

Phenomenal Consciousness and Intentionality

Comments on *The Significance of Consciousness*

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COMMENTARY ON: C. Siewert (1998) *The Significance of Consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. \$42.50 hbk. x + 374pp. ISBN: 0691027242.

ABSTRACT: I discuss three issues about the relation of phenomenal consciousness, in the sense Siewert isolates, to intentionality. The first is whether, contrary to Siewert, phenomenal consciousness requires higher-order representation. The second is whether intentional features of conscious states are identical with phenomenal features, as Siewert argues, or merely conceptually supervene on them, with special attention to cross modal representations of objects in space. The third is whether phenomenal features are identical with what we can have first person access to, with special attention to features of thoughts that are individuated by reference to the self and the present time.

1. Introduction

The *Significance of Consciousness* (Siewert 1998; all citations to page numbers will be to this book) is a careful, and valuable, investigation into the phenomenon of consciousness, and a welcome corrective to many recent books that plunge into the subject as if we were all clear from the outset exactly what we had in mind by 'consciousness'. The result is that all too often the putative subject of the discussion gets lost in a cloud of dust raised by

literally ancient ideological skirmishes about the relation of the mental to the rest of the natural world. In these circumstances it is refreshing to see someone paying attention to the subject itself largely apart from these dry and familiar maneuverings. In my opinion, we are much more likely to make progress in thinking about consciousness by attending carefully to our conscious lives than we are by thinking of it primarily in terms of which ready-to-wear suit of natural cloth is a best-fit.

The Significance of Consciousness divides roughly into two parts. The first part, comprising chapters 1-5 and some of chapter 6, is concerned, first, to clarify the sense of consciousness, phenomenal consciousness, which is its concern, second, to defend the claim that there is such a thing, and, third, to use the characterization as a way of identifying consciousness *neglect* in various extant theories of (something called) consciousness. The second part is concerned more purely with investigations into the phenomenology of various forms of consciousness (chapters 6-8), particularly with respect to their relation to intentionality, something long overdue in consciousness studies.

I will concentrate primarily on the second part. I accept that we are phenomenally conscious in the sense that Siewert isolates, and I am largely in agreement with Siewert about its neglect by many contemporary theories of mind that seek to find a place for something called 'consciousness' in a world viewed primarily through the lens of physics.

2. Consciousness and Self-Reflection

My first topic will be the question whether there is a connection between a state's being a phenomenally conscious state and one's representing oneself as having that state. In chapter 6, Siewert is concerned to deny the following thesis:

... it is either necessary, or necessary and (nontrivially) sufficient, for a conscious experience of a certain kind to occur (or for a certain state to be conscious), that its occurrence satisfy the conditions of truth or accuracy for some mentally self-reflexive feature belonging to the one who has that experience (or is in that state). (p. 194)

Siewert's denial of this thesis is part of his argument against higher-order thought theories of consciousness. I share Siewert's skepticism about higher-order thought theories of consciousness. Both non-conscious and conscious states may be the object of either conscious or non-conscious thoughts. Being the object of such a thought then could not be sufficient for it to be conscious. For otherwise it would not make sense to talk about a non-conscious mental state being the object of such a higher-order thought. Thus, in particular, I agree that we cannot state a sufficient condition for a mental state's being conscious in terms of a higher-order representation of it.

It is much less clear to me that we should deny that it is a necessary condition on a mental state's being a conscious mental state that we represent it to ourselves. Let me first give some reasons to think we should say that all conscious mental states are represented by their subjects as states they have, and then consider some of the difficulties which Siewert raises for this thesis.

2.1 Arguments for the Requirement That Agents Represent to Themselves Their Having Their Conscious Mental States

(a) The argument from seeming. The first argument hinges on the claim that to have a phenomenally conscious state is for things to seem some way to one. I will not argue for this here, since Siewert agrees with me about this (sec. 3.10). Siewert puts it by saying that for one to be phenomenally conscious is for it to seem to one to look/feel/sound/taste/smell as if things were thus and so. Differences in how things seem to one in this sense are differences in the phenomenal character of one's conscious mental states. I think this is right, but I want to look more closely at what is involved in its seeming to one to look/feel/ and so on as if things were thus and so. I think what we will find is that if we accept that for every conscious mental state one has, one is in that state if, and only if, there is some specific way it seems to one to look/feel/sound/etc. as if things were, then we will be committed to saying that one represents oneself as having every conscious mental state one has.

