

1 Introduction

intentionality: the phenomenon of something's being about or of something in the sense of 'of' given which a picture can be said to be of something, such as a battle or a landscape.

phenomenology (consciousness): there is 'something it is like', experientially, to be in that mental state, something it is like, experientially, for the creature who is in the state.

standard attitude/content distinction: (i) the thinker, *a*, (ii) the thing designated by the 'that'-clause, *b*, and (iii) the thinking (etc.) relation *R* in which *a* stands to *b*, which I will call the 'intentional attitude'.

Fodor (1978/2002: 542):

Propositional attitudes should be analyzed as relations. In particular, the verb in a sentence like 'John believes it's raining' expresses a relation between John and something else, and a token of that sentence is true iff John stands in the belief-relation to that thing.

Perry (1994: 387-8):

The phenomenon of intentionality suggests that attitudes are essentially relational in nature: they involve relations to the propositions at which they are directed . . . An attitude seems to be individuated by the agent, the type of attitude (belief, desire, etc.), and the proposition at which it is directed.

thesis: the attitude/content distinction, as standardly understood, is not a 'real' metaphysical distinction. When we go to list the categories of things we need to adequately describe conscious intentional states, surely we will need to include intentional and phenomenological properties, but we don't also need to include attitudes, construed as relations between subjects and intentional contents, as additional ingredients.

Rather, the words and concepts we use to distinguish between the attitudes (e.g. BELIEF, THOUGHT, DESIRE) are heuristic devices for grouping together certain classes of phenomenological properties, which themselves determine certain kinds of intentional content. In the end, all we have, metaphysically speaking, are phenomenological properties, intentional content, and a determination relation between them.

sensory phenomenology: the kind of phenomenology we typically associate with our five sensory modalities, e.g. what it's like to see red, hear middle C, taste pineapple.

cognitive phenomenology: a kind of phenomenology that is essentially over and above and other than sensory phenomenology, paradigmatically associated with conscious thought.

2 The standard attitude/content distinction for belief, thought, and desire

the belief-relation (Russell (1921: 232-4)

What is believed . . . I shall call the "content" of the belief . . . We must distinguish between believing and what is believed. I may believe that Columbus crossed the Atlantic, that all Cretans are liars, that two and two are four, or that nine times six is fifty-six; in all these cases the believing is just the same, and only the contents believed are different.

corollary to this idea: different attitudes (e.g. belief, desire, wonder) can be related to the same content.

3 The standard attitude/content distinction for perception

- Chalmers appeals to attitudes, or in his terminology 'manners of representation', in defense of a certain version of representationalism, what he calls 'impure representationalism'.

impure representational property: the property of having a certain intentional content in a certain manner or “the property of representing a certain intentional content in a certain manner”

representing such-and-such as being the case in such-and-such a way. Here the “way” is a manner of representation, and involves a mental characterization of the state of representing. There are many different manners of representation. For example, one can represent a content perceptually, and one can represent a content doxastically (in belief): these correspond to different manners of representation. At a more fine-grained level, one can represent a content visually or auditorily. Manners of representation may also involve functional characterizations of the representing state. For example, one can represent a certain content in such a way that the content either is or is not available for verbal report. (Chalmers 2004: 9)

- all impure representational properties will be properties of *phenomenally* representing intentional content.
- manners of representation do the bulk of their theoretical work in defending impure representationalism against possible counterexamples.

This would happen if a perceptual state and a nonperceptual state (a visual experience and a conscious belief, for example) could phenomenally represent the same content. It would also happen if two perceptual experiences in different modalities (a visual experience and an auditory experience) could have the same content. Finally, it would happen if two phenomenally distinct perceptual experiences in the same modality (two visual experiences, for example) could have the same content. (Chalmers 2004: 9)

- *perceptually phenomenally* representing the content in question
- *visually phenomenally* representing the content in question
- *auditorily phenomenally* representing the content in question

=> Can visual experiences and auditory experiences share the (exact) same content?

View 1: It's possible for distinct impure representational properties to share the same content *c*. It's possible for a visual experience to visually phenomenally represent content *c* and an auditory experience to auditorily phenomenally represent content *c'*, where $c=c'$.

View 1a: Manners of representation are given a reductive, functional analysis, and accordingly, different manners of representation will have different functional analyses.

View 1b: Manners of representation are not given a reductive, functional analysis, and so the phenomenological properties essential for distinguishing between different manners of representation are irreducible phenomenological properties.

View 2: It's not possible for distinct impure representational properties to represent the same content. Visually phenomenally representing content *c* and auditorily phenomenally representing content *c'* entails that $c \neq c'$.

- Once we accept that visual experiences and auditory experiences cannot represent the same content, it's a short step to establishing a logical/metaphysical connection between phenomenological properties and intentional properties.

the claim that phenomenal differences between visual experiences always correspond to representational differences has some prima facie plausibility, and serves as a sort of null hypothesis that should be rejected only if there is strong evidence against it. If the view is correct, then visual phenomenal properties are identical to impure representational properties of the form involving the (visual) phenomenal representation of a certain content. (Chalmers 2004: 10)

4 No 'real' attitude/content distinction in perception

Consider the following four elements of a subject's consciously seeing a red ball:

- (1) The subject of experience
- (2) A mind-independent physical object

(3) Various phenomenological properties, e.g. what it's like to see red and what it's like to see round. (Phenomenological properties are to be thought of specifically as properties of experience; predicates attributing phenomenological properties characterize what it is like for the subject.)

