Philos Stud (2009) 146:117–138
DOI 10.1007/s11098-008-9247-8

Intentional psychologism

David Pitt

Published online: 18 June 2008
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2008

Abstract In the past few years, a number of philosophers (notably, Siewert, C. (*The significance of consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Horgan and Tienson (*Philosophy of mind: Classical and contemporary readings*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 520–533); Pitt 2004) have maintained the following three theses: (1) there is a distinctive sort of phenomenology characteristic of conscious thought, as opposed to other sorts of conscious mental states; (2) different conscious thoughts have different phenomenologies; and (3) thoughts with the same phenomenology have the same intentional content. The last of these three claims is open to at least two different interpretations. It might mean that the phenomenology of a thought expresses its intentional content, where intentional content is understood as propositional, and propositions are understood as mind-and language-independent abstract entities (such as sets of possible worlds, functions from possible worlds to truth-values, structured n-tuples of objects and properties, etc.). And it might mean that the phenomenology of a thought is its intentional content—that is, that the phenomenology of a thought, like the phenomenology of a sensation, constitutes its content. The second sort of view is a kind of psychologism. Psychologistic views hold that one or another sort of thing—numbers, sentences, propositions, etc.—that we can think or know about is in fact a kind of mental thing. Since Frege, psychologism has been in bad repute among analytic philosophers. It is widely held that Frege showed that such views are untenable, since, among other things, they subjectivize what is in fact objective, and, hence, relativize such things as consistency and truth to the peculiarities of human psychology. The purpose of this paper is to explore the consequences of the thesis that intentional mental content is phenomenological (what I call "intentional psychologism") and to try to reach a

D. Pitt (✉)
California State University, Los Angeles, USA
e-mail: dpitt@calstatela.edu

conclusion about whether it yields a tenable view of mind, thought and meaning. I believe the thesis is not so obviously wrong as it will strike many philosophers of mind and language. In fact, it can be defended against the standard objections to psychologism, and it can provide the basis for a novel and interesting account of mentality.

Keywords Intentionality · Phenomenology · Consciousness · Psychologism

Over the past decade or so, a growing number of analytic philosophers, including Searle (1992), Strawson (1994), Siewert (1998), Horgan and Tienson (2002) and Pitt (2004), have been articulating and defending views of the cognitive mind on which there is an essential connection between the intentionality of conscious thought and the phenomenality of consciousness. In particular, Siewert, Horgan and Tienson, and I have argued for the following three theses: (1) there is a proprietary kind of phenomenology characteristic of conscious thought, different from that of other kinds of conscious states; (2) different conscious thoughts have distinctive phenomenologies of the cognitively proprietary kind; and (3) thoughts with the same phenomenology have the same intentional content. In Pitt 2004 (henceforth "*PC*"), I argued for (1), (2) and (3) on the basis of our capacity to, introspectively and non-inferentially, (a) distinguish our occurrent conscious thoughts from other occurrent conscious mental particulars, (b) distinguish our occurrent conscious thoughts each from the others, and (c) identify our occurrent conscious thoughts as the thoughts they are (i.e., as having the intentional contents they do). The argument was a transcendental one: we would not have the abilities (a)–(c) if (1)–(3) were not true. The identifiability of occurrent conscious thoughts in this way entails that they have phenomenologies that are *proprietary*, *distinctive* and *individuative*.

The last of the three theses claims that thoughts with the same phenomenology have the same intentional content; but it does not say *why* this is so. In *PC* I maintained that the intentional content of a thought is a mind- and language-independent proposition of some sort (a set of possible worlds, a function from worlds to truth-values, a structured n-tuple of objects or properties, a *sui generis* abstract object, …), and that the distinctive phenomenology of a thought determines which proposition is its intentional content. In formulating this view of the relation between phenomenology and content, I took my cue from theories of mind on which thoughts are mental representations whose contents are propositions. The twofold task of a theory of this kind is to specify (i) *which* properties of a thought are responsible for its expressing a particular proposition, and (ii) *how* having those properties results in its expressing that proposition (i.e., having that proposition as its content). On the most popular versions of this view, causal or teleological relations between mind/brain states and world states and/or functional/computational relations among mind/brain states are responsible for their expressing the propositions they do, and various features of those relations (e.g., that they conduct information about states of the world, or track content-constitutive inferential relations) explain how having those relations results in their expressing those

propositions.[1] In *PC* I held that the distinctive phenomenology of a thought is responsible for its expressing the proposition it does. That is, I held that a thought's *phenomenal* content—viz., its intrinsic phenomenal features—determines its intentional content—which proposition it expresses. (I did not attempt to explain *how* phenomenal content determines propositional content.)

There is another way to see the relationship between cognitive phenomenology and intentional content, however; to wit: the phenomenology of a thought may be taken to *be* its intentional content. That is, instead of *expressing* or *representing* its intentional content, the phenomenal content of a thought may be seen as *constituting* its intentional content. A thought is the thought it is simply because it has the cognitive phenomenology it has. On this view, thoughts are individuated in the way that experiential states in general are. A bodily sensation, for example, is the sensation it is—a pain, an itch, an ache—not in virtue of *expressing* or *representing* something, but simply in virtue of tokening a particular phenomenal type. It is *constituted by* its phenomenology. A sensation is a pain not because it expresses or represents pain, but because it has a particular intrinsic phenomenology (it is a sensation *of* pain only in a sense analogous to that in which a pool of blood of is *of* blood or a pillar of salt is *of* salt).[2] Similarly, the experiential content of a perceptual state is just its intrinsic phenomenal features. The *visual* content of an experience of seeing that the lawn is on fire, for example, is a distinctive sort of complex visual phenomenology. The *aural* content of an experience of hearing that hyenas have surrounded the house is a distinctive sort of complex auditory phenomenology. Perceptual experiences may also have intentional content (*that* the lawn is on fire; *that* hyenas have surrounded the house), but the experiential content of a perceptual experience is just its sensory qualitative character; and to have such sensory content is simply to instantiate a sensory phenomenal type.

On the first way of looking at the relation between cognitive phenomenology and intentionality, a thought is the thought that p because it tokens a phenomenal type that *expresses* the intentional content that p, where the phenomenal type and the intentional content are distinct entities. On the second way, the phenomenology of a particular thought is a token of a type that *is* its intentional content. A thought is the thought that p because it tokens a phenomenal type that is the intentional content that p.[3] The phenomenology of a particular thought determines the thought's content by being a token of that content.

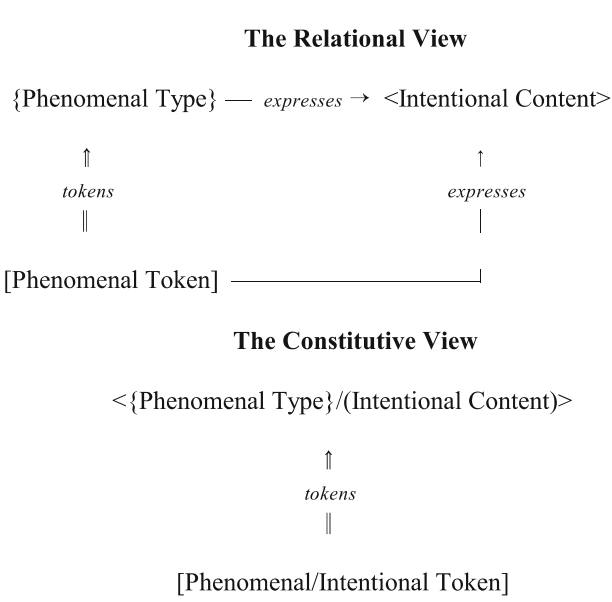
[1] Hence, such theories seek to *naturalize* the mind, not by *nominalizing* mental contents, but by giving naturalistic explanations of the *expression relation* between mental representations and their contents. (Cf. Fodor 1990a, b, "The asymmetric dependence story is up to its ears in Realism about properties, relations, laws, and other abstracta … *naturalism*, as I understand the term, needn't imply *materialism* if the latter is understood as denying independent status to abstract entities" (1990, p.132, note 6).).

