) fear. This does not mean that what is experienced should be frightening, just to represent the content of the sensation as something dangerous, or fearsome, which causes the emotion of fear.

Thus, emotional experiences provide to individuals a quick assessment about the value of the particular perception as something dangerous, and this would provide a causal answer. Individuals are wired with value-tracking detectors that instantiate the most adequate behavior to their survival according to the particular situation as experienced.

When we have emotional experiences then, according to Tye, they are about emotions. If one feels fear, she undergoes an experience that represents aspects of her own experience as dangerous. This is also an evaluative feature of the object from which the fear is derived, along with a causal connection between both. Hence, the experience represents a causal complex of internal and external properties. And every experience that represents an appropriately similar complex of properties should be understood as an experience of fear. So, emotions are just patterns of behavior that undergo certain emotional experiences in concrete situations. An emotional experience is, therefore, a state of a sort that is rationally justified to have other related propositional states (Tye, 2008, pp. 40–41).

Nonetheless, I think, not every emotional experience can be explained this way, by appealing to propositional causal content. Sometimes, in the same way that we saw in the case of bodily states such as pain, emotional experiences show other kinds of content. Imagine the next scenario. Someone is angry because her teacher has handed out an inappropriate punishment, and the content of her experience of anger should be associated to a conceptual content attached to her state. The justification of these mental states comes in more than one form. Justification often consists of giving propositional reasons for something. But other times justification also requires premises and conclusions about the object that the particular state is directed towards, and this additional requirement supposes other kinds of content.

According to Tye, corresponding justifications are often available in emotional experiences. On the basis of perceptual and bodily experiences, an overarching experience of anger is generated through further reliable processes. Of course, emotional experiences do not always involve primary emotions but, in the case of secondary emotional experiences, there is a complex content, part of which is conceptual and the other part can be considered as non-conceptual, related by a causal nexus. The conceptual part is essential in the normal behavior of individuals.

This is to say, the conceptual part is the evaluative side of the emotional state, and this evaluative character of content will be the causal nexus with the particular cognitive structure of the individual. This evaluative character of content is similar to its phenomenal character. In this case, the identification of the object of emotion (which will permit one to say what kind of emotion the individual possesses) will be previous to the evaluation of the situation. After that, the causal justification just will happen whether the subject is involved in a conceptual world because she will need reasons to modify her behavior accordingly. But this appeal to reason will be always further from the identification of the particular emotional state.

Remember that, according to Tye, the thesis of transparency is also obvious in the emotional experiences for two reasons. On the one hand, there is no place where attention goes when one attends to an emotional experience, even if transparency holds. On the other hand, some of the qualities represented by emotional experiences are evaluative features of objects in the world. If the character of emotional experiences is properly appreciated, Tye states, the difference between the case of perceptual experiences and emotional experiences will depend on the particular identification that the individual has of the particular object that characterizes the content of the emotion that she feels (Tye, 2008, p. 47).

An Alternative View of the Content of Bodily Sensations, Emotions, and Moods

As I have argued from the beginning, one of the motivations of Tye's intentionalism is the requirement of transparency. That is to say, the introspective reflection on a conscious experience shows the relevant qualities of the external object to which the experience is directed. But, as I have shown, this position never exposes the intrinsic qualities that characterize the experience itself. And it seems controversial to me to say that, when someone appeals to concrete cases where experiences refer to something that does not exist, as cases of illusion or hallucination, the properties we are aware of are attributed to an absent object.⁷

There is a paradigmatic case of this kind of phenomenal experience as well: the scenario of blurry vision. In cases of blurry vision, one observes every object of the environment as blurry. According to Tye, the experience represents the object viewed and its relevant qualities as blurry. The representation depends on the quality of blurriness that the individual will attribute to the object and, therefore, it will completely depend on the way in which her cognitive system represents and associates the particular propositional content to the perception.

According to this view, it seems indeed plausible to affirm that, in certain cases (as in blurry vision scenarios), the individual is conscious of something more than just the way in which he represents the world, or the objects that his experience represents. In cases like blurry vision, when something appears as blurry to the individual, he does not necessarily represent the world as being blurry. The response is simple. In a certain moment, he sees blurry things, but it does not mean that these objects should be represented as blurry, *pace* Tye's objections (Tye, 2000, chapter 4).

From my view, cases of blurry vision can be explained as the particular way the things exist in the world from a certain perspective. Hence, blurry vision and other phenomena will be a part of the character of the same perceptual experience. These phenomena are only one manner of presentation, a concrete way that the particular experience can be felt. And this is simply because this is the particular way in which an individual usually perceives the world. In other words, this is one of the ways that things appear to us. The phenomenal character of our mental states is determined by the experience that the individual has in the particular moment of perception. This is to say, the experiences of blurry things depend on the keenness of the perception rather than on the fact to-be-aware-of in its representational or propositional content.

