

A MODERATE DEFENSE OF COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

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## Thesis Abstract

Hakkı Kaan Arıkan, “A Moderate Defense of Cognitive Phenomenology”

Is there a specific phenomenology of thinking? Cognitive phenomenology debate goes about possible answers for this question. According to a liberal conception of phenomenal consciousness, thinking has a *sui generis* phenomenology in addition to sensory phenomenology. A conservative conception of phenomenal consciousness rejects this liberal proposition and holds forth that the domain of phenomenology must be only sensory experiences. A detailed examination of the opposing arguments of the two rival approaches is the main topic of the present thesis study. The most common strategy for liberalism to argue for the existence of cognitive phenomenology is to appeal to introspection and claim that cognitive phenomenological properties are available to its subject by introspection. I propose that direct appeals to introspection cannot provide conclusive results and this is the main reason why conservatives cannot be persuaded by the liberal arguments from introspection. Another argument form that is commonly used by liberals is based on the notion of phenomenal contrast and liberals argue that the best explanation for phenomenal contrast scenarios is the existence of cognitive phenomenology. On the other hand, conservatives argue that the phenomenal contrast scenarios are explainable not by cognitive phenomenology but by sensory phenomenology and that there is no need to grant the existence of cognitive phenomenology. The general line of thinking of conservatives against the liberal arguments is a reductionist approach. I argue that this reductionist approach cannot prove the inexistence of cognitive phenomenology and support my claim with adverbialism. Moreover I argue that adverbialism conflicts with neither liberals nor conservatives and believe that the adverbialist approach can reconcile the two rival views.

## Tez Özeti

Hakkı Kaan Arıkan, “Bilişsel Fenomenolojinin İlmî Bir Savunması”

Düşünmenin belirli bir fenomenolojisi var mı? Bilişsel fenomenoloji tartışması bu soruya verilebilecek olası cevapları ele alır. Özgürlükçü bir fenomenal bilinç anlayışına göre duyumsal fenomenolojinin yanı sıra düşünmenin de *kendine özgü* bir fenomenolojisi vardır. Tutucu bir fenomenal bilinç anlayışı bu özgürlükçü önermeyi reddeder ve fenomenolojinin ilgi alanının sadece duyumsal deneyimler olması gerektiğini öne sürer. Bu iki rakip yaklaşımın karşılıklı argümanlarının detaylı bir incelenmesi bu tez çalışmasının başlıca konusudur. Özgürlükçülerin bilişsel fenomenolojinin varlığını savunmakta kullandıkları en yaygın taktik iç görüye başvurmak ve bilişsel fenomenolojik özelliklerin iç görü yoluyla özne tarafından bulunabilir olduğunu iddia etmektir. Ben doğrudan iç görüye başvurmanın kesin sonuçlar doğuramayacağını öneriyorum ve bu önermenin tutucuların iç görüye başvuran özgürlükçü argümanlarla ikna edilemeyeişlerinin başlıca nedeni olduğunu iddia ediyorum. Özgürlükçülerin sık kullandığı başka bir argüman yapısı ise fenomenal kontrast fikrine dayanır ve özgürlükçüler bilişsel fenomenolojinin varlığının fenomenal kontrast senaryoları için en iyi açıklama olduğunu savunur. Öte yandan, tutucular fenomenal kontrast senaryolarının bilişsel fenomenoloji ile değil duyumsal fenomenoloji ile açıklanabilir olduğunu ve bu yüzden bilişsel fenomenolojinin varlığını kabul etmenin gerekli olmadığını savunur. Tutucuların özgürlükçü argümanlara karşı genel yaklaşımları indirgemeci bir tavidir. Ben bu indirgemeci tavrın bilişsel fenomenolojinin var olmadığını kanıtlayamayacağını iddia ediyorum ve bu iddiamı belirtecimsilik görüşü ile destekliyorum. Ayrıca savunduğum belirtecimsi tutumun ne özgürlükçülerle ne de tutucularla zıt düştüğünü savunuyor ve bu tutumun iki karşıt görüşü uzlaştırabileceğine inanıyorum.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Cognitive Phenomenology Debate

Is there a specific phenomenology of thinking? This question has been revolving around the contemporary philosophy of mind climate at least for two decades. The answer is ‘yes’ for some philosophers and ‘no’ for others. And for some other philosophers the question is ill-posed and they keep their distance intact to the overgrowing debate on it. The kind of phenomenology that is specific to thinking, and existence of which is under dispute, is labeled as cognitive phenomenology.

Philosophers involved in cognitive phenomenology debate are separated into two camps. At one end of the spectrum are those who affirm the existence of cognitive phenomenology and at the other end are those who deny its existence. To be sure, there is no uniformity in philosophers’ views, even when they are grouped into the same camp. Moreover, some few philosophers maintaining a stance on the subject of cognitive phenomenology adhere to neither camp. In order to categorize the wide-spectrum of views, let’s call *liberalism* on behalf of those who argue in favor of cognitive phenomenology and *conservativism* on behalf of those who argue against it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I borrow the terminology from Bayne. Note that terminology diverges within the literature: Prinz prefers ‘expansionists’ versus ‘restrictivists’, Siewert adopts ‘inclusivism’ versus ‘exclusivism’.



The debate between liberals and conservatives is illuminating in many respects. It goes to the heart of disputes about the nature of phenomenal consciousness. It also calls upon further reflections on cornerstone topics of introspection and self-knowledge, the nature of thought, experience and phenomenal character, and so on. Furthermore, it draws attention on our methods in argumentation and generates new forms while casting suspicion on the old ones.