[2] A reductive representationalist would say that what it is like to experience pain is constituted by its representing a particular tissue-property. Needless to say, I am not a reductive representationalist. (Thanks to Declan Smithies for reminding me of reductive representationalism in this connection.).

[3] Whether or not thought contents on this view could be *propositions* will be discussed below.

Some readers will be put in mind here of Husserl, whose general view of mental content as phenomenal seems to be very close to the present one. The second way of construing the relation between phenomenology and thought content was (arguably) held by Husserl in *Logical Investigations* (thought contents as *species*), whereas the first way was (arguably) held by him in *Ideas* (thought contents as *noematic Sinne*).

Let us call the first way of construing the connection between phenomenality and intentionality the *relational view*, and the second way the *constitutive view*:



On the constitutive view, there is a kind of non-sensory phenomenology that is by its very nature representational.[4] Cognitive phenomenology has semantic properties *essentially*.

The purpose of this paper is to develop the thesis that thought content is constitutively phenomenal, to explore its consequences and its problems, and to attempt to come to a conclusion about whether it can form the basis of a tenable view of mind and meaning.

1 Type-psychologism

The constitutive view is a form of *psychologism*.[5] Psychologistic views (as I will understand the term) hold that one or another kind of mathematical or logical objects—numbers, sentences, propositions, etc.—are *mental* objects.

[4] There is controversy over whether or not sensory states have representational content in virtue of their sensory phenomenal content—so-called "non-conceptual" content. Supposing that they do not, the difference between cognitive and sensory phenomenal content would be that the former is representational/intentional whereas the latter is not. Supposing that they do creates a *prima facie* problem for the view developed here, to be addressed below.

[5] It is also a form of *internalism*, in that it maintains that the intentional content of a thought is determined by its intrinsic phenomenal properties, not its relational properties. My teachers will be very disappointed in me.

The constitutive view proposes that thought contents are *cognitive phenomenal* objects.[6]

Psychologism has been in very bad repute in analytic circles for over a century. It is widely accepted that Frege showed it to be untenable, since it subjectivizes what is objective, and, hence, relativizes such things as consistency, truth and proof in logic and mathematics to the peculiarities and vagaries of individual human psychologies. But the thesis that thought content is phenomenal is not so obviously wrong as the ignominious history of psychologism would suggest. For one thing, it can be construed in such a way as not to be subject to Frege's famous objections. To maintain that thought contents are phenomenal is not *ipso facto* to commit oneself either to their being subjective or to their logical relations being variable and contingent.

There are two ways of understanding the thesis that one or another kind of (supposedly abstract) objects are mental. They may be identified with *token* mental objects: for example, a number may be said to be a particular concept or idea in the mind of a particular calculator at a particular time, or a proposition a particular thought in the mind of a particular thinker at a particular time. It is to psychologism so understood—call it "token-psychologism"—that Frege's objections that numbers are not ideas and that the prescriptive laws of logic and mathematics are not the descriptive laws of thinking most clearly apply.[7] If a proposition is a thought token, then (perhaps) it is only accessible to the thinker to whom it occurs, it cannot occur to any other thinker, it cannot occur to the same thinker more than once, and the laws governing its relations to other propositions—the laws of logic—are the idiosyncratic laws governing its co-occurrence with other thoughts in a single thinker. (*Mutatis mutandis* for numbers as concept tokens. I will not be discussing psychologism about mathematical objects here.)

But there is another, more sophisticated version of the view, to which Frege's objections are not so clearly relevant. One may propose that the logical objects in question be identified, not with psychological *tokens*, but with psychological *types*. Call this sort of view "type-psychologism." If (as I will assume) types are themselves mind-independent abstract objects, then they are not subjective but objective, and it is not the case that relations holding among their tokens are *ipso facto* to be construed as formal relations holding among the types themselves. In supposing that species, for instance, are types, one is not committed to saying that contingent relations among their members are formal relations among the species themselves. (The fact that tokens (members) of the types (species) *hyena* and

[6] Note that the constitutive view is consistent with giving non-psychological abstracta (sets of worlds, n-tuples, etc.) a role in third-person characterizations of individuals' thoughts. One could maintain either that phenomenal content is "narrow" or that "wide" content really is not *mental* content at all, but a coarse-grained approximation to it that is useful in some circumstances. (I am inclined toward the latter view. Cf. Balaguer 2005.).

[7] Frege's objections to psychologism may be found in Frege1884/1953 (pp. 26–27), 1891/1952 (p. 79), 1893/1964 (pp.11–25), 1894/1979 (*passim*), 1906/1980 (66–70), and 1918/1997 (*passim*). It is a fact perhaps underappreciated by analytic philosophers that Husserl offered his own powerful critique of the kind of psychologism Frege attacked (in the "Prolegomena to Pure Logic" (*passim*), first volume of *Logical Investigations*). It is, moreover, not entirely clear that Husserl ever espoused psychologism in the form that Frege criticized. (See, e.g., Bell 1990, pp. 59–62; Findlay 1970, pp. 12–13; and Simons 1995, p. 113).

baboon are mutually antagonistic does not entail that a relation of mutual antagonism holds between the types. Indeed, this would be absurd.) Likewise, in supposing that thought contents are phenomenal types, one is not committed to saying that any contingent relations among their tokens in particular minds/brains at particular times are logical relations among the content-types themselves. (Relations among tokens cannot in general *be* relations among types, since the former are (typically) contingent while the latter are necessary, and they relate entities of different ontological categories. This is, of course, part of Frege's point; but what I am emphasizing here is that its truth does not militate against *type*-psychologism.) Moreover, one and the same phenomenal type can be tokened by more than one thinker, and by a single thinker more than once. Hence, indefinitely many distinct thought tokens can have exactly the same content, and one and the same thought can be shared by indefinitely many thinkers.

1.1 Nomenclature

It has been objected that type-psychologism is not *psychologism* at all, but instead a kind of platonism.[8] But this complaint rests on a false dichotomy. Type-psychologism (as I am understanding it) is indeed platonistic, given that it traffics in types as abstract objects; but it does not follow that it is not psychologism.[9] What makes a theory psychologistic is its identification of objects of some kind with psychological objects. Reorienting its ontology from tokens to types does nothing to change this. Analogously, what makes a theory *physicalistic* is its identification of objects of some kind with physical objects—regardless of whether the identification is at the level of tokens or the level of types. Type-physicalism is not a form of platonism because it identifies mental *types* with physical *types*. It is a form of physicalism because it identifies *mental* types with *physical* types. Likewise, psychologism does not become a form of platonism if it identifies thought contents with psychological types. What makes it a form of psychologism is its identification of objects of one sort or another with *psychological* types.