The idea that when one is conscious things seem to one as if they were a certain way has to be understood broadly enough to allow that conscious states which are not perceptual can be captured by this locution, so that we capture also pain, anger, euphoria, and conscious or occurrent thoughts, and so on. What we say here I think is instructive. What do we say in the case of pain? We don't say: it seems to me as if there is pain, but rather it seems to me as if *I* am in pain. For anger? We don't say: it seems to me as if there is anger, but rather it seems to me as if *I* am angry. For thinking occurrently that the number four has two square roots? We don't say: it seems to me as if there is thinking that the number four has two square roots, but rather it seems to me as if *I* am thinking that the number four has two square roots. In these cases we don't have recourse to vocabulary used to describe scenes presented to us in perceptual experience but cite the state itself, which captures the differences in their phenomenal character. If these are, as they seem to be, proper characterizations of the phenomenal character of these states, then they all represent the subject of the state as having it.

Siewert uses a slightly different locution in talking about how pains, and so on, feel to us. He says, e.g., "The way it seems to me to feel pain differs from the way it seems to me to feel nausea" (p. 90). The infinitival phrase 'to feel pain' and 'to feel nausea' elide explicit reference to the subject of the pain and nausea. This may make it appear as if we could talk of how pain and anger, e.g., seem to one without commitment to the seeming's content including a representation of the possessor of the pain or anger. But this is illusory, for in logical form 'seems' takes a sentential complement, so the subject position

of the verb must be filled in. The subject is elided in this case because there is a simple rule for providing it: it is the subject of the seeming. (Compare: I intend to go to the store. Who is the intended agent of the going? The intender. So this is equivalent to: I intend that I go to the store.)

Moreover, the phenomenology of feeling pain and anger mirrors, as it should, the grammar of our reports of how it seems to us to feel pain and anger: we are presented as the subjects of the pain and the anger. Try to imagine, for a moment, what it would be like to feel anger but not as one's own anger.

Turning back to our original locution, 'things seems to me to look/feel/... as if ...', I want to suggest this under describes the way things seems to me. More properly, when I see something, such as a book on a table, it seems to me to look as if a book on the table *is being visually presented to me at a certain distance and orientation*. Our visual experiences, and indeed other perceptual experiences, if less obviously, are perspectival. They do not present things from no point of view at all, but from a very definite point of view. It seems fair to say that this is a feature of their phenomenal character, part of the phenomenology of visual experience. Thus, I want to suggest that in fact perceptual seemings, like the seemings involved in pain, emotions, and occurrent thoughts, seem to one as if they were, inter alia, one's own states, and, in particular, in the case of perceptual seemings, certain sorts of presentations to one. And if this is right, then every phenomenally conscious mental state represents itself as a state of the person whose state it is.

(b) The argument from deviant causal chains. The next argument is the argument from deviant causal chains, which is supposed to show that every perceptual state that is capable of being veridical or nonveridical is one the subject represents to him or herself (I am indebted here to chapter 2 of (Searle, 1983)). Consider then a case in which I am hallucinating a book on the table in front of me, and at the same time there happens to be a book on the table in front of me of just the sort I hallucinate. That the hallucination corresponds to the scene actually presented to me does not make it veridical. What is missing? It is not my belief that the scene is the way it is presented to me. I may not know I am hallucinating, and I may pick up the book as a result of the hallucination. But it is still non-veridical. Why? The answer is that every visual experience is also presented as if it were the result of the scene it presents to us. Thus, my visual experiences are veridical only if in fact the scenes they present cause, and cause moreover in the right way, the visual experience (in the right way because even if the hallucination is triggered by the scene it is not veridical). Reading into the content of the perceptual experience the conditions required for it to be veridical, we can conclude that it must in some way contain in its content that it is being caused by the scene which it presents to its subject. This may be subsumed by the previous point if we understand 'being visually presented to me' to require the experience be caused in the right way by what it presents. Note that I do not claim that the self-representation I am suggesting is a part of the phenomenal content of every conscious mental state is fully expressible propositionally; the locutions we use to describe them employ sentences expressing propositions, but this is compatible

with the propositions providing pointers to their contents rather than fully expressing them.