(4) The property attributions that are made by us (by the subject) simply in having this visual experience as we do, i.e. the property attributions that are as I say 'made in experience'. (I take the properties attributed in having perceptual experience to be part of the intentional content of experience.)

- When we consciously see a red ball, there is a color property we attribute to the object, and the phenomenology of the experience suffices for this property attribution. The general idea is that given the phenomenological properties of a particular visual experience there is a kind of intentional content that can be 'read' off that phenomenology. For example, a visual experience of a ball which instantiates the *what it's like* to see red phenomenological character entails the attribution of n-red to the ball.
- Since the differences and similarities between perceptual experiences that are our concern are described adequately in terms of phenomenological and intentional properties, there is no need to appeal to an additional attitude relation.

5 No 'real' attitude/content distinction in belief or thought

The argument against a 'real' attitude/content distinction for conscious belief and thought consists of three main claims:

[i] Conscious thought and belief have their own distinctive kind of phenomenology: cognitive phenomenology.

[ii] Cognitive phenomenology is required to account for the sense in which the intentional content of beliefs and thoughts can be conscious.

[iii] 'Taking', a notion I'll introduce, is a cognitive-phenomenological property of consciously thinking and believing, and is essentially part of the intentional content of such states.

all conscious intentional states, including conscious thought and belief, are phenomenological phenomena.

- No amount of sensory phenomenology that may somehow be tied up with or integral to the occurrence of a thought or belief can account for that thought or belief's being conscious. No amount of sensory phenomenology that is tied up with conscious thought or belief could ever satisfy what I call the 'conscious content principle' or CC for short. According to CC,

If an occurrent thought T or belief B is to be a conscious thought or conscious belief, the intentional content of that thought or belief must in some manner be consciously occurrent, it must be consciously entertained.

- Given the failure of proposals based on sensory phenomenology to satisfy CC, I propose now that the only plausible way to account for how a thought can be conscious, and hence how the content of a thought can be conscious, is to claim that there is cognitive phenomenology associated with, and indeed essentially constitutive of, all conscious thoughts.
- The notion of 'taking' invoked in [iii] is closely related to the notion of 'taking' Strawson 2008 introduces in his defense of an internalist conception of intentionality, according to which consciousness is necessary for intentionality.

Strawson & the stopping problem: we need a notion of 'taking', understood as a cognitive-phenomenological phenomenon, in order to solve the 'stopping problem': consider a subject, Lucy, who is perceiving or thinking about a jackrabbit called Jake. Assuming that Lucy has the appropriate causal connections to Jake, how does Lucy's experience or thought manage to be precisely and only of or about Jake, rather than, say, the set of Jake-reflected photons impacting on Lucy's retinas, or certain other sets of causes on the causal chain leading to the thought? How does Lucy's thought or perception manage to stop precisely at Jake rather than at some other location on the causal chain?

- the overall cognitive-phenomenological character of Lucy's thinking (or perceiving) includes her (fully internalistically specifiable) conception of what particular thing Jake is, it includes a conception of what thing her experience is about. It is this cognitive-phenomenological 'taking' that explains how Lucy's thought (or perception) is about Jake rather than the set of Jake-reflected photon's impacting her retinas

claim: 'taking' obviates the need for the standard attitude/content distinction in the case of belief and thought

aims of belief and thought: when a subject believes something, she accepts that reality is a certain way, whereas in merely contemplating something or wondering something, the subject neither accepts nor denies that reality is a certain way

- reality is everything that exists, and existence is a matter of objects instantiating properties.
- when a subject believes reality is a certain way she believes something about what exists—typically, she believes that a certain object or several objects instantiate a property or instantiate several properties.

how 'taking' comes into the picture: Consider believing that it's snowing. When a subject believes it's snowing she believes something about reality, she believes something about what exists. Given that existence involves the instantiation of properties, the current proposal is that this belief involves a cognitive-phenomenological 'taking' that the property of snow is instantiated.

contemplating snow (or the state of affairs of it's snowing): involves only presentation of snow

wondering if it's snowing: involves the entertaining of a possibility being instantiated rather than the taking of something as being instantiated

desire: characterized as wanting the world to match the contents of one's desires, it's plausible that desire involves a 'taking' which includes a 'pro-attitude' towards the possible instantiation of a certain property or properties. This arguably introduces extra intentional content, namely the property of goodness.

- Since the cognitive-phenomenological 'taking' I have described adequately distinguishes belief, thought, and desire, there is no need for anything over and above phenomenological properties and intentional properties to make these distinctions. In short, it is unnecessary to appeal to a *belief-relation* type, a *thought-relation* type, or a *desire-relation* type.

=> Attitudes are often characterized as 'ways' of being related to content, where this engenders a picture of content as being something utterly separable from these 'ways' of being related to it. This is the wrong picture of our mental relation to content. We should rather be talking about the way in which the instantiation of phenomenological properties determines intentional content.