1.2 Intersubjective knowledge of content

On the epistemological side, it might be objected that making thought content phenomenal renders intersubjective knowledge of it impossible. Since token qualitative experiences cannot be intersubjectively compared, I cannot know whether yours are tokens of the same types as mine; hence I cannot know if you are thinking what I am thinking. Worse, since experiences are not intersubjectively accessible, I cannot know what yours are; hence, I cannot know what types they are tokens of; hence, I can never know what you are thinking—or even *that* you are thinking—at all.[10]

[8] Mark Balaguer, in conversation.

[9] It might not be the doctrine Frege, Husserl and those they criticized were discussing; but that is a historical, not a conceptual point.

[10] Cf. Frege 1918/1997, 334–335.

Of course, if physicalism is true, then phenomenal properties *are* intersubjectively accessible in principle, and the objection is moot. But even if token qualitative experiences cannot be shared, and cannot be directly accessed by anyone other than their possessor, it does not follow that intersubjective knowledge of qualitative content is impossible—or even especially difficult. It only follows that it cannot be *direct*. But this is no more a problem for psychologism than it is for any representationalist theory of content—at least as far as our commonsense knowledge of each other's mental lives is concerned. Though I may in principle have access to your brain states and their counterfactual-supporting relations to each other and to your environment, in practice I do not. Nor do I need to. I do not have to perform brain surgery on you or put you "in the magnet" in order to know what is going on in your mind.

Since we are of the same species, and, hence, constructed along essentially the same lines, it is reasonable to suppose that what you experience in certain specific circumstances is a lot like, if not identical to, what I experience in those circumstances.[11] It is no more the case that I cannot know what your experience is like unless I have direct access to it than that I cannot know that you have a liver unless I have direct access to it. If I know you are human, then I know (with, of course, less than absolute certainty) that you have a liver. (The fact that I *could* access your liver directly is irrelevant, since I can know you have one *without* doing so.) And I know (ditto) that if I poke you in the eye with a stick, you will have an experience that is pretty much the same as (or even identical to) the one I would have if you poked me in the eye (in exactly the same way) with the stick. Hence, though I cannot access your token experiences, I can have very good reason to think that—indeed, I can *know* that—you are having one of a particular type, tokens of which I am familiar with in my own case.

To insist otherwise, it seems to me, is to succumb to a peremptory philosophical skepticism that would stifle inquiry. Surely I do not know beyond all possibility of doubt that you have a liver. You *could* turn out to be a mutant, or an android, or pure spirit, or a figment of my imagination, or … Still, I think I know that you have a liver. I have good reasons to think that you do, and no especially compelling ones to think that you do not. Likewise, you *could* have experiences that are very different from mine, or even have no experiences at all. But given that we are otherwise tokens (members) of the same types (species), what non-arbitrary reason is there to believe that we are in fact so radically different mentally?[12]

Furthermore, in addition to being hard-wired to have the same sorts of qualitative experiences on exposure to various mechanical, chemical and electromagnetic stimuli, we tend to share automatic *cognitive* responses to immediate circumstances—e.g., perceptual beliefs—as well. Just as it is reasonable to suppose that

[11] Indeed, without the assumption of a shared mentality, psychology would be impossible. Science seeks generalizations; but generalizations require a domain of individuals with shared characteristics. If we were not of the same psychological kind, we would not comprise such a domain. (A familiar Fodorian point.)

[12] Of course, there are well-known variations in perceptual phenomenal content among humans (due to age, race, etc.). But the fact that these differences are known is further confirmation of the claim that intersubjective knowledge of phenomenal content is not impossible.

you smell what I smell when we stick our noses into the same carton of sour milk, it is also reasonable to suppose that the first thing you *think* in response to the stimulus is the same thing I think—viz., (something like) *Sour!* We tend to form the same immediate perceptual beliefs in response to the same circumstances, in the same knee-jerk fashion.[13]

However (I will be reminded), though there may be objective criteria for determining the contents of *some* of each others' mental states, it is notoriously difficult—impossible, by general consensus—to determine *all* that a conspecific is experiencing or thinking on the basis of stimulus and circumstance alone. In general, the occurrence of mental states is not so straightforwardly tied to external stimuli (as Chomsky emphasized long ago). One of the more interesting things about us is that our mental activity can enjoy a great deal of independence from what is going on in our immediate vicinity. Beyond the stereotypical perceptual and cognitive responses, there is little or nothing to be gleaned about the contents of someone's mind from local external conditions. (One could be sitting in the middle of a hurricane contemplating one's stock portfolio.) If the remainder really were inaccessible in principle from the outside, we would be in large part irretrievably inscrutable to each other. Nothing short of mind reading would allow us more than superficial knowledge of one another's mental lives.

Fortunately, however, there is a stunningly reliable way to determine what others are experiencing and thinking on a given occasion—with or without conspicuous stimuli—without having to read their minds (or open their skulls): we can *ask them*. Given the assumption that conspecifics come pre-packaged with very similar (perhaps identical) conceptual, experiential and behavioral capacities, it is not unreasonable to suppose that members of a linguistic community pick up the same words to describe their common experiences and express their common thoughts.[14] And, given that sincere declarative utterances are generally reliable indicators of what someone thinks, we can in fact have access, albeit indirect (and fallible), to each other's private moods and musings. Hence, type-psychologism does not have the untoward epistemological consequences alleged above.

1.3 First-person methodology

A similar objection seeks to cast doubt upon appeals to phenomenology in the context of scientifically informed philosophy of mind. Given that (token) experiences are directly accessible only by those whose experiences they are, any disagreements that might arise concerning their structure or content will be irresoluble in principle, and, hence, phenomenologically-based theorizing about the

[13] I recall Jerry Fodor once remarking that though Skinner was wrong that our *utterances* are stimulus-automatic (one does not *say* "Chalk-chalk-chalk-chalk-chalk-chalk- …" whenever one sees some), he got it right about at least some of our mental states (we do seem to be constrained to *think* 'chalk' (once or twice, anyway) when we encounter some).

[14] "Ouch!" mommy says; "I bet that *hurts*!" when you walk into the kitchen with the stick in your eye, because she believes, quite reasonably, that you are experiencing what she would experience in the same unfortunate circumstances. So you learn to apply the words 'ouch' and 'hurts' (etc.) to the same types of experiences and thoughts she applies them to.

mind will inevitably be fraught with pointless and unadjudicable counterassertions of "what it's like for *me*." We ought to have learned our lesson about the perils of first-person methodology from the failure of introspectionist psychology. It invites endless squabbling over empirically vacuous claims, with no hope of resolution or genuine progress. Insofar as intentional psychologism commits us to such a first-person methodology (the objection continues), it is intellectually recidivist.

An example from the philosophy of perception will serve to illustrate what the problem is supposed to be. (Comparable problems arise for cognition as well.[15]).