(c) The argument from memory. The third argument I will call the argument from memory. If the argument from memory is correct, then it simply draws attention indirectly to something that we should be able then to isolate more directly. (See the second response to the argument from conceptual deficits below.) Here is the argument. In principal, even if we are not paying attention to it at the time, any phenomenally conscious state one has at t is potentially available to be remembered as some time t subsequent to t . I take this to be a conceptual truth about phenomenally conscious mental states. What I mean by its being potentially available to be remembered at some time t subsequent to t is roughly that there is a memory of it that is registered in virtue of having it, even if the memory fades almost immediately. Then the key claim is that to remember some experience one had, one had to know that one had it originally, since one cannot remember something one never knew. Memory preserves but does not create knowledge. Then we can infer that each of one's phenomenally conscious mental states is one that one knows one has. To say this much is not to say what that knowledge comes to. I do not myself think there is likely to be a satisfactory reductive analysis of it. But in any case my current concern is simply to note that knowing one has a mental state at a time implies that one represents oneself as having it at that time.

2.2. Arguments Against the Necessity of Self-Reflection for Phenomenal Consciousness

Siewert presents a number of arguments against the necessity of self-reflection for phenomenal consciousness. I want to examine these to see whether they are successful. If they are, then the arguments I have given above must be flawed in some way. But I am not so far convinced that Siewert's arguments are successful.

(a) Argument by example. The first argument is that we can know that some conscious mental states are not the object of any representation simply by reflecting on many of the conscious mental states we do have. There is a certain general difficulty, I think, in making this case, but let me first explain what sorts of examples Siewert has in mind. The first has to do with "silent speech":

I do a lot of silent talking to myself in the course of an ordinary day. But often, even typically, when I do this, I am not attending to, or taking note of, this occurrence as it happens. Usually I am paying attention to, and consciously thinking about, only whatever it is that I am silently talking about. Though, for example, I am speaking silently to myself as I read something, I am not (consciously) thinking about my silent speech all the while- -I am too busy concentrating now on what I am reading about. This is not to say I do not know that I am thinking, as it is happening--I do know. But the kind of knowledge I then have of my own experience does

not require that a thought of some sort occur to me about my experience as I am having it. (p. 198)

The second has to do with ordinary perceptual experience in everyday life:

... consider the sort of perception we have when engaged in activity that requires more coordinated movement than what is sufficient merely to perceive--the sort one typically has of one's own body and surroundings when going somewhere, whether by walking, riding, driving, or swimming; when grasping and moving things, whether in, say, building, cleaning, repairing, or cooking something; and in the course of all manner of movement involved in human contact--shaking hands, conversing, dancing, punching someone in the eye. It would be an odd sort of life, difficult to imagine, in which one without pause consciously thought about one's perceiving as one went about such activities. Often, if one is doing these things, and one is, properly speaking, consciously thinking about anything at all, it is about that which one perceives, not about one's perceiving--or else about something entirely apart from either of these. (p. 199)

I think these examples show something, but I don't think that they show that conscious mental states are not represented by their subjects as possessed by them at the time they have them. For we need to distinguish between consciously thinking about a concurrent thought or experience, where this signals a kind of *direction of attention* to the thought or experience, and representing oneself at the time as having the experience. The latter can occur without the represented experience being one which one is attending to or taking note of, for these activities are quite special.

That this is so is shown by the fact that we can tell after the fact that some of our conscious mental states were not ones we were attending to. It is precisely because we can recall having them and recall at the time not having attended to them that we know not all of our conscious mental states are attended to (and thought about in that sense) at the time we have them. But to recall having had them we had to know that we had them at the time. And to know that we had them at the time, we had to be in possession of a representation of our having them at the time. Thus, these examples are not examples of conscious mental states that we were not concurrently representing ourselves as having.

Indeed, in the first passage above, Siewert says explicitly that when we engage in "silent speech" we do know that we do so, even if we are not attending to it (and in that sense entertaining a conscious thought about it). This must be so to produce examples of experiences we did not attend to. And this shows that there is a general difficulty with the strategy of showing from the first person perspective that some conscious mental states are not accompanied by any representing of the subject as having them. For if there were any such states, we would not know from the first person perspective that we had had them, and so could not thereby cite them as examples of the relevant sort.