Liberalism holds that there is a *sui generis* cognitive phenomenology. In other words, they hold that cognitive phenomenology is *proprietary* to thinking and that it is non-sensory in nature. This is a prologue for liberalism. In addition, a liberal can also argue that cognitive phenomenology is *distinctive* to thinking so that the phenomenology of thinking *p* is distinct from the phenomenology of thinking *q*. Furthermore, some liberals argue for the claim that cognitive phenomenology is also *individuating*, such that the phenomenology of thinking *p* constitutes its content *p*.<sup>2</sup> These three aspects of cognitive phenomenological character of a thinking experience are not necessarily conjoined to each other, i.e. they can come apart. An account of cognitive phenomenology is a strong version of it if it is the view according to which all these three aspects of a cognitive experiential episode must hold for that experience.<sup>3</sup> It is also possible to endorse a weaker version of cognitive phenomenology thesis by holding that cognitive phenomenological properties are

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<sup>2</sup> Notice that the term ‘thinking’ is being used here (and elsewhere) to characterize a wide range of states and activities of the mind that are to be called *cognitive* on their own right. I will not be offering a distinctive mark of cognition. Still, most liberals have in mind propositional attitudes when they use the word cognitive. In general, a whole family of mental states and events are represented by the generic activity of ‘thinking’.

proprietary to thinking while being not committed to its individuating and even distinctive character.<sup>4</sup>

Here are some representative views of liberalism:

[T]he experience of seeing red and the experience of now seeming to understand this very sentence, and of thinking that nobody could have had different parents ... all fall into the vast category of experiential episodes that have a certain qualitative character for those who have them as they have them. (Strawson 194)

Intentional states have a phenomenal character, and this phenomenal character is precisely the what-it-is-like of experiencing a specific propositional attitude vis-a-vis a specific intentional content. Change either the attitude-type (believing, desiring, wondering, hoping, etc.) or the particular intentional content, and the phenomenal character thereby changes too. (Horgan and Tienson 522)

...generally, as we think – whether we are speaking in complete sentences, or fragments, or speaking barely or not at all, silently or aloud – the phenomenal character of our noniconic thought is in continual modulation, which cannot be identified simply with changes in the phenomenal character of either vision or visualization, hearing or auralization, etc. (Siewert, Significance, 282)

Liberalism is held to be the heterodox view of phenomenal consciousness in that it does not restrict the domain of phenomenality into the realm of sensory or perceptual experience. The orthodox view is thought to be conservatism, the view that the domain of phenomenally conscious states is to be restricted to sensory and perceptual conscious experiences.<sup>5</sup> In other words, they deny that there is *sui generis* cognitive phenomenology. Conservatives need not deny that there is a phenomenological character of one's experience when she thinks. The kind of phenomenology that occurs in such an experience, the conservative claims, can completely be explained

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<sup>3</sup> Pitt, Horgan and Tienson, and Horgan are clear examples. According to my view, Strawson and Siewert are representatives of the strong account too.

<sup>4</sup> Smith and Levine defend a weaker version. See also Kriegel 2011 for an account that is less committal to strong version yet can't be thought being a weak account of phenomenology of thinking.

<sup>5</sup> In my opinion, Conservatism is not the orthodox view of phenomenal consciousness, at least not as it used to be.

in sensory phenomenological properties of one's experience, and we don't need to posit cognitive phenomenological properties in characterizing one's phenomenology.

Here are some representative examples of conservatism:

Neither the *believing* nor the *consciousness* that one oneself is believing *feels* like anything, if by 'feels' one means some sort of phenomenal or phenomenological state. It is only because we take sensations and sensation-like states as our paradigms of consciousness that we think that any state about which we are conscious must have phenomenological properties. (Nelkin 424)

Should we include any mental states that are not feelings and experiences on the list of phenomenally conscious states? Consider my desire to eat ice cream. Is there not something it is like for me to have this desire? If so, is this state not phenomenally conscious? And what about the beliefs that I am a very fine fellow? Or the memory that September 2 is the date on which I first fell in love? ... It seems to me not implausible to deal with these cases by arguing that insofar as there is any phenomenal or immediately experienced felt quality to the above states, this is due to their being accompanied by sensations or images of feelings that are the real bearers of the phenomenal character. (Tye, Problems, 4)

Our thoughts aren't like anything, in the relevant sense, except to the extent that they might be associated with visual or other images or emotional feelings, which will be phenomenally conscious by virtue of their quasi-sensory status. (Carruthers 138-9)

Bodily sensations and perceptual experiences are prime examples of states for which there is something it is like to be in them. They have a phenomenal feel, a phenomenology, or, in a term sometimes used in psychology, raw feels. Cognitive states are prime examples of states for which there is *not* something it is like to be in them, of states that lack a phenomenology. (Braddon-Mitchell and Jackson 129)

According to me, one important aspect of the debate between liberals and conservatives needs to be emphasized is that the kind of phenomenology in question must be due to an occurring mental phenomenon, whether it be sensory or cognitive (non-sensory) in nature. This is a natural take on the issue. The most commonly metaphor being used to explain consciousness is that it is a stream, or a flow. Our experience of the world and also our inner lives is a time-bounded phenomenon, at

least as it is manifest to us. So, conscious mentality is thought to be something happening to us in time whereas non-conscious states are not. This manner of restriction also casts doubt about people's speaking of mental states as if they can be conscious, if a state is to be understood as something endures over time. For example<sup>6</sup>, on a dispositional understanding of beliefs, beliefs are states of the mind that are not conscious – they become conscious when they are consciously entertained, so in talking about conscious beliefs, we are in fact talking about episodes of believing, or forming and entertaining judgments based upon our belief states. Given the overall terminological reasons, non-occurring mental states are held to be out of question for the purposes of the present article. I take it experience as an episode in one's stream of consciousness, and in some sense, a mental phenomenon's being occurring is taken to be a criterion for it's being conscious. And the core idea of a mental phenomenon's being conscious is meant to be referring to its being experienced by its subject, namely, an experience is an episode – an event or a process – for a subject. Finally, the domain of conscious experience is the domain of phenomenal consciousness, for by phenomenality is meant the experientiality of a given conscious episode.