There is disagreement over whether or not the perceived constancy of objects through change in the way they appear is itself phenomenally manifest.[16] For instance, when objects move with respect to us (or we with respect to them), we see them as retaining their shape though the way they appear is in some respects changing. One way to get at what is changing is to imagine a two-dimensional projection of the object in question. (To keep the example simple, I will ignore changes in illumination, texture, shadow, etc., which no doubt also play a role in perceptual constancy.) Suppose it is a circular piece of cardboard, rotating slowly on a spindle. As it turns, the shape of its two dimensional projection (its shadow, as it might be) changes—from a circle, through a series of narrowing ellipses, to a thin rectangle, through a series of widening ellipses, to the circle again. There is some sense in which these changes are represented in our experience: we see something changing in the way the two-dimensional projection changes. But we do not see the shape of the piece of cardboard as changing; we see it as constant.[17]

The important phenomenological question is whether the constancy of the shape of the cardboard circle is "phenomenally manifest"—that is, whether there is an *experience* of constancy, or only a *belief* in it. Is there a "what-it's-like" of the circle's shape-constancy, or only the what-it's-like of its changing appearance (what is isolated in a two-dimensional projection)? Some (e.g., Kriegel and Siewert) say that there is a distinctive phenomenology of perceptual constancy, while others

[15] The question of the very existence of a distinctive phenomenology of cognition is a case in point. Some claim that it is obvious that there is such a thing, others that it is equally obvious that there is not. I try to provide an argument for the claim that there *must be* in *PC*, and an explanation for why it is not obvious to everyone in another (unpublished) paper, "Cognitive Acuity."

[16] I am indebted here to conversations with Charles Siewert and Uriah Kriegel, and to their reports from the trenches at the summer 2005 SPAWN conference at Syracuse University. (See also Kriegel 2007.).

[17] One way to account for this involves distinguishing direct and indirect forms of Dretske's (1969) *epistemic seeing*, and assigning the perception of change to direct epistemic perception and the perception of constancy to indirect epistemic perception. One (indirectly) sees the thing on the spindle as constantly circular by (directly) seeing the changes in its apparent shape. Given the background assumptions (a) that objects do not change shape just because they are moving and (b) that the thing on the spindle is rotating, we know that its apparent shape would not change in the way it does unless it were circular; hence, we see that it is constantly circular *by* seeing that its apparent shape changes in ways it would not change unless it were circular. One sees both that there is change and that there is not, without inconsistency. (This is analogous to seeing that a thing is white by seeing that its apparent color is green, in conditions under which it would not look green unless it were white, or seeing that an apple is rotten by seeing that it is brown and wrinkled. See *PC* 11, 25–26 for more discussion.).

(It might be objected that the work of this account is being done, not by the distinction between direct and indirect epistemic perception, but by that between apparent and actual shape. But this is not the case, since change in apparent shape is not inconsistent with change in actual shape.).

(e.g., Prinz and scattered time-slices of Pitt) say that there is not. The worry is that if the only evidence that can be appealed to by either side is its own private experiences, the question is unanswerable, and the issue entirely moot. There is simply no way to tell who is right. But this just shows that phenomenological approaches, with their first-person methodologies, are intellectually barren: they can yield no genuine advances in our understanding of the mind. If the question cannot be answered empirically, then it is not a genuine question.

I will not attempt a full-dress defense of first-person methodology here. The issues are many and complex.[18] But I think it is clear that the skeptical conclusion is overly hasty. To begin with, the question whether perceptual constancy is phenomenally manifest is underarticulated, since there is more than one sort of phenomenology that might manifest it. The phenomenology of shape constancy in visual perception, for example, might itself be visual; but it might also be (or be affected by) some other sort of non-visual or non-perceptual phenomenology—such as a phenomenology of proprioception (one's position or state of motion), or of imagination, expectation or cognition.[19] Constancy could be *phenomenally* manifest in experience without being *visually* (or *perceptually*) manifest. It would not be at all surprising if failure to appreciate the variety of factors that can make a phenomenal difference should lead to polemical stagnation.

Another way in which the issue needs to be clarified concerns the bearer of the perceived shape constancy. One might maintain that shape constancy is experienced as an intrinsic property of objects, in the way that color and size are. But one might also maintain that it is perceived as a kind of holistic property of entire visual scenes (perhaps something akin to being perceived as *in late afternoon sunlight*, or as *containing something that is moving*). These different claims have importantly different consequences. Failure to distinguish them might also lead to the appearance of irresolubility-in-principle.

If, for example, we suppose that disagreement over shape constancy concerns whether or not it is *visually* phenomenally manifest, progress on the question might be made by taking each side's position seriously and investigating its consequences. If shape constancy is a visually experienced property distinct from shape, color, texture, illumination, position, etc. (and changes therein)—as opposed to a property an object is merely *believed* to have on the basis of (changes in) its shape, color, texture, etc., in conjunction with background beliefs concerning local conditions and the behavior of objects in general—then one would not expect suspension of such beliefs to affect the visual experience of it in a way that is introspectively detectable. For example, suspension of the belief that objects do not change shape just because they are moving should not change the visual appearance of shape constancy. Whereas, if constancy is *not* a visually experienced property, but, rather,

[18] See Siewert 2007 for such a defense. I am much indebted in the next few paragraphs to conversations with Siewert.

[19] Such factors are also relevant to examples such as the difference between experiencing the front of a building as part of a larger structure and experiencing it as a mere facade (or seeing the facing side of a coffee cup as part of a whole cup whose back one cannot see and seeing it as half of a cup), and the differing senses one has of a particular place (a neighborhood, an intersection) before and after one is familiar with adjacent places and their specific relations to it.

cognitively attributed on the basis of an inference from such properties in conjunction with background beliefs, then one would expect that suspension of those beliefs would have an effect on a subject's experience—for example, he might not be able to tell whether he is seeing something that is changing shape without moving, something that is constant in shape but moving, or something that is both changing in shape and moving. And if we were to suppose that shape constancy is perceived as an intrinsic property of objects, we would expect the removal of contextual cues from a particular scene to have no effect upon whether the object is perceived as constant or changing in shape. Whereas if we suppose that constancy is perceived as a holistic property of entire visual scenes, we would expect the removal of contextual cues to have such an effect.

A clever psychologist could no doubt come up with much more elegant and decisive ways of assessing these claims. The point is that first-personal investigation of subjective experience is not the doomed enterprise some philosophers seem to think it is.[20] It is not the case that phenomenological approaches to the study of the mind can never get past initial clashes of introspective judgment. Hiddenness from direct third-person scrutiny does not create an epistemic dead zone in which there are no standards of evidence and no hope of establishing any systematic truths.

2 Internal problems

Type-psychologism, then, is not vulnerable to Frege's objections, is really worthy of the name, and has no uniquely untoward epistemological consequences. There are, however, several other objections to it that must be confronted. The first, which is closely related to Frege's, would, if sound, be as devastating to type-psychologism as Frege's was to token-psychologism.

2.1 Entailment

In many cases, necessary relations among types impose necessary restrictions on their tokening. For example, it follows from the fact that the types *triangle* and *trilateral* (i.e., *three-sided closed plane figure*) are mutually necessitating (*triangularity* necessitates and is necessitated by *trilaterality*) that, necessarily, any token triangle is a token trilateral, and vice versa. Similarly, since the psychological state-type *pain* necessitates the psychological state-type *sensation* (*being a pain* necessitates *being a sensation*), necessarily, any token pain is a token sensation (though of course not vice versa). In both of these cases, a necessary relation between the types necessitates *identity* of their tokens (the token pain and the token sensation are the *same* state). In other cases, necessary co-occurrence without token identity is entailed. For example, consider a (bad) version of analytic functionalism according to which it is conceptually necessary that pains are caused by tissue

[20] It is, moreover, far from clear that empirical methods cannot be brought to bear on phenomenological disputes (though of course the present objection is that introspective investigation cannot yield decisive results on its own).

damage.[21] On such a view it is metaphysically impossible for the type *pain* to be tokened if the type *tissue damage* is not, since there is a conceptually necessary connection between them. No token mental state occurring in the absence of tissue damage could possibly be a pain: if a pain occurs, then, necessarily, tissue damage has occurred, and has caused it. The formal relation between the types entails that if one is tokened then, necessarily, the other is tokened as well—though the token pain and the token tissue damage are distinct states.