(b) The argument from conceptual deficits. Siewert acknowledges that appeal to examples does not provide a knockdown argument against the claim that no conscious mental state can occur without its subject representing him or herself as having it. The difficulty is precisely that whenever we point out one, it seems that we must have had, at least dispositionally, a belief about it, in order to be in a position to use it later as an example (p. 202). But Siewert has a backup argument, which relies on appeal to the possibility of creatures who are conscious in the same sense we are but lack the conceptual resources necessary to represent their conscious mental states.

It seems possible that beings [which] have conscious vision or hearing might never contemporaneously think about their own experience, but might remain for their entire lives in the sort of unreflective condition we often are in, and further, that they might never think about their past sense-experience. And this would not be because they just happen never to exercise their capacity to think about their own experience, but because they have no such capacity. And so, they have no beliefs about their own experience. (p. 202)

A creature might see colors and hear sounds, and yet lack belief in such truisms [as that something looked red or sounded thus and so] because it is incapable of forming a belief one way or the other about such questions. But if one lacks such beliefs, one does not have the concepts of seeing or hearing, and so, even though one sees and hears, one lacks the belief that one sees and hears. (p. 203)

And finally, if one is to have beliefs about seeing or hearing, one needs to understand how the contrast between appearance and reality applies to them. That is, one needs to believe in some cases, or at least be able to form the belief, that something someone sees or hears is not the way it appears or looks or sounds to him. However, one could see or hear things, without being able to form such beliefs. (p. 203)

Siewert cites as an example a one-year-old child, who presumably sees and hears things, and feels warmth and cold, pain and pleasure, without having the concepts, for example, of seeing and hearing and even feeling.

The argument from conceptual deficits is more powerful, I think, than the argument from examples. But I think it is not so easy as it may appear at first to see what the right thing is to say about the cognitive states of a one-year-old child. It is significant that in this case we are not in a position to make clear judgments about the child's phenomenology by imaginative projection. The more complex cognitive abilities we have obviously make a difference to the kind of conscious phenomenology we experience. Our judgments about a child's mental life are based on analogies with our own adjusted in the light of the child's behavior. I want to raise three sorts of difficulties for the appeal that Siewert makes to the cognitive capacities of a one-year-old child to support the claim that one can be conscious without representing one's being so.

(i) First, then, I observe that we routinely treat even one year olds as agents capable of performing actions. We say that they do things, we ascribe to them desires of various

sorts, and beliefs. But if we treat them as agents, we cannot, on the standard analysis of agency, deny to them concepts of belief, desire and intention. This follows from the view that any action is rationalizable in the light of the agent's beliefs and desires. Thus, if X reaches for a bobble, and we wish to say that X did so intentionally, we suppose there was some aspect under which X saw reaching for the bobble as desirable, i.e., we suppose there is some way of constructing a practical syllogism that explains the action, and whose premises, in particular, are derived from psychological states the agent possesses which motivate the action.

Practical Syllogism

Its being the case that p is good
Aing will bring it about that p

Aing is good

Corresponding psychological states

X wanted it to be the case that p
X believed that Aing would bring it about that p

X intended to A

The first premise of the practical syllogism is derived from the desire that motivates the action. The second premise is derived from the agent's means-end belief about how to satisfy the desire. The conclusion corresponds to an intention to perform the action (see (Davidson 1980) for background).

Now the key here lies in understanding the conceptual commitments entailed by attributing these psychological states to the agent. Notice in particular that believing that Aing will bring it about that *p* requires that a verb expressing the concept of a particular action type to be in the scope of 'believes', and, hence, to express a concept possessed by the agent. Thus to be an agent one has to have the concept of an action. But the concept of an action is the concept of a bodily movement which is rationalizable and brought about mediately by an intention. Thus, to have the concept of an action is to have the concepts of belief, desire and intention. Our treating one-year-old children as agents therefore commits us to their having these psychological concepts which are supposedly too sophisticated for them to possess.