The question of whether thoughts are phenomenally conscious has not been taken into consideration as an issue in philosophy of mind until early 1990s. One may wonder why this has been so. And this is why I referred to conservatism as the orthodox view of phenomenal consciousness: it has been held by many philosophers of mind that phenomenal consciousness must be a subject of sensory phenomenology. Indeed, phenomenal consciousness has become a philosophical

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<sup>6</sup> See Crane for an illuminating discussion.

topic within the circle of analytic philosophers of mind only after 1950s.

Paradigmatic examples of phenomenally conscious experiences are thought to be pain sensations and after-images, and the domain of our cognitive life has been excluded from phenomenal domain and has been treated non-phenomenologically.

However, if one could widen his perspective from the last 50 years through the beginnings of 20th century, one then would see that the topics of thinking and phenomenology is closely intertwined. And then one starts wondering how conservatism has become so dominating during the last half of the century. The reasons are mainly historically significant, although they cast light upon the contemporary debate of cognitive phenomenology to some extent.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Husserl has firmed the grounds of the phenomenological tradition. He is held to be the father of phenomenology and has been influential to many philosophers especially for those European phenomenologists who prolonged the phenomenological tradition such as Heidegger, Sartre, Ponty et al. Husserl maintained that conscious experience is a phenomenon that is all inclusive of percepts, imaginative and pictorial representations, acts of conceptual thinking, surmises and doubts, joys and grieves, hopes and fears, wishes and acts of will etc. Accordingly for Husserl conscious experience is an all-encompassing phenomenon from which is not possible to exclude the domain of cognition. A contemporary of Husserl, James independently endorsed similar claims regarding conscious experience. His very influential notion of *stream of thought* still serves as a guide for contemporary characterizations of conscious experience. And his near contemporary Moore included the act of understanding within the realm of

conscious experience. These brief remarks provide support for a liberal understanding of phenomenal consciousness.

The climate has drastically changed beginning with the second half of the 20th century. Ryle's seminal work *The Concept of Mind* directed the course of studying the mind towards a behaviorist framework, in which Ryle *demystified* the Cartesian understanding of the mind as a "ghost in the machine". Ryle disputed the stream metaphor of James and stated that even if there is a sense of the phrase, it must be referring to a series of sensations. Ryle's treatment of mentality has influenced the rise of materialist theories of the mind in the writings of Place and Smart, and thus the tradition that is now commonly referred as 'Philosophy of Mind' has begun. Early materialist theories of the mind have treated sensations and cognitions separately, in ascribing a qualitative aspect only to the former. Interpretations of later Wittgenstein, especially his critique of the notion of a private language, also provided reasons for the elimination of a first person outlook for the intellectual aspects of human existence.

The topic of phenomenal consciousness entered into the field of inquiry most notably after the seminal article *What Is It Like To Be A Bat?* by Nagel appeared. It arguably provoked reactions against the materialist paradigm, and called for a better treatment of the first person, subjective character of conscious experience. The post-Nagel paradigm has been the standard consideration for an inquiry of phenomenal consciousness, the properties of which have been sometimes granted to be immune to a full-blown materialistic understanding and sometimes taken to be consolidated with materialism. However, even after this so-called semi-paradigm change, the phenomenal character of conscious experience has generally considered to be

paradigmatic of raw feels, after-images, and sensations. The main reason for this phenomenon consists in the conciliatory attempts to provide a theory of conscious experience that is also in the spirit of physicalism.

This brief historical outlook unfolds the reasons why conservatism served as the orthodox understanding for phenomenal character but it is not that clear why the liberal approach remained silent until the beginnings of 1990s. There might be several reasons for this phenomenon but one definite reason is the overwhelming variety of views on phenomenal character. The reasons available for one either to endorse or to reject cognitive phenomenology must have been shaped by the ways in which he holds a particular take on phenomenal consciousness. Therefore, in order to fully understand what is going on within cognitive phenomenology debate, one must be selective of the kinds of views of phenomenal character that are endorsed either by conservatives or by liberals.

This is the reason why I address the issue of phenomenal character in Chapter 2. The chapter consists in two parts. First I lay out the most basic notion used as a referent to phenomenal character by most philosophers, namely the ‘what it is like’ concept that has been introduced by Nagel. The ‘what it is like’ talk is practiced by most philosophers of mind, if not all, even in the absence of a consensus on what that notion amounts to. This practice result in there being competing concepts of phenomenal character for the very reason that the phrase ‘what it is like’ is ill-formed, as I will be arguing for. My argument is based upon taking subjective character to be more fundamental for phenomenology than qualitative aspect, namely qualia. I take it that the variety in use of the phrase makes it obscure whether what it is like notion involves the subject of the experience or not. For the very same reason,

there arise those views of phenomenal character that dislodges subjective character from phenomenal character and treats phenomenality of conscious experience as being a matter of the object of the experience.