The worry about type-psychologism is that it is a *general* truth that formal relations among types impose metaphysically necessary constraints on their tokening, and, hence, that if thought contents are construed as phenomenal types it would follow that if one thought-content logically necessitates—entails—another, then when the first is tokened the second must be tokened as well. If that is the case, however, it would not be possible to token (think) a thought without tokening (thinking) all the thoughts it logically entails. The result would be, not that the laws of logic are rendered contingent, or hostage to the vagaries of human psychology, but, conversely, that human thought processes would be rendered necessary, and hostage to the rigors of logic. Clearly, however (and this is after all one of the sources of Frege's objections) it *is* possible to think in ways that do not respect entailment relations holding among the contents of one's thoughts. Whatever regularities there may be in the tokening of distinct thought types are, for us, contingent. Frege emphasized that it is possible to think a succession of thoughts that are related, not by logic, but by (say) the contingent laws of psychological association. But it is also possible to think a thought without thinking *any* of its logical entailments. Moreover, it is a consequence of the finitude of our minds that we *never* think *all* of what follows logically from a given thought.

Frege's objection was that the course of human thought routinely overflows the banks of logic; hence, the laws relating the occurrence of thought tokens cannot be the logical laws relating their contents, and such contents cannot be psychological. The present objection is that human thought necessarily fails to flow very far along the banks of logic, and indeed need not flow at all; hence, the logical laws relating thought contents cannot constrain their tokening, and psychological objects cannot be logical. The common moral is that, since psychological relations among thought tokens are not constrained by the laws of logic, whereas relations among thought contents are, thought-types cannot *be* thought contents.

This objection is difficult to evaluate. For one thing, construing thought contents as tokenable types is a relatively unfamiliar strategy. Thought contents are typically taken to be propositions, and propositions are typically taken to be some sort of singular, untokenable abstract objects. It is difficult to know how to use thought contents construed as types to think about the things philosophers use propositions to think about. Further, a thorough assessment of the objection would require a clear understanding of the nature of types, including how they differ from properties (if they do), and of the relation between types and their tokens. It is obviously not the

[21] According to *non-bad* analytic functionalism, it is not conceptually necessary that a given pain state *be caused by* tissue damage, but only that it be a token of a type whose *function* in the organism is to occur in response to tissue damage. Thus it is possible for pain to occur in the absence of tissue damage—something bad functionalism precludes.

case that *all* properties and relations among types impose such restrictions upon their tokens. (Types are non-spatiotemporal, but may have spatiotemporal tokens; one type may have another as a distinct constituent (as, e.g., genus in species), without having tokens related in this way (rectangles, for example, are not distinct constituents of squares); etc.) What one needs is a way of making a *principled* distinction between those type properties and relations that are token-relevant and those that are not. But it is not obvious how such a distinction is to be made. Finally, if one supposes that intentional contents are mind- and language-independent abstract objects, then one needs a *metaphysics* of the entailment relation (as opposed to merely a formalism that *represents* it)—i.e., an account of the relations among types (or propositions, or properties) themselves *in virtue of which*, necessarily, one cannot be tokened (or be true, or be instantiated) unless the other is. But this is something that we do not have.[22]

Now, it might be supposed that, given that we know that it *is* possible to think that p without thinking all of p's logical consequents, it follows that the present objection has no force.[23] This strikes me as question-begging. Whether the fact about how we think should be taken to be a *reductio* of the constitutive view or evidence that entailment of thought contents does not constrain their tokening is just what is at issue. I suspect that this response presupposes a relational conception of thought. In general, relations among representations are metaphysically independent of the relations among the things they express. If the thought that p expresses the proposition that p, then the fact that we can think that p without thinking all that follows from it is perfectly consistent with the fact that p has infinitely many logical consequents. But here we are exploring a different way of thinking of thought-types—not as types of representations of intentional contents, but as the contents themselves. We cannot simply apply intuitions that are sound on one conception to a completely different conception and assume that they remain sound. The question is whether, *if we suppose that thought contents are tokenable types*, their entailment relations impose metaphysically necessary restrictions on their tokenings. The worry cannot be so easily dismissed.

Perhaps our firmest grip on the notion of entailment is in the context of formal logical systems. Entailment in a formal system is typically characterized in two ways. A well-formed formula (wff) $\mathscr{P}$ of a formal language $\mathscr{L}$ may entail a wff $\mathscr{Q}$ of $\mathscr{L}$ *semantically* or *syntactically*. $\mathscr{P}$ *semantically* entails $\mathscr{Q}$ in $\mathscr{L}$ iff $\mathscr{Q}$ cannot be false in $\mathscr{L}$ if $\mathscr{P}$ is true in $\mathscr{L}$—i.e., iff every model for $\mathscr{L}$ in which $\mathscr{P}$ is true is one in which $\mathscr{Q}$ is true. Presumably, this is meant to capture the non-linguistic fact that,

[22] It might be maintained that for one type to "entail" another *just is* for it to be impossible to token the one without tokening the other. I think this reverses the order of explanation. The fact that a token figure cannot be a triangle without being a trilateral is due to the nature of the types (properties) themselves, not vice versa. That a figure cannot have one property without having another is due to the nature of the properties; our intuitions about tokening are in fact intuitions about type-relations. In any case, the suggestion is of no help in the present context. It implies that since it is possible to think that p without thinking that (p or q), the content that p does not entail the content that (p or q); and that since it is *not* possible to think that (p or q) without thinking that p and thinking that q, the content that (p or q) entails the content that p and the content that q.

[23] Charles Siewert and John Searle independently suggested this response.

necessarily, if the proposition represented by $\mathscr{P}$ entails the proposition represented by $\mathscr{Q}$, and is true, then so is the proposition represented by $\mathscr{Q}$. One thing that does seem clear is that semantic entailment is not a relation that threatens the constitutive view. For, to token the thought type that p is not for p to be *true*. Rather, it is simply for *p* to *occur*. Moreover, if p occurs and is true and p semantically entails q, then, though q must be true as well, it does not follow that q must also *occur*.

A wff $\mathscr{P}$ *syntactically* entails a wff $\mathscr{Q}$ in $\mathscr{L}$ iff there is a *proof* of $\mathscr{Q}$ from $\mathscr{P}$ in $\mathscr{L}$ (or, if $\mathscr{Q}$ can be *derived from* $\mathscr{P}$ in $\mathscr{L}$). This notion is relativized to a method of proof, typically consisting of a set of wffs of $\mathscr{L}$ designated as axioms and a set of rules for inferring wffs from other wffs. It is not clear that this is entirely apt in the case of propositions themselves (as opposed to the wffs that represent them), however, since it is not clear that the entailment relations propositions enter into are *licensed by* inference rules. Rather, they seem to hold in virtue of the intrinsic nature of the propositions themselves (something that cannot be said for well-formed formula types).

One may suppose that formal derivations are meant to capture objective relations among propositions themselves. But at best our formalisms provide a way of clarifying and regimenting what appears true to unaided intuition, and extending it to cases that are not intuitively obvious. In particular, one may suppose that formal derivations are meant to capture objective relations among propositions themselves; but formal systems do not provide insight into the metaphysical nature of those relations. It may be that the pretheoretical notion of entailment is simply not clear enough to ground this objection to the constitutive view, and hence that there cannot be a definitive answer to the question what the *objective* relation among propositions-*qua*-types that we call "entailment" would imply about relations among their tokens.