This point works against Siewert's argument in two ways. First, if we are correct to treat one year olds as agents, then they do possess some of the concepts needed to represent conscious mental states, which are arguably as sophisticated as the others they would need. In this case, Siewert's case against children being able to represent their own conscious mental states collapses. Second, if we wish now to withdraw our attribution of agency to one year olds, we should in general be much more hesitant about our other

pronouncements about their mental lives, for it is certainly very counterintuitive to say that one year olds don't act one their environments.

(ii) Secondly, it is not clear to me that we can make good sense of a one year old with phenomenal consciousness who does not have the capacity to represent its states, if we require that we make intelligible to us what this would come to from the first person point of view. I assume that in saying that a one year old is phenomenally conscious, we mean to be saying something that at least implies that there is something it is like to be the one year old from the first person point of view. I doubt we can make good sense of this without thinking that the one year old is *aware* of its conscious mental states. Consider a one year old with blindsight in the left visual field and contrast him with a one year old without blindsight in the left visual field. If we can make sense of this at all, we think that there is something it is like for the one it is not like for the other. This is not to be cashed out in terms of differences in beliefs not involving phenomenal concepts. But suppose that the one with real sight has no *awareness* of its left conscious visual field. Why in this case would there be *anything* it was like to have visual experience in the left visual field for the child? What would we be imagining? The puzzle here cannot be solved by appealing just to the potential availability of conscious phenomenology for reflection. If Siewert is right, not even that is possible for the one year old. But then I think we have very great difficulty in making sense of what the difference between the one year old with blindsight and without blindsight is really supposed to come to from the first person point of view. I assume it must make sense what the difference is from the first person point of view for it to be intelligible to attribute a difference in conscious phenomenology. But it is difficult to see how to think of what this comes to if not an awareness of the conscious state as it occurs. The concept of the first person point of view is the concept of a special epistemic position we occupy with respect to our conscious mental states. There is no first person point of view on something of which we have and can have no awareness. And if being aware of (or potentially aware of) something requires the capacity to represent it, then we must see even the one year old as having the capacity to represent its conscious mental states on pain of not being able to make sense of its having any conscious phenomenology.

It should be emphasized that to say that a one year old can represent its conscious mental states is not the same as to say that it represents them *as conscious*. For to represent each conscious mental state it is not necessary to have the concept of the determinable under which they all fall. That is an additional level of conceptual sophistication that it may well be true that even adults need not ever achieve. Nor is it clear, as I will now argue, that we must think of the representation as belief like.

(iii) Thirdly, it is not clear that the nature of the representation required by having a conscious mental state need be conceptual representation. What our visual experiences are like, how it seems to look as if to us, is certainly shaped by our conceptual resources. But it is a familiar point that we cannot capture fully the representational content or phenomenal features of perceptual experience in words. The experience is a different *form* of representation. When we remember a conscious mental state, a visual experience of a certain country meadow in the late afternoon sun in early summer, or the taste of the

Closely related to one had with dinner, e.g., the primitive form of remembrance is experiential rather than propositional. Propositional memories are based either on the experiential memory or beliefs formed on the basis of the perceptual experience one had at the time. The fact that the primitive form of remembrance of a conscious mental state is an experiential memory, however, shows that the primitive form of knowledge we have of conscious mental states employs a form of representation like that of the conscious mental state itself. The experiential memory is like an image of the original; what it requires is that at the time of the conscious experience itself there have been something like an image of it then which constituted the representation of it, which is preserved in the later memory. But the possibility of such an image of the original would require only minimal resources in addition to those required to have the original experience. It must represent its possessor as having had a past state whose features systematically map onto and are similar to the features of the experiential memory. That is, the experiential memory state itself has the same structure and similar elements as the state of which it is a memory. The primitive form of representation it employs is similarity and structural correspondence. It is a *model* of the original, as a globe is of the earth. Thus, sophisticated conceptual resources of the sort required to describe discursively our conscious phenomenology should not be required for experiential representations of such states.

Thus, while I am persuaded that there is no hope for a successful analysis of consciousness in terms of higher order representations of mental states, I am not so far persuaded that representation of a conscious mental state is not essential to it.

3. Sameness of Intentional Content Across Differences in Phenomenal Character

Turning to other matters, I want briefly to raise two questions, one connected with Siewert's discussion in chapter 7 and one with his discussion in chapter 8.