To treat phenomenal character as a matter of the thing the experience is about rather than the experience itself, as I will be suggesting, is most characteristic to what it is like talk, and the model for conscious experience deriving from this talk is thus labeled as the act/object model. I reject this model. I provide reasons for being suspicious of what it is like talk, and these reasons incline me to endorse ‘how it is like’ talk instead of what it is like. I endorse the view that phenomenal character must be a matter of how the experience is to the subject, a matter of its being experienced by a subject, and the best available theory fitting these constraints is adverbialism, as I will be proposing. I admit that it is difficult to articulate the adverbial talk sometimes, but the basic idea behind adverbialism is really tempting for my purposes. It locates the phenomenal character in to the ways the subject has it, and thus into the subjective conscious act rather than the object being experienced. I think adverbialism is the most plausible theory of phenomenal character regarding the issue of cognitive phenomenology for its being non-committal to objectual talk. In talking in terms of objects of experience, the subjective character can easily be dismissed from the phenomenal character, and this is simply a mistake. This is the main reason I defend adverbialism instead of any rival account of phenomenal consciousness.

Having been fixed what my understanding of phenomenal character consists in, I then begin discussing the first kind of arguments on behalf of cognitive phenomenology in Chapter 3. These arguments are directly based upon introspection;



however, they are far from being persuasive, obvious if one is accustomed with the disagreement between liberals and conservatives. I treat the introspective arguments of liberals as being a continuation of the general paradigm of act/object model, which certainly implies the transparency of experience. This is at least clearly so in Pitt's version of the argument from introspection. What is most striking within the debate about arguing from introspection on behalf of cognitive phenomenology is that there seems no hope in achieving a consensus regarding the issue. This led some philosophers which I am sympathetic to in some respects to question the very idea of introspection being a viable guide in determining phenomenal character of experience. This is simply because of the reason the existence of vastly hostile introspective judgments of liberals and conservatives. There are two proposals that I discuss in resolving the disagreement, none of which seems to be decisive.

Since the debate between liberals and conservatives seems to be irresolvable by introspection alone, an argument type in favor of cognitive phenomenology is required and called upon for by liberals, namely the argument from phenomenal contrast. Phenomenal contrast arguments are indirect appeals to introspection in detecting the contrast, but when the contrast in two distinct phenomenal characters is agreed upon, they are more decisive than arguments from introspection. This is what I lay out and discuss during most of Chapter 4. Phenomenal contrast can be considered to be a method, as I first explain it before I elaborate particular phenomenal contrast arguments. Since these arguments are in the form of argument to the best explanation, the idea behind arguing from phenomenal contrast is that the existence of cognitive phenomenology serves as the required explanation. Having been presented varying versions of the argument, I end up the chapter by taking three

more arguments in favor of cognitive phenomenology into consideration. These arguments are from higher-order-thought theory, tip of the tongue phenomenon, and noniconic thinking. I present some counter-arguments to these particular arguments. However, I postpone the most general way to argue against liberal claims until the next chapter.

During Chapter 5, I discuss reductionism with respect to cognitive phenomenology. This is the most general strategy endorsed by conservatives. In claiming that all introspectible features of phenomenal character are sensory phenomenological properties and that all phenomenal contrast cases are due to a contrast in sensory phenomenologies of two distinct experience episodes, conservatives believe that the very idea of there being non-sensory and thereby cognitive phenomenology is ruled out. Since I endorse adverbialism and treat phenomenal character as a property of the experience, I am in sympathy with some of the claims of conservatives in so far they treat phenomenal character of a thinking episode as a matter of having mental imagery. I object, however, that even if the phenomenal character of a thinking episode can be thought to be exhausted by sensory phenomenology that accompanies the thinking experience, the possibility of there being cognitive phenomenological properties is ruled out. This is a mistake on the conservative side, since they hold the mental imagery accompaniment to thinking as being conscious solely by the sensory phenomenology they bear – that mental imagery must possess also a cognitive aspect within for them to be accompanying thinking. How do those mental imagery become meaningful, I question. And I propose an argument from phenomenal contrast in order to articulate my questioning. According to the argument, having cognitive phenomenological properties is the best

available explanation for the kind of phenomenal contrast I offer. From this inclination, I suggest that cognitive phenomenological properties can be understood as being the determinate way their sensory phenomenological accompanying mental imagery to be organized. This, I take to be a reconciliation of the debate between liberals and conservatives.

## CHAPTER 2

### PHENOMENAL CHARACTER

#### Qualia: What Is It Like?

The term 'qualia' carries a huge amount of conceptual baggage with itself into the philosophical discourse on consciousness. According to Block, the term qualia "include the ways it feels to see, hear and smell, the way it feels to have a pain; more generally, what it's like to have mental states... thoughts and desires as well" (Qualia, 514). So Block affirms the idea that "thoughts" have qualia, understood by the phrase "the way it feels" to have them. As another example, Searle thinks that there is a qualitative aspect to thinking, since he writes that there is "something it is like to think that two plus two equals four. There is no way to describe it except by saying that it is the character of thinking consciously "two plus two equals four"" (560). Another one who thinks that thinking has a phenomenal quality is Chalmers in writing that when "I think of a lion, for instance, there seems to be a whiff of leonine quality to my phenomenology: what it is like to think of a lion is subtly different from what it is like to think of the Eiffel tower" (10). These rough characterizations of qualia clearly include the idea that thinking has a qualitative feel with it.

The notion of "qualitative feel" is best characterized by the phrase "something it is like", a notion presented by Nagel. Nagel writes that "fundamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something it is like to

be that organism – something it is like for the organism” (436). What Nagel primarily was concerned in articulating the issue of ‘subjective character of conscious experience’ in his seminal work was the unquestioned paradigm of physicalism regarding the mental between 50s and 70s. Given the success in provoking the philosophers of mind, the article served quite well; however, is it justified to pursue the issue of ‘subjective character of experience’ in lines of there being ‘something it is like to be a bat’? That question remains unsolved in so far there is still great controversy about it. This chapter is a brief outline of some ways in which it is sensible to approach the issue.

