

Rereading 'The rationality of emotions' in terms of processes

Pierre Livet

Abstract This text is an attempt to reconstruction the main concepts (target, motivational aspect, formal object) of de Sousa's analysis of emotions and of his conception of emotions as "a kind of perception of values", starting from an ontology whose basic entities are processes (time is deduced from processes). If we cannot be certain about the identity of a process, we nonetheless can reason about the connections between processes (even if connections themselves are also processes). Emotions imply a connection between the subject's expectations (SPs) and the dynamics of his environment (EPs), therefore between two types of process. Imagining EPs also induce emotions. The mode of handling symbols (usual language of formal language associated with abstract contents) also constitutes EPs. Stabilizing the "content" of an emotion (in a sense not limited to its object but including the connection between processes) and thus identifying its "target" implies a mutual reinforcement of Sps and EPs. The connections specific to the differential of the EPs with the expectations and the mode of reception of the SPs - including the reactivation of memorizations of previous contents - define the focal property of the emotion and its motivating aspect. They therefore specify the values brought into play by an emotion, which reveal to us that a value is not a simple property, but a property capable of being involved in a differential and of giving rise to a form of compensation for this differential, which may involve adaptive revision.