In cases of emotional experiences, the same kind of problem appears. Let us revisit the example of the parking lot. The noise and the silhouette that provoked

⁷And Tye has realized that. As it is shown by his actual line of investigation, Tye tries to block precisely this kind of problematic case by appealing to some reformulations of the thesis of transparency in scenarios of illusion and hallucination. See, for instance, Tye (2011).

your fear really were groundless. Your representation of the situation as dangerous was erroneous. But it does not mean that the sensation of fear did not exist. In fact, you had the experience of fear because in the concrete moment the experience appeared as dangerous. You were in the particular state that usually an individual is in when experiencing a situation of fear. In other words, the particular way in which you experienced that particular situation was the habitual way that every particular subject might experience this kind of situation, if the subject would be in a state of fear.

The way that you have accessed the world was the habitual way of accessing the world that everyone else does when experiencing fear. This state can be explained by appealing to the particular way that the subject experienced this sensation, as a dangerous one, or any other associate property. Again, the identification of the particular state as fear should be previous to the possibility to interpret the content as having the property of dangerousness, that is to say, as having propositional content. And this is because the phenomenal character of our experiences should accomplish the following characteristic:

Non-Propositional Perspectival Affectivity (NPPA): the content of our mental states should be identified with the way that the things really are as accessed from the particular perspective adopted, and this has causal power enough to determine and modify our behavior because of the particular way that a certain state can *color* the rest of our mental states.

To bring some light to this view, let us look to the following example. In an old episode of *The Simpsons*, Bart is afraid of clowns. What provokes this fear in Bart? Objectively, it seems that nothing external to Bart provokes the fear. Nothing is placed on the fact that the clowns provoke the experience of fear. How could Bart represent a clown as dangerous (or as an object of fear) or even to attribute the property of dangerousness to clowns? Based on this example, it seems that Tye's thesis is untenable. Let me show why.

According to Tye, Bart at a certain moment observes a clown as an imminent danger. Given the propositional content of the experience ("seeing a clown"), Bart is conscious of something in the way he represents the world. He consciously has a fear of clowns, finding them dangerous. He predicates the property "to be dangerous" to any clown that he experiences. This is due to a disagreeably relevant incident that happened in his cognitive history, nothing more. But the thing is that, as Tye defends, if that is the case, then it is the personal level rather than the sub-personal level which makes Bart contemplate the world in a different way from all those who believe that the clowns are inoffensive. Understood this way, the content acquires a Fregean characterization that is denied by Tye.

Thus, the simple appeal to transparency is not enough to explain the intentionality of experiences. We could affirm, nevertheless, that there is something beyond the simple awareness of the representation. My fundamental criticism was that something like represented experience, as in the case of Tye's intentionalist theory, shows that the individual should have her experience by appealing to a previously familiarized way of considering the phenomenon that caused the experience in the first place. If my claim is right, then the misidentification of the (type and content of a particular) mental state is impossible under the representationalist theory because when an experience is defective or non-veridical, one should assert that there is no such familiar phenomenon. In other words, there are no sources of experience for the particular mental state (as Travis, 2004 claims). If we think that the character of an experience is determined by the experience's intentional nature, an explanation of the intrinsically established connection between the intentional and the phenomenal is necessary. Furthermore, the appeal to transparency is not the only representationalist attempt to explain the phenomenal character of conscious experiences. Byrne (2001), for instance, tries a different approach, but his arguments also fail (by reasons exposed by Crane, 2007).

Following Crane's (2007) suggestions, analyzing the relation between how the world appears to the individual and the way that an experience represents it is derived from two notions that have a common core. Both describe what intentionality captures at an abstract level: the content of experiences. From this perspective, perception always implies the existence of an individual and the way one perceives the particular content of experience.

Thought this way, my view suggests that things always appear as they are according to the certain way that individuals can access them, a kind of intentionality can be conserved: the intentionality present in the concrete perspectival mode of the experience. Thus, the phenomenal character of the experience can be saved without necessarily appealing to representations within propositional content. This view also allows an explanation of the unity of consciousness under the notion of *point of view* (see Charro and Colomina, 2013; Vázquez and Liz, 2011).

And my view also can explain the causal power of phenomenal states (as required for the poiseness of content claimed by Tye). Return to the previous parking lot example. Your fear did not have a representational object, but did not lack of causal power because the fear caused your bizarre behavior. Maybe it was caused by the strange noise that you heard or by the strange silhouette or by your tendencies to imagine things. This experience of fear probably was different from how you feel habitually when you walk to get your car.

This concrete experience of fear changed your behavior completely. For example, you accelerated your steps. You rapidly inserted your hand into the

pocket searching for the keys of your car. You impulsively jumped into the car. Your heart hastened and your sweat glands expelled additional sweat. Your entire world was altered in the same moment in which the sensation of fear appeared. The rest of your experiences were determined by this initial sensation of fear. In the same way, certain moods also change our personal world. The depressed person, for example, is plunged into such a state that the rest of her experiences are modified by this initial mood. It seems as if *her world* was different from *our world*.