Nagel addresses the ineffable character of ‘there being something it is like’ in saying that the “subjective character of the experience of a person deaf and blind from birth is not accessible to me, for example, nor is mine to him.” (440). Nagel is right in saying that the deaf and blind person’s experiences are inaccessible to me, in a sense; but what exactly does this mean? Not much, I would say, except noticing that there is a feature of conscious experience that is knowable only from the first person point of view. That feature cannot be apprehended from a third person perspective because only the subject of experience is acquainted with it. Thus Nagel must be taking subjective character of one’s experience as a matter of acquaintance. However, ‘what it is like’ talk also allows characterizations for conscious experiential episodes in describing them. That characterization is not based upon the subjective character but derives its shape from the qualitative character of the experience in question. So, from a third person perspective, ‘what it is like’ character of one’s experience can be accessible by description though not by acquaintance. The

contrast between subjective character and qualitative character of one's overall phenomenology has been put forward by Levine in those terms:

There are two important dimensions to my having reddish experience. First, there is something it's like for me to have this experience. Not only is it a matter of some state (my experience) having some feature (being reddish) but, being an experience, its being reddish is for me," a way it's like for me... Let's call this the subjectivity of conscious experience. The second important dimension of experience that requires explanation is qualitative character itself. Subjectivity is the phenomenon of there being something it's like for me to see the red diskette case. Qualitative character concerns the "what" it's like for me: reddish or greenish, painful and pleasurable, and the like. (Purple Haze, 6-7)

I agree with Levine in his articulation, and think that phenomenality of one's experience has two aspects. It is difficult to track, however, Nagel's take on the issue. If 'what it is like' properties are definitive of phenomenal character, they must endorse both subjective character and qualitative character, and Nagel seems mostly to be talking about subjective character in saying that experiential properties are accessible only from the first person perspective. His claims about accessibility hold true if one takes phenomenal character as solely a matter of acquaintance; it is not so clear, however, whether if knowledge of one's experiential properties by description is an available position to take, then the force of ineffable character of phenomenality diminishes.

I know what it's like to be me, in quite broad terms, and by Nagel's accessibility principle, no one else knows what it's like to be me, although any third person perspective acknowledges that there is 'something' it is like to be me. I mentioned that this mode of self-knowledge is 'in quite broad terms' because I also know that my conscious life is a quite rich phenomenon even I cannot track all aspects of it, all the time. But the idea is simple: I know what it is like to be me

because it feels in certain ways – in certain times – to be me. These ‘ways of feeling’ and ‘something which it is like’ notions are tied to each other, so let me handle with them separately. First, the way it feels to be conscious.

It is tempting to ask whether it is legitimate to characterize conscious experience in its varying modalities, such as seeing, smelling, planning, questioning, with the way these experiential modes *feels*. One might ask to a person lost his vision due to a brain damage several years ago and regained his sight again: ‘how does it feel to see, again?’ In this sense, it is quite a sensible thing to ask to that person. And the person may feel strange, amazing, or even terrifying to see again, and may reply to the question in those lines. Does that mean that his visual experience is to be characterized with feeling of ‘strangeness’ or ‘amazingness’? The kind of feeling that we are after is not akin to these feeling types. However, we must have already getting some hints that what we are after is missing to us; it is a queer, definitive of consciousness, type of feeling – the feel of the qualitative character of conscious experience. Yet, still, even though it is something so close to us, we find it very difficult to articulate. If I were to ask someone ‘how does it feel to see the blue coffee cup in front of you?’ that person would not immediately conceive what I am after – and look at me as if I am confused in a bizarre way. It is true that seeing a blue coffee cup differs from seeing a red balloon in certain ways, but the question remains whether it is legitimate to individuate these visual experiences with regard to their qualitative feelings.

*Feeling* may not be the appropriate term to characterize visual experiences, but, e.g. one might say that it feels a certain way to have pain, or to have an orgasm. That is quite true: having pains or having orgasms are certainly associated with

feelings, but, again, we should ask whether those associated feelings are definitive of those states in question. For most creatures, having pain is an unpleasant experience whereas having an orgasm is something pleasing. However, is there any aspect other than the affirmation or disaffirmation of feeling that might serve as a proper answer to questions like ‘how does it feel to have a pain in your back?’ or ‘how did you feel during your last orgasm?’ I think these questions are not settled well, and this is due to the ambiguous agenda in asking ‘what does it feel like’ questions.

Maybe it is not so easy to discard the ‘ways of feeling’ aspect of conscious experience so quickly. As it is characteristic of those who attempt to elaborate the qualitative character of conscious experience in association with the ‘ways of feeling’ phrase, Searle, e.g., claims that any “conscious state has a certain qualitative feel to it, and you can see this if you consider examples. The experience of tasting beer is very different from hearing Beethoven’s Ninth symphony, and both of those have a different qualitative character from smelling a rose or seeing a sunset” (560). I agree with Searle, except his claim that the differentiating aspect of those experiential episodes are due to their characteristic feeling. A glass of beer is something drinkable and Beethoven’s Ninth is something audible. It is quite confusing to claim that they do differ with respect to their qualitative feelings, as if, in case these feelings are absent, then these two experiences would be indifferentiable. And, in returning to my overall quandary regarding the ‘ways of feeling’, let me ask how do these experiential episodes feel like? If I were to answer, I would say they are both pleasing. But someone else would find these experiences both unpleasant. It is a matter of subjective evaluation of one’s own experiences (besides all other non-relevant factors that a subject may be holding in deciding the



issue). And it may also be the case that one may find Beethoven's Ninth pleasing in one instance and unpleasant in another. This explains why it is a strange thing to claim that there is a certain way hearing Beethoven's Ninth feels like, generic to that experience type (It is even wrong to label hearing Beethoven's Ninth as a type of experience, in my view.)