The first has to do with the relation between the phenomenal character of conscious states and their intentional content. Siewert is concerned to maintain that many phenomenal features of conscious mental states are features *in virtue of which* they are assessable for accuracy. I think it is undeniable that a change in the phenomenal content of a conscious state can make a difference intuitively to its intentional character. This is brought out vividly in the case of an ambiguous figure, where there is in some sense no question of a different scene being presented to one, though the phenomenal character of one's visual experience (how it seems to one to look as if) differs depending on how one represents in the experience what one sees.

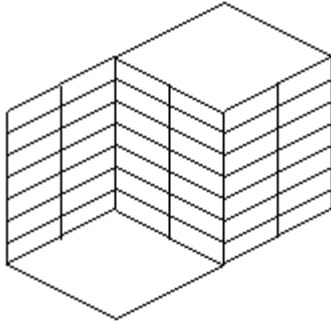


Figure 1.

Ambiguous Figure

However, it remains unclear how to think of the relation between the phenomenal character of a perceptual experience and its intentional content. I want to raise a question about how to understand the import of the claim that Siewert makes that (at least some) conscious mental states have their intentional features (are assessable for accuracy and inaccuracy in certain ways) in virtue of their phenomenal features. The two ways of understanding this I have in mind are: (1) understanding it as the claim that certain phenomenal features *are* intentional features, and (2) understanding it as the claim that certain intentional features (conceptually) supervene on, but are not identical with, certain phenomenal features. Siewert infers from a conscious mental state's phenomenal features being features in virtue of which it is assessable for accuracy that those phenomenal features *are* intentional features. "If it is correct to think assessment for visual accuracy follows in this manner from its seeming to one as it does to us for it to look as if things are shaped and situated in certain ways--then we should say that *enormously many visual phenomenal features are intentional features*" (p. 221). But there are considerations, though I do not think they are conclusive, which suggest that the second way of understanding the import of the claim is more plausible. It is in any case important to note that the test Siewert employs, an affirmative answer to the question whether assessment for visual accuracy follows from the possession of phenomenal features, itself establishes only conceptual supervenience, not identity of phenomenal and intentional features.

To sharpen this question, consider perceptual representations that seem similar or alike in intentional content but appear to differ fundamentally in their phenomenal characters, in particular, cross modal representations of such things as location, shape and size. We can represent shape and size and location in both visual and tactile experience. We can in addition represent location and proximity by way of auditory experience. It is plausible to think that other species, such as bats and dolphins, can represent through auditory experience the geometry of objects and their locations in their environment with as much precision as we can through visual or tactile experience.

Suppose I touch and see a ball in front of me, and in each sensory modality I represent the ball as round and as of a certain size. I represent it as of the same shape and size both

through visual and tactile perception. The phenomenal character of each experience would differ if I represented a differently shaped and sized object. Clearly, the phenomenal characters of the visual and the tactile experience are quite different, even if I am representing the same sized and shaped object. I am in no doubt about which is which. If I went suddenly blind while I was holding the ball and looking at it (even with tunnel vision so that I saw only the ball), I would not wonder whether it was my tactile or visual experience which I had lost. The puzzle (an old puzzle) is what relation there is between the phenomenal and intentional that allows fundamentally different sensory modalities to represent the same properties of objects.

There seems to be a particular problem if we want to identify the phenomenal features with the intentional features. For we have in cross modal representations of size and shape apparently an example of the possibility of phenomenally conscious states that have the same intentional content but not in virtue of having the same phenomenal features, at least as those relate to the special sensory modality of each. Suppose that the phenomenal features of these perceptual experiences (visual and tactile) are exhausted by modifications of the underlying modality. Suppose they have the same intentional content. Then intentional content, even if it is had in virtue of, in some sense, the phenomenal features of the states, would not itself be a phenomenal feature. In this case, the 'in virtue of' relation must signal some relation that suffices for supervenience but not for identity.

I can see only two ways to rescue the thesis that intentional features of perceptual states are, rather than merely supervene on, phenomenal features.