There are, however, some considerations that might afford a firmer grip on the issue. Consider the logico-mathematical notion of a *sequence*, in which one or more things—including abstract objects—may *occur*. For example, the numbers one, two, three and four occur in the sequence $\langle 1, 2, 3, 4\rangle$. Further, objects may occur *more than once* in a sequence: in the sequence $\langle 1, 2, 2, 3, 4\rangle$ the number two occurs twice. Occurrence in a sequence is in some respects *analogous to* tokening, inasmuch as one and the same thing can occur in a sequence more than once. (Compare: the number two occurs three times in the sequence $\langle 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4\rangle$ and there are four tokens of the numeral type '2' in the expression '$\langle 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4\rangle$'.)

Consider now the sequence of propositions $\langle p, p \rightarrow q, r, s\rangle$. Such a sequence is entirely acceptable, mathematically. But note that it contains occurrences of propositions *without* containing any of the propositions they entail (other than themselves). If there is anything to the analogy between occurrence in a sequence and tokening, then perhaps this is independent (i.e., non-psychological) evidence that tokening of a thought content that p would not necessitate tokening of its logical consequents. A comparison with the occurrence of geometrical figures in a sequence provides further illumination. It is *not* possible to have an occurrence of a triangle (a tokening of the type *triangle*) in a sequence without having an occurrence of a trilateral (a tokening of the type *trilateral*), in the same position in the same sequence. This suggests that, whatever the entailment relation is, it does not imply

necessary co-occurrence of entailing and entailed *propositions*.[24] Perhaps, then, we can say that entailment is some sort of truth-preserving relation among propositions, which neither is itself tokened nor implies the instantiation of a necessary token-relation when the propositions are. Clearly more work needs to be done on these issues. But as things stand it seems to me that the entailment objection to the constitutive view is inconclusive.

2.2 Perceptual content

It is widely accepted that perceptual states have intentional as well as phenomenal (experiential) content. For example, there is *something it is like* to smell that the toast is burning, or to hear that the crocodiles have hatched; but these states have intentional content as well—as indicated by the use of 'that'-clauses in their ascription. The intentionality of perception has been understood by some (e.g. Dretske (1969)) as essentially involving *belief*: to smell that the toast is burning is (roughly) to believe (truly) that the toast is burning because of the way it smells, where the way it smells is a matter of the phenomenal character of one's experience of it.

Recently, however, a number of philosophers (e.g., Block, Chalmers, Loar, Peacocke, Siewert) have argued that the phenomenal character of perceptual experience *itself* determines intentional content, independently of the deployment of concepts: perceptual experience in itself, in addition to conceptual states, can represent *that*.[25] So-called "non-conceptual content" is thought to account for our ability to represent experientially more properties than we have concepts for (e.g., to distinguish colors we cannot reidentify), and for the fact that unconceptualized experiences can have intentional content (e.g., one can visually *experience that* there is food in the bowl even if one does not, or cannot, *think that* there is food in the bowl). Non-conceptual intentionality is usually taken to involve a distinctive style of representation, as opposed to a distinctive (non-propositional) sort of representatum; but on this view experiences can have the very same intentional contents, by virtue of their sensory phenomenality, that thoughts have by virtue of their conceptuality.[26]

The *prima facie* problem non-conceptual content presents for the constitutive view is this. If intentional contents are *cognitive*-phenomenal types, then for a state to have the content that p is for it to token a particular cognitive-phenomenal type.

[24] *Analytic* entailment need not present a problem for the constitutive view, since the claim that one cannot think a thought without thinking its analytic entailments is (at least) defensible (since the analytically entailed thought is *part of* the entailing thought).

[25] This position is sometimes called "non-reductive representationalism" (see, e.g., Chalmers 2004), and is contrasted with the view that the phenomenal character of experience is *reducible to* its representational properties. (Similar claims, on both sides, can also be made for introspective experience.)

[26] Unfortunately, the term 'content' is used both for intrinsic properties of mental representations and for the mind-independent objects they express. The content of a thought, for example, may be said to be a mind-independent proposition, but the term 'non-conceptual content' is used to describe non-conceptual representations *themselves*. The thesis that there is non-conceptual content is (on its most common version) the thesis that there are mental representations that are not concepts but which nonetheless express the same abstracta as conceptual representations.

But if there are non-conceptual states with intentional content—i.e., if there is also *non-cognitive* intentional phenomenology—and if the phenomenology of a non-conceptual state constitutes its intentional content (i.e., if one also adopts a constitutive view of experiential content), then any intentional content would be identified with a number of *distinct* phenomenal types. The content *that there is food in the bowl*, for example, would be both a cognitive phenomenal type—*qua* the content of the thought that there is food in the bowl—and an assortment of non-cognitive-phenomenal types—*qua* the content of the (visual, auditory, olfactory, etc.) experience that there is food in the bowl. But the intentional content *that there is food in the bowl* cannot *be* all of these *different* phenomenal types. And this would seem to force adoption of the relational view of the relation between phenomenality and intentionality. (There is no inconsistency in supposing that representations in two different styles represent one and the same objective intentional content.)

One way to respond to this objection is simply to deny that sensory phenomenology itself determines intentional content, and cleave to a view like the one Dretske (1969) has articulated (see also Block 1996, 2003). There are no doubt those who believe this on independent grounds. But I am inclined to think that perceptual states do have a kind of intentional content in virtue of their phenomenal features alone; so I would prefer another response to the worry.

One might claim that whereas cognitive phenomenology determines intentional content by *being* intentional content, *non*-cognitive phenomenology determines intentional content by *representing* it—a hybrid view on which one sort of phenomenology represents another. But this solution incurs the explanatory burden of the relational view (*how* does a phenomenal type represent the intentional content?), which the constitutive view finesses.

Another possibility is to deny that the objective intentional content of a non-conceptual representation is, in the relevant sense, conceptual/propositional. It is a common observation that the content of non-conceptual representations is much richer than that of conceptual ones. A visual experience that counts as seeing that the toaster is on fire will typically also count as having an indeterminate number of other intentional contents (e.g., that there is something in the toaster, that there are flames rising from it, that it is on the counter, that it is plugged in, etc.). Moreover, it is not clear that there is a principled way to determine whether a particular proposition is expressed by a given perceptual experience. (Does my visual experience of seeing that the toaster is on fire also count as representing *all* states of affairs subtended by my visual field? Do I also see that the hyena outside the kitchen window in the backyard has fifty-five spots?) The very richness that makes perceptual experiences so useful seems to entrain a degree of vagueness in what one might suppose to be their propositional contents. Further, though it is reasonable to attribute to at least some non-verbal animals experiences as richly phenomenally detailed as ours, their lack of a comparable conceptual repertoire renders ascriptions of propositional attitudes problematic. (Is the dog seeing that there is food *in the bowl*? Or that there is food *there*? Or merely that *there is food*? Or perhaps none of these?) The possibility of indeterminacy here suggests that non-conceptual contents (in the objective sense) might not be the same kinds of things as conceptual contents.