I am aware that what I have been proposing so far is merely to trivialize 'the way it feels' notion. But, isn't the notion trivial by itself? During the last couple of hours, I have been undergoing innumerable conscious experiences, and I should admit that almost all of them lacked a definitive feeling character. I suggested that some experience types, pains and orgasms, e.g., do possess a certain *feeling*, yet I find it difficult to make it sensible how these feelings (pleasure and displeasure, e.g.) may help in individuating experience.

Finally, let me briefly return to the main topic; cognitive experiences. If a cognitive episode is identified by the way it feels to its subject, then we would be in no position to account for how our cognitive lives could be fine-grained compared to feeling types. Certainly thinking that '2+2=4' and 'Erdoğan will win the presidential elections' do differ from each other, and there might be ways of accounting for how they differ. Yet, 'the way it feels' to think the former thought and 'the way it feels' to think the latter formulation would definitely not help. Thinking that 'Erdoğan will win the elections' might feel a certain way to me, i.e. depressing, whilst it would feel in certain ways for someone else. And it is quite possible for the same thinking content to be entertained in different ways - a difference in 'the way they feel like' is not ruled out from entertaining the content phenomenally. What is being questioned is whether 'the way it feels' talk can be definitive of phenomenally conscious states.

It is dubious, and I suppose this is quite sufficient in reducing the possibility of cognitive experiential episodes being defined in their ‘ways of feeling’.

I take it that the core of pursuing phenomenology in trying to capture the nature of conscious experience is to account for its subjective character. In other words, relocating the subjects within our ontology of the mental is the merit of phenomenological analysis. So, any phenomenology that would dislocate the subjects of experience within its framework is doomed. If there is something it is like, e.g., to think that  $p$ , it must be for some  $s$  that it is like to think  $p$  – otherwise, what would it be to think that  $p$  in a world there are no subjects, and what would be the meaning of such questioning? Accordingly, the “for  $s$ ” (for a subject) component of the phrase ‘something it is like’ cannot be detached from the whole. Let me elaborate.

Nagel loosely describes the term ‘conscious experience’ by appealing to facts that are (allegedly) non-physical – that is, non-reducible to physical facts. This feature of his agenda (namely that the discussion whether consciousness is physical or not) is not an issue of the present article. Leaving this issue aside, there is more to extract from Nagel’s general description of conscious experience, one of which is his insistence in explaining conscious experience as bound to a first person perspective, as he writes that “the fact that an organism has conscious experience *at all* means that there is something that it is like to *be* that organism” (435), whereas “whatever may be the status of facts about what it is like to be a human being, or a bat, or a Martian, these appear to be facts that embody a particular point of view” (441).

Now, let me elaborate whether the phrases ‘there being something it is like’ or ‘what it is like’ function in accordance with Nagel’s commitment to first person point view, or, whether they serve justice to the subjective character of conscious experience. If one is asked ‘What is it like for you to X?’ where X is meant to refer to a particular experience (e.g. seeing a red tomato), that question is posed to characterize one’s experience X. He may reply in several manners, depending on his capacities to use descriptive vocabulary – and, indeed, he may reply in ways which is descriptive of how X feels like for him (entertaining, repulsive, boring, etc.)

However, if one is asked to answer ‘What is it like to X?’, that question is meant not to characterize any individual experience but to characterize the generic experience-type of X, and the kind of answer he may provide would yield to a contrast for instances of X with instances of non-X. He may reply that ‘It is like to Y’, in which case it means that X is like Y (and in some cases it may mean something like ‘X is Y’ or ‘Xing is Ying’). The idea is, that, from the proposition ‘To X is like to Y’ one can infer that ‘there is something it is like to X’ (that something is like to Y), whereas from the proposition ‘For s, to X is like to Y’ it does not follow that ‘there is something it is like for s to X’. This is simply a result of a confusion that is due to the phrase ‘there being something it is like for s to X’ – the responsible aspect of the phrase is the ‘like’ component: there isn’t anything it is like for s to X, because, it is not like *anything* for s to X, but merely *to X*. So the question must be reformulated by detaching the ‘likeness’ component; such as, ‘What it is for s to X?’, for we do not expect from s to offer a contrast of Xing with Ying but to characterize ‘what it is for s to X’. The subject s may reply that, for him ‘to X is a’ (e.g. wonderful), but we cannot conclude that ‘For s, to X is like a’. Accordingly, I suggest that the phrase

‘there being something it is like for  $s$  to  $X$ ’, where  $X$  denoting any conscious experience that  $s$  undergoes at any time, is ill-formulated, and it cannot be used to characterize the subjective character of conscious experience.