What I mean is that the content of some experiences should be understood from a certain point of view: the view from where we have access to the things of the world. And from there, how things really are. In other words, the content of our mental states is informed by the perspective that we access the world, and how the things come from that perspective. And things will appear the same to everyone who has access to the world on that perspective, causing other mental states. Then, some experiences *tinge* the rest of our mental life, the rest of our mental states, acquiring the same affective character of that previous experience. This is to say, when one is in a depressive mood or has an experience of fear, the content of these experiences affects the rest of one's experiences, changing completely one's view of the world. Hence, further perceptions and experiences will be contaminated from the previous affective perspective, changing the *tonality* from where one will experience them.

Instead of insisting that every mental state has a propositional content, as Tye's intentionalism does, one can argue that the content of our mental states appears in very different manners, many of them in an affective more than in an evaluative way. And this way the contents are not simply reducible to propositions. The same affective aspect can be included in different experiences and in different mental states, allowing a generalization of the concrete emotions and moods experienced. The affective aspect of our mental states can be different in various diverse individuals depending of the perspective from where they access the world. Since the mental states can change the rest of the particular mental aspects of the individual, they have the capacity to conform a personalized view of the world.

References

- Bermudez, J. (2003). *Thinking without words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Block, N. (2006). Bodily sensations as an obstacle for Representationalism. In M. Aydede (Ed.), *Pain: New essays on its nature and the methodology of its study* (pp. 137–142). Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Burge, T. (1979). Individualism and the mental. *Midwest Studies of Philosophy*, 4, 73–121.
- Byrne, A. (2001). Intentionalism defended. *The Philosophical Review*, 110, 199–240.
- Charro, E., and Colomina, J. (2013). Points of view beyond models: Towards a formal approach to points of view as access to the world. *Foundations of Science*. doi: 10.1007/s10699-013-9325-z

- Crane, T. (2007). Intentionalism. In B. McLaughlin, A. Beckermann, and S. Walter (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of philosophy of mind* (pp. 474–493). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dretske, F. (1980). The intentionality of cognitive states. In D. Rosenthal (Ed.), *The nature of mind* (pp. 354–362). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dretske, F. (1997). *Naturalizing the mind*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Evans, G. (1982). *The varieties of reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fodor, J. (1975). *The language of thought*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Fodor, J. (1983). *Representations: Philosophical essays on the foundations of cognitive science*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Grzankowski, A. (2013). Not all attitudes are propositional. *European Journal of Philosophy*. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0378.2012.00534.x.
- Jackson, F. (1977). *Perception*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, F. (2000). Representation, scepticism, and the a priori. In P. Boghossian and C. Peacocke (Eds.), *New essays on the a priori* (pp. 320–332). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jackson, F. (2001). Locke-ing onto content. In D. M. Walsh (Ed.), *Naturalism, evolution and mind* (pp. 127–143). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Martínez, M. (2011). Imperative content and the painfulness of pain. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 10, 67–90.
- Maerz, A., and Paul, M. (1950). *A dictionary of color*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Millikan, R. (1984). *Language, thought, and other biological categories*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Montague, M. (2007). Against propositionalism. *Nous*, 41, 503–518.
- Noordhof, P. (2006). In a state of pain. In M. Aydede (Ed.), *Pain: New essays on its nature and the methodology of its study* (pp. 151–162). Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Ramachandran, M. (1993). A Strawsonian objection to Russell's theory of descriptions. *Analysis*, 53, 209–212.
- Ramachandran, M. (2009). Anti-luminosity: Four unsuccessful strategies. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 87, 659–673.
- Searle, J. (1983). *Intentionality: An essay in the philosophy of mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Toribio, J. (2007). Nonconceptual content. *Philosophy Compass*, 2/3, 445–460.
- Travis, C. (2004). The silence of senses. *Mind*, 113, 57–94.
- Tye, M. (1995). *Ten problems of consciousness*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Tye, M. (2000). *Consciousness, color, and content*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Tye, M. (2003a). A theory of phenomenal concepts. In A. O'Hear (Ed.), *Minds and persons* (pp. 91–106). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tye, M. (2003b). *Consciousness and persons*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Tye, M. (2004). The nature of nonconceptual content. In M. Reicher and J. Marek (Eds.), *Experience and analysis* (pp. 221–239). Kirchberg, Germany: Kirchberg am Wechsel.
- Tye, M. (2008). The experience of emotions: An intentionalist theory. *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 62, 25–50.
- Tye, M. (2010). The puzzle of transparency. In A. Byrne, J. Cohen, G. Rosen, and S. Shiffrin (Eds.), *The Norton introduction to philosophy* (pp. 193–207). London: Norton.
- Tye, M. (2011). What is the content of a hallucinatory experience? In B. Brogaard (Ed.), *Does perception have content?* (pp. 89–110). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tye, M. (in press). Transparency, qualia realism, and representationalism. *Philosophical Studies*.
- Vázquez, M., and Liz, M. (2011). Models as points of view: The case of system dynamics. *Foundations of Science*, 16, 383–391.
- Williamson, T. (2000). *Knowledge and its limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