First, one could say that the intentional features are *sui generis* phenomenal features, present in both visual and tactile, and indeed in auditory experiences, which are not modifications of the underlying sensory modality at all. This would be to deny that the phenomenal features of visual and tactile experiences are exhausted by modifications of the underlying modality. This leaves us with two questions. (1) How is the phenomenology of the intentional content, if it is the same in the visual and tactile experience, associated with the right perceptual experience? (2) How are we to understand the relation between these phenomenal features and the phenomenal features of the underlying modality, for it seems clear that systematic changes in the phenomenal features of the underlying modality lead to systematic changes in intentional content?

Second, one might deny that the intentional content of visual and tactile (likewise auditory experience) is the same even when the same objects are represented in the same locations with the same shapes and sizes. How is that possible? The idea would be to treat our characterizations of the intentional content of representations of objects in space through these different sensory modalities as abstracting away from important differences in detail. Consider this analogy. There are phenomenal differences between representing visually a book on a table from different locations. A visual experience of a book on the table from one location, and from another, both represent there being a book on the table. But we do not for that reason conclude that they are the same in intentional content. For each represents the book as being in a different location relative to the observer, and as

seen from a different angle. Similarly, one may argue that in our casual characterizations of the content of visual and tactile experience, we leave out details about how the object is represented to us, which if included would show that the experiences have different intentional contents. Suppose, for example, that I look at the edge of a table, and I run my finger along it. The visual experience I have represents the edge at a single time. The tactile experience I have represents it by way of a series of experiences of the edge exerting pressure on my finger, intruding into the space occupied by it, as it travels along it. We might say: how I construct a representation of its length is quite different, and involves different, as it were, micro-representations. Even if I look at an edge the whole length of which I can touch at a time, there appears to be a difference in what is represented; in the visual experience the edge is represented from a location in space some distance from it, in the tactile experience the edge is represented as in proximity to and impinging on the space occupied by my finger. In general, we represent objects in tactile experience by how they impinge on the space occupied by our bodies; in visual experience we represent objects from a distance as occupying an extent of the visual field.

These observations are suggestive, but it would require further argument to show that cross modal representations of things in space must always differ in their intentional content. But on the whole, the second of these responses seems to me more promising, and also to point to the need for a more detailed phenomenology of the structure of different sensory modalities, which may be approached in part by thinking about the differences in the details of what different sensory modalities represent to us. However, if one adopts this response to the puzzle, one must still explain the relation between the different fundamental sensory modalities and the possibility of representing in those modalities in the distinctive ways it is possible.

I have not presented these considerations as an objection to Siewert's thesis that very many of our phenomenal visual (and more generally perceptual) features are intentional features. I am sympathetic to this claim. But I do not think that the considerations he has advanced are adequate by themselves to establish the thesis. And I think we need a better understanding in particular of how cross-modal representations objects in space can be compatible with the thesis that very many of their phenomenal features are intentional features.

4. Type and Token Phenomenal Character

The final topic I want to touch on is the relation of first person knowledge of one's own conscious mental states to their phenomenal features. It is natural to think that any thing about a conscious state that is available to us non-inferentially from the first person point of view is a phenomenal feature of that state. Siewert himself seems on the verge of endorsing this claim at one point in chapter 3 in discussing phenomenal character:

"the crucial point is that whatever differs in just the first-person knowable ways such experiences differ among themselves--in respect of the way it seems to you to have them-- is a conscious experience" (p. 89).

However, in chapter 8, Siewert offers an argument that appears to undermine this, in particular, in the case of occurrent thoughts. He maintains that if two individuals are phenomenal twins, then if one has a thought that p, the other must have a thought that q, but not that the other must have a thought that p (p. 284). Siewert gives a number of arguments for this. Two rely on appealing to some indeterminacy in what is the correct report of an occurrent thought (pp. 287-290). I think these fail because at most they could show that it is as indeterminate for my phenomenal twin as it is for me how to report the thought. The third relies on reflections on indexical or demonstrative thoughts (p. 291). This is the one I want to concentrate on. Siewert's claim is that phenomenal twins would not be intentional twins. Thus, for example, the argument goes, if I have a phenomenal twin, his thought that he is tired and my thought that I am tired would have the same phenomenal features, but would differ in intentional content, since his would be about him, and mine would be about me.