One might suggest that even if the ‘likeness’ component is not conjoined with the ‘for  $s$ ’ component of the phrase, one can still work with the ‘no-likeness’ version of it. Surely, one might go on to say, that there is something for  $s$  to  $X$ , which is  $a$ , and  $a$  might just serve well in characterizing the conscious experience of the subject. What is  $a$ , then, if not ‘to  $X$ ’? It may be something corresponding to the ‘way it feels’, e.g. ‘amazing’, ‘boring’, etc., but it has been shown that this strategy does not help in our characterization of ‘to  $X$ ’, for the simple reason that to  $X$  is not merely  $a$ , i.e. to think that ‘Erdoğan will the elections’ is not simply to feel depressed when entertaining that thought. Then,  $a$  must be something directly referring to  $X$ , in which case it must simply be ‘ $X$ ’ – we must avoid using  $a$  altogether. Accordingly, our formulation would result in being that ‘there is something for  $s$  to  $X$ , which is  $X$ ’. But this formulation would not do any justice at all, for the apparent circularity – it would merely be to reiterate  $X$ ing within the formulation. It must be all clear that the phrase ‘what it is for one to see a red tomato is to see a red tomato’ would not suffice to account for characterizing the conscious experience of ‘seeing a red tomato’, with no function other than pointing to itself. The phrase is trivial in its form involving the ‘for  $s$ ’ component, either with or without the ‘likeness’ component.

The implications of being engaged in what it is like talk that I have put forward is intended to be a guideline for a modification of the notion ‘there being something it is like’. The phrase should not imply a ‘what’ question, for ‘what’ questions cannot be answered nontrivially. I argue that we must take it that the

phenomenal character of an experience is best characterized when it serves as an answer to the ‘how?’ question. Phenomenal character is not a matter of what it is like but of how it is like. The way an experience feels like can be cashed out as responding to the how question, however, it would not suffice to characterize ‘how’ definitively. Notice that this contrast between ‘what’ inquiry and ‘how’ inquiry is guiding the discussion into ‘object’ and ‘act’ terminology, respectively. One hidden implement of what it is like talk is, arguably that it treats qualitative character of an experience as if it is a matter of the object of experience, namely what that experience is of. This is a very general view to be found in theories of phenomenal consciousness, and even though it is not explicitly articulated in those writings, it is a model for consciousness that is shared most commonly. This is the act/object model for phenomenal consciousness.

Since I think phenomenal character is a matter of how it is for one to experience, trying to avoid objectual talk is important to me. I believe endorsing an adverbial account of phenomenal character would help me in avoiding the act/object model for phenomenal consciousness. What follows is my take on adverbialism.

### A Defense of Adverbialism

My primary aim is to search for a model of phenomenal character that suits both sensory and cognitive phenomenology. I have outlined the difficulties inherent to the ‘way it feels like’ and ‘there being something it is like’ or ‘what it is like’ talk, such that these ordinary language concepts can be cashed out by dropping the subject

component out of it and that is not in line with accounting for phenomenality. I now want to address a less discussed and considered to be an old-fashioned model of phenomenal consciousness, namely adverbialism. I will defend the view that adverbialism with regard to phenomenal consciousness can be saved from the alleged problems ascribed to it, and that it is a defensible view for understanding phenomenal consciousness.

The claim guiding adverbialism is basically that conscious experience must be understood in adverbial terms. That means to say that we are not conscious *of* experiences but rather we *consciously* experience. The phenomenality of perceptual experience derives from the fact that we consciously see, hear, etc., and, the phenomenal character of cognitive experience is due to the fact that we *consciously* think. Consciousness is then the mode of experience, and thus the name *conscious experience*. Phenomenal character of your consciousness is then a matter of how you consciously experience, i.e. if it is a visual experience then it is consciously seeing and has a visual phenomenal character – seeing is then a modification of the experience in how it is conscious. Likewise for hearing, feeling, and thinking as well. According to the view that phenomenal consciousness can be explained in adverbial vocabulary, the term ‘conscious’ is a modification of the experience. For example, within the expression ‘Bilal thinks slowly’ the adverb ‘slowly’ modifies Bilal’s thinking. Likewise, adverbialism states that the expression ‘I see blue’ when I look at the sky is to be understood as ‘I see *bluey*’. The paraphrase of the sentence ‘I see blue’ into the sentence ‘I see bluey’ may seem absurd at first, for what does it mean to ‘see bluey’? This seeming absurdity has taken to be a handicap for the view. But

if we leave aside this issue and consider the technical advantages of adverbialism, the view suddenly becomes more comprehensible in comparison to its rivals.

Adverbialism is out-fashioned. It has been defended by Ducasse and Chisholm, and then gone out of the literature especially by the beginning of 1980s.<sup>7</sup> This is mostly due to Jackson's criticism of the view, which I will explain soon. The orthodox model for conscious experience is based upon an act/object structure, according to which there is a duality of aspects in conscious experience, namely, the act of consciousness and its object. This model is inherent in most theories of consciousness despite the overwhelming diversity among them in other respects. This phenomenon is mostly due to the wide acceptance of Brentano's thesis of intentionality appreciated as being the mark of mentality. The intentionality of consciousness is basically the idea that all consciousness is necessarily of, or about, something – consciousness is directed to an object, whether the object is something existing out there in the world or a non-existing entity.<sup>8</sup>

Whether the object of consciousness exists or not, it is the object to which consciousness is related via a special feature of the mind, intentionality, and the term attached for this special kind of object class is *intentional objects*. The class is overwhelmingly large; including worldly objects such as tables and chairs, trees and mountains, and their properties, such as colors and tastes, shapes and surfaces, sensational objects such as after-images, and also abstract entities such as mathematical objects such as numbers and curves, and fictional entities such as flying horses and golden mountains. Arguably the class of intentional objects is the

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<sup>7</sup> For recent discussions of adverbialism, see Kriegel 2007 and 2008

<sup>8</sup> I know this sound paradoxical, and the problem within will be apparent soon after when I discuss intentional inexistence

largest ontological class such that it encompasses all the things that can be thought of.