So perhaps one should say that though we invoke concepts in ascribing perceptual states, as far as the purely experiential component of such states is concerned, our 'that'-clause ascriptions, though useful as rough-and-ready characterizations of non-conceptual content, are never literally true. They are only literally true when applied to accompanying conceptual states (thoughts, beliefs, etc.). Hence one may adopt the non-conceptualist thesis on its less common construal—viz., that non-conceptual states are non-conceptual because the (mind-independent) contents they token (or express) are not conceptual/propositional.

I am inclined to think that this last resolution is the best motivated. The considerations alluded to concerning the density and possible propositional indeterminacy of perceptual experiences suggest that, though propositions can be useful in characterizing their contents, and though they might bear interesting relations to propositions, they do not themselves, qua non-conceptual, have the same sort of intentional contents as thoughts. As such they would not be in competition with cognitive-phenomenal types to be intentional contents: non-conceptual states do not represent *that*.

There are thus at least two potentially workable resolutions of the second worry. Hence, I do not think it poses a serious problem for the constitutive view.

2.3 Parochialism

If the content of the thought that p is identified with the phenomenology had by *my* (or some other individual's) thought, or even human thought in general, then it would seem that there could not be other humans, or creatures other than humans, who could think that p without tokening that very phenomenology. And this might seem implausible.[27] There is a pretheoretical intuition that there is more than one way to think that *p*; but the constitutive view seems to imply that there is not.

It seems to me that this consequence would not be problematic. For, consider the phenomenology of pain. I think it is intuitively correct to say that the phenomenology of pain is essential to it: no experience with a phenomenology in no way similar to that of *our* pains could be a pain.[28] It seems wrong to say that other creatures might have different ways of feeling pain, if this means that their pains might have phenomenologies nothing like ours.[29] And, given our status as conspecifics, it is reasonable (though not beyond all doubt) to assume that the sensation I identify as pain is the very same sensation that you identify as pain. But once it is accepted that our thoughts have a distinctive sort of phenomenology that is content-constitutive, it ought to be accepted

[27] I owe the objection to Mark Balaguer, in conversation.

[28] And no state with a phenomenology different from that of a maximally determinate sensation of pain could be a pain of that maximally determinate type.

[29] Balaguer objects that "feeling like *this*" is constitutive of our concept of pain, whereas "seeming like *that*" is not constitutive of our concept of thought, and, hence, that the analogy with pain phenomenology is inapt. I would argue, however, that in fact the concept of phenomenology really is constitutive of our concept of thought, given that it is constitutive of our concept of conscious states in general. (See the argument on pp. 2–3 of PC.) The further result that leads to our having to accept that what is true for pains and other sensations is true of conscious thoughts as well is the *individuative* nature of cognitive phenomenology.

that thought contents are in the same boat as pain contents, and the intuition that there may be many different ways to think that p ought to be explained away in terms of the different phenomenologies of other, non-cognitive types (e.g., visual, auditory, emotional, etc.) that might accompany episodes of conscious thinking for other people, or for creatures other than humans.

Alternatively, one might suppose (though I am not especially sympathetic to this move) that phenomenal types are to some degree *vague*, and that token conscious states that differ in their phenomenology might nonetheless be of the same (vague) type.

In any case, I do not think this objection is fatal to the constitutive view.

2.4 Propositions

If thought contents are propositions, then the constitutive view entails that propositions are phenomenal types. This may appear to be inconsistent with widely accepted philosophical views about the nature of propositions—viz., that propositions are *sets* or *functions* (of one kind or another), which are not tokenable types; that there are more (and more complex) propositions than could possibly be the thought-contents of any (finite) mind; and that propositions are mind-*independent*, *abstract* entities.

Of course, 'proposition' is a term of art, and as such may be variously construed depending upon one's theoretical purposes. One may maintain that though 'proposition' is generally used to answer to the notion of *intentional content* or *meaning*, it may have different kinds of referents in different contexts. Moreover, since *thoughts*, unlike formulas or sentences, are essentially psychological entities, it does not seem out of the question that their contents might be psychological as well.

Nonetheless, the idea that thought-contents and sentence-contents are the same kinds of thing enjoys a good deal of intuitive appeal, and is widely assumed. It allows for efficient explanations of a variety of phenomena, including language understanding, language use, the intentionality of language, the structural isomorphisms of language and thought, and the form of propositional-attitude attributions. If the best accounts of linguistic contents assume that they are propositions, construed in a particular way, then one ought not give up too quickly on the idea that thought contents are the very same propositions.

Supposing then that thought contents and sentential contents are propositions (of the same kind), is there anything that can be said in defense of the constitutive view?

In response to the objection that propositions are mind-independent abstract objects, whose existence does not presuppose or depend upon the existence of minds or their experiences, it can be said that the existence of phenomenal *types* need not presuppose the existence of phenomenal *tokens*, or the existence of individual minds.[30]

[30] One might also worry that if phenomenal types are properties of *conscious experiences*, then the constitutive view implies an incoherent "sentientism" about propositions: it requires that propositions *be* conscious, and, further, that they be conscious *to* an experiencing self; but it is absurd to say either that abstract objects are conscious or that selves are abstract objects. I do not think this is a real problem, either. It may be that (though I do not believe this), necessarily, phenomenality is *instantiated* only by token conscious states, and that any such state presupposes a self; but it follows neither that phenomenal types themselves are conscious nor that they must be experienced.

In response to the objection that there are more (and more complex) propositions than phenomenal types, it can be said that, given that thought types are composed of concept types (which are also phenomenal types), there can be as many phenomenal thought-types as there are possible combinations of phenomenal concept-types. The fact that infinitely many of these are unthinkable by us or any other finite creatures is beside the point.

The objection that propositions as standardly construed are sets or functions, which are not tokenable types, is more serious. Though there have been accounts on which propositions (or something closely related) are types (e.g., Barwise and Perry 1983), the view that they are not is so well entrenched, and has been used in successful accounts of so many different logical and mathematical phenomena, that giving it up might seem too high a price to pay for the constitutive view. In giving it up one risks losing those explanations. So if propositions are best construed as non-tokenable entities, then if thought contents are phenomenal types they cannot be propositions.

Perhaps, then, the best response to the propositional objection is, after all, to deny that thought contents are propositions. Maybe they are better construed as some other sort of entities—perhaps of a kind closely related to propositions. An obvious choice would be that thought-contents are psychological *modes of presentation* of propositions—perhaps tokenable property complexes composed of phenomenal-concept types. This would require an account of how phenomenal-concept types determine the constituents propositions are composed of; and it might seem that we are thus, in the end, no better off with the constitutive view than we were with the relational view. Better, then, to weaken, or sever, the connection between thought-contents and propositions, and hold that the former are really different kinds of things—similar to propositions in that they have truth conditions and bear entailment relations to each other, but unlike sets or functions in being tokenable types. Thought contents are be neither propositions nor modes of presentation of propositions as ordinarily construed.

3 Conclusion

My primary purpose in this paper has been to explore and defend a version of psychologism—the constitutive view of cognitive phenomenal intentional content. I have argued that none of the problems I have considered is insurmountable, and, hence, that, as far as I can tell, intentional psychologism is a tenable position in the logical space of theories of mental content.

But are there any positive reasons to adopt the position? I think there are. For one thing, the constitutive view provides a more *economical* account of the relation between an intentional state and its content than the relational view. On the relational view, a token thought that p is a token of a mental representation type whose content is the proposition that p: the thought expresses the proposition that p in virtue of being a token of a representation type that expresses that proposition. There are thus two expression relations on this view, one between representation type and propositional content and one between representation token and its

propositional content. The latter holds in virtue of the former (the token bears the same relation to the proposition as does its type); but a separate account is required for the latter. Indeed, the representation-type/proposition expression relation has occupied center stage in recent attempts to develop naturalistic representational theories of the mind.