Siewert's own examples involve a thought expressed using a demonstrative, the thought that this paper, e.g., is yellow. I agree with Siewert that such thoughts do not have their contents determined by their possessors' total phenomenal state. However, these thoughts are not counter examples to the particular thesis I want to examine, that whatever about a conscious mental state is non-inferentially first person knowable is an aspect of its phenomenal content. This is because one cannot know one has such thoughts (demonstrative thoughts about things around one) without some empirical knowledge. This is so for any thought attributed to one using a singular term in the complement clause of an attitude report that refers to something other than oneself or the present time. If I discover that there is no one named 'George W. Bush' who ran for President, and that it was all an elaborate hoax, then I discover that when I tried to announce a thought by saying "Bush would have won the election even if there had been a full recount in Florida," I failed to do so. It is only empirical knowledge that assures me that I did.

At first, I thought Siewert's conclusion was right even restricting attention to those thoughts we can know non- inferentially we have which contain directly referring terms. But now it seems to me less clear that this is so. For what does this claim rest upon? If we thought that every phenomenal feature of a state were individuated without reference to any particular, that is, were purely qualitative, then, since my thought that I am tired is individuated by its having me as its object, and not solely by qualitative features of it, that the thought was about me could not make a difference to its phenomenal character. But why should we accept that phenomenal character cannot be individuated in part by reference to particular objects? For I do know in that distinctively first person way when I think that I am tired that I am thinking about myself, and that is a feature of that conscious mental state which makes a difference to what it is like to have it. It is not as if I have a blind spot with respect to the fact that the thought is about me. The fact that a thought is about me does make a difference intuitively to how it seems to me have to the thought. Perhaps someone will say that if I were in the place of my *type*-phenomenal

twin, then I would not notice the difference! If we could make good sense of this, it might serve to show that intentional content of conscious mental states is not determined by phenomenal character. But it does not make sense to ask what would be so if I were not myself, but someone else, since I could not be anyone other than who I am. Of course, we can try imagining someone else to whom the world seems all the same as it does to us (an alter ego confined since childhood to a vat). But we do not really imagine someone to whom the world seems the same as it does to us. It would not seem to my twin, would it, as if *he* were *I* (it is hard to know, again, what we would be trying to imagine)!

It might seem more difficult to make the case that thoughts about the time at which they take place have each a distinctive phenomenal content in virtue of the time they are about. If I stare at a blank wall for thirty seconds, is there some phenomenal feature of my total conscious mental state that changes with each passing second corresponding to my thoughts being directly about different times? There may be no *qualitative* difference in the phenomenal character, but is there not a difference which is first person knowable? For do I not know at each moment that it is that moment, and not another, at which I think? And does not that make a difference to how things seem to me?

We could declare by fiat that by 'phenomenal character' we mean a type, not something that is individuated in part by reference to particular individuals or times. But my question is whether any motivation can be found for this in the application of our intuitive guide to differences in phenomenal character: how things seem to us. How things seem to us at a moment includes everything we know non-inferentially about our conscious mental states. This will include knowledge of the contents of thoughts that are individuated in part by reference to particular objects or times. (This same point can be made about representation of orientation in space, which does not supervene on type-phenomenal features (Ludwig 1996)). So, I offer as my last question this: why should we not accept that differences in phenomenal character can be individuated in part with respect to particular objects?

If there is a theme running through these remarks, it is that there is an intimate connection between phenomenal features of conscious mental states and what we can know non-inferentially about them from the first person point of view. This came out both in my arguments for thinking that every conscious mental state is one which we represent to ourselves (particularly in the memory argument) and in the response to the argument from conceptual deficits which relies on a link between being aware of one's conscious mental states and there being something it is like to have them, which is required for them to be conscious states. It also came out in the final discussion of whether phenomenal features should sometimes be individuated by reference to particulars in the case of some thoughts. If there is an essential connection, as I am inclined to think, then conscious states are a species of epistemic state, at least in the sense that having one entails that one has some knowledge about that very state (though this is not to reduce consciousness to having knowledge about a mental state). Recently it has become common to distinguish between access consciousness and phenomenal consciousness

(following Ned Block). If I am right, access and phenomenal consciousness are not separable in the way commonly supposed. We can fall into error through failing to make distinctions: we can also fall into error through making distinctions where there are none.

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