



Varieties of Representationalism

David J. Chalmers

Consciousness and Intentionality

- Background question:
 - What is the relationship between consciousness and content?
 - ...between the phenomenal and the intentional?
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Phenomenal and Representational Properties

- Phenomenal, representational properties = properties of subjects (alternatively, mental states).
 - **Phenomenal property** = property characterizing an aspect of what it is like to be a subject
 - **Pure representational property** = property of representing such-and-such
 - **Impure representational property** = property of representing such-and-such in such-and-such a way.
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Question

- What is the relationship between phenomenal and representational properties?
 - Are there **entailments** between these? (Which direction?)
 - Is one class **reducible** to the other? (Ditto.)
 - Are phenomenal properties **identical** (or equivalent) to representational properties?
 - Representationalist: yes
 - Antirepresentationalist: no
 - Block: “the greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind”
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Entailment I

- Do pure representational properties **entail** phenomenal properties?
 - Plausibly, no. A given content can plausibly be represented unconsciously, without associated phenomenal properties.
 - Weaker tenable theses? Entailment by:
 - Complexes of pure representational properties?
 - Special pure representational properties?
 - Impure representational properties?
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Entailment II

- Do phenomenal properties entail pure representational properties?
 - Plausibly yes - at least for perceptual phenomenal properties.
 - A given perceptual phenomenal state by its nature presents the world as being a certain way, and is thereby assessable for accuracy.
 - Siewert, Horgan/Tienson, Loar, Byrne, ...
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Identity I

- Are phenomenal properties **identical** (or equivalent) to pure representational properties?
 - Plausibly no, because of failure of reverse entailment due to unconscious representation (see Entailment I).
 - Only possibility: special contents that cannot be nonphenomenally represented.
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Identity II

- Are (perceptual) phenomenal properties identical (or equivalent) to **impure** representational properties?
 - Plausibly yes, if the “way” distinguishes conscious/unconscious representation
 - E.g.: phenomenal property P <->
 - phenomenally representing such-and-such
 - or
 - visually-phenomenally representing such-and-such
 - This requires that distinct phenomenal properties (or distinct visual phenomenal properties) entail distinct pure representational properties
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Representationalism

- **Representationalism**: phenomenal property \leftrightarrow representing such-and-such in such-and-such a way
 - **Reductive representationalism**: terms on right-hand-side can be understood without appeal to the phenomenal
 - **Nonreductive representationalism**: terms on right-hand-side cannot be understood without appeal to the phenomenal.
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Functionalist Representationalism

- **Functionalist representationalism** (Tye, etc): RHS terms can be understood in (broadly) causal/functional terms
 - “such-and-such way” = under an appropriate functional role (global availability, etc)
 - Amounts to a sort of functionalism about the phenomenal/nonphenomenal distinction
 - Most arguments for these views are really arguments for the representationalist aspect, not the functionalist aspect.
 - Standard objections to functionalism about the phenomenal apply.
 - So the good reasons to accept representationalism do not obviously yield good reasons to accept reductive representationalism.
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Nonreductive Representationalism

- Phenomenal property \leftrightarrow Phenomenally representing content C
or: visually-phenomenally representing C.
 - Further: content C may also presuppose the phenomenal
 - Cf. projectivism, Shoemaker, Stoljar
 - P-representing object as having quale Q
 - P-representing object as disposed to cause quale Q.
 - ...
 - If so: doubly nonreductive representationalism?
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Internalist and Externalist Representationalism

- Phenomenal properties are often thought to be **narrow**
 - Representational properties are often thought to be **wide**

 - Reactions:
 - (i) deny representationalism (Block)
 - (ii) hold that phenomenal properties are wide (Lycan, Dretske)
 - (iii) hold that the relevant representational properties are narrow.

 - (ii) = externalist representationalism
 - (iii) = internalist representationalism
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Russellian (Extensional) Representationalism

- Russellian (extensional) representationalism: the relevant representational contents are extensional (referential) contents.
 - Typically: properties attributed by experiences
 - Standard representationalism: (e.g.) color properties
 - Shoemaker: dispositional properties
 - Extensional representational properties are typically wide properties -> externalist representationalism.
 - Shoemaker's view allows narrow properties, but with costs re attribution of colors by experiences.
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Fregean (Intensional) Representationalism

- Fregean (intensional) representationalism: the relevant representational contents are intensional (Fregean) contents
 - In the domain of senses/modes of presentation rather than extension.
 - E.g. Fregean content = condition on extension
 - Cf. *Hesperus*: morning star (intension), Venus (extension)
 - quasi-descriptive condition, mirroring cognitive role
 - Argued elsewhere: all beliefs, perceptual states have Fregean (epistemic) contents
 - Maybe: phenomenal property = representing such-and-such Fregean content in such-and-such a way.
 - Phenomenal properties = (in effect) modes of presentation of extensions
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Example

- E.g. red experience:
 - extensional content (property attributed): *red*
 - intensional content (condition on property attributed) = *the property that typically causes phenomenally red experiences*
 - So: the experience attributes (non-dispositional) colors, under a dispositional mode of presentation (cf. Shoemaker)
 - Phenomenal contents are mode-of-presentation contents.
 - Compatible with transparency: one always attends to modes of presentation by attending to referents.
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Summary

Phenomenal property = representing content C in manner M

- Pure [manner = phenomenal] vs. impure [manner = phenomenal+]
 - Reductive [manner functionally reducible] vs nonreductive [not]

 - Extensional [Russellian content] vs intensional [Fregean content]
 - Externalist [wide content] vs internalist [narrow content]
 - Reductive [content is phenomenal-involving] vs nonreductive [not]

 - My view: impure, (doubly) nonreductive, intensional, internalist representationalism.
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