On the constitutive view, in contrast, the relation between representation type and intentional content is *identity*, and the expression relation between a thought token and its intentional content is *just* tokening.[31] Cognitive phenomenal types *determine* thought contents by *being* thought contents (just as sensational phenomenal types determine sensational contents by being sensational contents). A thought is the thought that p in virtue of tokening the cognitive phenomenal type *that p* (a sensation is a pain in virtue of tokening the sensational phenomenal type *pain*). There is thus no obligation to provide a distinct substantive account of the relation between representation types and their contents.

The constitutive view also yields a more *unified* account of the nature of the mental than standard representational views. Given that sensations, perceptions and thoughts (and, perhaps, propositional *attitudes*) are all the mental states there are, and that all of them are phenomenal, the general view of mentality that emerges is constitutive-phenomenal: to be in *any* mental state is just to token one or another phenomenal type. What emerges is a view that assimilates the intentional to the phenomenal, and pursues a uniform *constitutive* account of the relation between mental states of all kinds and their contents.[32]

Finally, the constitutive view provides a natural explanation of self-knowledge of content. Normally, we can and do know the contents of our mental states, including our thoughts, by direct, non-inferential introspection.[33] But, then, the properties of such states that determine their contents must be immediately available to us from a first-person point of view. (If knowing that a mental state *S* has a property *F* is *alone* sufficient for knowing that it has the content *C*, then it must be that *S*'s having *F* constitutes its having *C*.[34]) Phenomenal properties are so accessible, whereas the relational properties typically proposed as content-determining are not. Our knowledge of what we are thinking, experiencing and feeling does not in general depend either on knowledge of causal relations obtaining between our brain states

[31] Note that since the type-token relation is assumed by *both* accounts, the constitutive view's dependence on it is not a relative liability.

[32] Cf. Galen Strawson's view in *Mental Reality*, and the "phenomenal intentionality" thesis of Horgan and Tienson 2002. Reductive representationalism, which assimilates in the opposite direction, pursues a uniform *relational* account of mental states and their contents. Given the economic considerations just offered in favor of the constitutive view, however, assimilation to the phenomenal has advantages over assimilation in the opposite direction. (Not to mention the serious problems that arise in giving a reductive representationalist account of phenomenal character.)

[33] Introspective knowledge has had a hard time of it lately. (See, e.g., Schwitzgebel 2008.) I am not convinced that it has been shown that there is no, or only very little, such knowledge, however.

[34] No matter what external states of affairs bring about the occurrence of *S*. What makes my thought that there is a baboon in the living room about baboons, and not orangutans or gorillas-in-the-mist, is not what causes it (or has caused it, or would cause it, or should cause it, or …), but its introspectable phenomenology. (Cf. Searle 1987. See *PC*, 11–13, 25–26, for an argument for the parenthetical claim in the text.)

and objects in the world or states of our bodies, or on knowledge of the ecological functions or global inferential relations of such states. Such theories may solve the problem of knowing other minds, but in the process they make it mysterious how we could know our own.

Given that the constitutive view has these advantages over relational views, and that it has no insurmountable problems, it represents a viable alternative to extant theories of intentional content, and is well worth further serious consideration and development.

Acknowledgments I have had helpful exchanges on the issues discussed herein with Mark Balaguer, Alex Bundy, David Chalmers, Justin Fisher, Brie Gertler, Terry Horgan, Sean Kelly, John Searle, Eric Schwitzgebel, Susanna Siegel, Charles Siewert, David W. Smith, Declan Smithies, Gerardo Villaseñor, and an anonymous referee for this journal. Thanks to all.

References

Balaguer, M. (2005). Indexical propositions and De Re belief ascriptions. *Synthese, 146*, 325–355.

Bell, D. (1990). *Husserl*. London and New York: Routledge.

Block, N. (1996). Mental paint and mental latex. In E. Villanueva (Ed.), *Perception* (pp. 19–49). Atascadero: Ridgeview Press.

Block, N. (2003). Mental paint. In M. Hahn & B. Ramberg (Eds.), *Reflections and replies* (pp. 165–200). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Boghossian, P. A. (1997). Analyticity. In B. Hale & C. Wright (Eds.), *A companion to the philosophy of language* (pp. 331–368). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Chalmers, D. (2004). The representational character of experience. In B. Leiter (Ed.), *The future for philosophy* (pp. 153–181). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Findlay, J. N. (1970). Translator's introduction. In Husserl 1900/1970 (pp. 1–40).

Fodor, J. A. (1990a). *A theory of content and other essays*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Fodor, J. A. (1990b). Fodor's guide to mental representation: The intelligent auntie's vade-mecum. In Fodor 1990 (pp. 3–29).

Frege, G. (1884/1953). *The foundations of arithmetic*, J. L. Austin, trans., New York: Philosophical Library.

Frege, G. (1893/1964). *The basic laws of arithmetic*, M. Furth (Ed., trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Frege, G. (1891/1997). Review of E. G. Husserl, *Philosophie der Arithmetik I*. In P. Geach & M. Black (Eds.), *Translations from the philosophical writings of Gottlob Frege* (pp. 79–85) Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Frege, G. (1894/1979). Logic. In H. Hermes, F. Kambartel & F. Kaulbach (Eds.), P. Long, R. White, trans., *Posthumous writings* (pp. 126–151) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Frege, G. (1906/1980). Letter to Husserl, In G. Gabriel, H. Hermes, F. Kambartel, C. Thiel, A. Veraart & B. McGuinness, (Eds.), H. Kaal, trans., *Gottlob Frege: Philosophical and mathematical correspondence* (pp. 66–71). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Frege, G. (1918/1997). Thought. In M. Beany (Ed.), *The Frege reader* (pp. 325–345). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Horgan, T., & Tiensen, J. (2002). The intentionality of phenomenology and the phenomenology of intentionality. In D. Chalmers (Ed.), *Philosophy of mind: Classical and contemporary readings* (pp. 520–533) Oxford University Press.

Husserl, E. (1900/1970). *Logical investigations*, J. N. Findlay, trans., New York: Humanities Press.

Husserl, E. (1913/1931). *Ideas. A general introduction to pure phenomenology*. W. R. Boyce Gibson, trans., London: Allen & Unwin.

Kriegel, U. (2007). The phenomenologically manifest. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 6*, 115–136.

Pitt, D. (2004). The phenomenology of cognition, or, what is it like to think that P? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 69*, 1–36.
Schwitzgebel, E. (2008). The unreliability of naive introspection. *Philosophical Review, 117*, 245–273.
Searle, J. R. (1987). Indeterminacy, empiricism, and the first person. *The Journal of Philosophy, 84*, 123–147.
Searle, J. R. (1992). *The rediscovery of the mind*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Siewert, C. (1998). *The significance of consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Siewert, C. (2007). Who's afraid of phenomenological disputes? *Southern Journal of Philosophy, 45*(Suppl.), 1–21.
Simons, P. (1995). Meaning and language. In B. Smith & D. W. Smith (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Husserl* (pp. 106–137). Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press.
Strawson, G. (1994). *Mental reality*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Copyright of Philosophical Studies is the property of Springer Science & Business Media B.V. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.