If one wants to avoid ontological commitment to non-existing intentional objects, one possibility for him is to embrace adverbialism. Consider you think about Pegasus. How is this possible? One possibility is that you think about an object, Pegasus, which is an intentionally non-existing object, on the act/object model for thinking. Another possibility is that you think not about Pegasus but think Pegasus-wise, thus adverbialism. What is the purpose of putting the matter in those terms? Well, in adverbialism, there is no object of your conscious act: what you think *of* in the act/object model is what modifies your thinking adverbially. Thereby we can avoid objectual talk. In taking adverbialism as a model for phenomenal character, I am taking phenomenal properties as non-relational properties of the experience. When you think Pegasus-wise, Pegasus-wise are the modes of your thinking activity - there are many ways you can think about Pegasus, and Pegasus-wise captures them all. There is no relation between your thinking and what you think of, i.e. Pegasus; instead, it is a matter of intrinsic features of your thinking Pegasus-wise activity.

Adverbialism, despite its initial plausibility, has gone out of fashion due to Jackson's criticism of the view. The criticism goes like this: Take the sentence 'you think about purple violets and red roses'. The adverbial paraphrase would be something like 'you think purple-wise and violet-wise and red-wise and rose-wise.' But this sentence would equally be a paraphrase for 'you think about red violets and purple roses'. Since the two sentences are different but has an equal adverbial paraphrase, there must be a mistake. A possible reconsideration would be to paraphrase the sentences differently, such as 'you think purple-violet-wise and red-



rose-wise' for the former and 'you think red-violet-wise and purple-rose-wise' for the latter. The critic would then say that these later paraphrases are not appropriate for the following reason. From the sentence 'you think about purple violets' you can infer that 'you think about violets', whereas from the sentence 'you think purple-violet-wise' you cannot infer 'you think violet-wise'. This is the main objection of Jackson to adverbial paraphrasing.

However, I don't think it necessarily rules out the possibility of adverbial paraphrasing. The reason behind the objection is that the sentence 'you think purple-violet-wise' lacks the syntactical compositionality allowing for the inference from 'you think purple violets' to 'you think violet' to proceed. Take the sentence 'you see moonlight'; is it allowable to infer from that alone the sentence 'you see light'? I think so. Then why is it not allowable to infer 'you think violet-wise' from the sentence 'you think purple-violet-wise'? I don't see any reason for this non-allowance. Thus, I think adverbialism is still on the table for us, especially regarding its advantages compared to the act/object model.

Since the act/object model of consciousness is held to be granted within the scope of intentionality of consciousness, it guides and motivates some philosophers in their attempts to account for the phenomenality of conscious experience in the same vein. For some, the phenomenal character of a given experience is thought to be a relational property of the experience between the conscious act (seeing, thinking, etc) and its object (e.g. colorful objects and meaningful thoughts). This is characteristic of representationalism, according to which phenomenal character

depends upon representational properties of the object being represented.<sup>9</sup>

Adverbialism with respect to phenomenal character, on the other hand, does not endorse a relational understanding of phenomenality consisting as a relation between the experience and its intentional/representational object. It avoids objectual talk all together and dedicates the whole emphasis on the activity based nature of conscious experience. Thus it locates phenomenal character into experience, not something extending out of but somehow relating to it. The phenomenal character of a conscious experience is, on the given adverbialist outlook, is the way the experience is modified by its adverbial component, let's say, x-wise. It also takes the aspect of mine-ness character granted, for an experience is necessarily *for* a subject; thus it does justice to the subjective character of experience as well.

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<sup>9</sup> See, e.g. Tye 1995 and Dretske 1995 for externalist versions.

## CHAPTER 3

### ARGUMENTS FROM INTROSPECTION

#### Introspection and Cognitive Phenomenology

The most intuitive type of argument for the very existence of cognitive phenomenology is the argument from introspection. Introspection is held to be a special faculty of the mind via which we gain knowledge of our own mental goings-on; though it should be noted that there is a variety of views on how the faculty of introspection to be understood. Different views of introspection will hopefully appear as the present discussion proceeds. Before jumping into the details, let me state that the term introspection literally means “to look within”, conjoined with the Latin terms ‘intro’ and ‘specere’.

From a historical point of view, the faculty of introspection has been in service for philosophers in arguing for their views, so the use of introspective reflection in philosophy is not something recently emerging. Indeed, introspection extends over other fields of inquiry as well, such as the rise of introspectionist psychology by late 19th century.

The idea behind the use of the faculty of introspection as a tool is that it provides a mode (perhaps the only mode) of self-knowledge. So the arguments that will be examined during this chapter might also be considered as self-knowledge arguments. Although there isn’t one but a plurality of arguments that can be found in

the writings of the defenders of cognitive phenomenology appealing to introspection, and that there are minor differences among them both in style and in scope, the common feature behind those arguments is something like that the existence of cognitive phenomenology (and its nature, in some occasions) is introspectively evident. Whether it is, or not, is the topic of this chapter.

However, it is an interesting feature of the cognitive phenomenology debate that the opponents of the cognitive phenomenology thesis also appeal to introspective reflection in some of their arguments. So for example, Tye and Wright claim that the “primary source of resistance emerges from introspective unfamiliarity with the kind of phenomenology in question” (329). It is cognitive phenomenology that is unfamiliar in kind in comparison to sensory phenomenology and the debate over whether the existence of cognitive phenomenology is introspectively evident or not interestingly evolves through a debate over the reliability of introspection.

In this chapter, I will first present the view that conscious experience is transparent to its subject, the core idea behind appealing to introspective reflection in phenomenological issues. I then question the viability of applying the transparency thesis into the cognitive domain, by examining individual arguments.

### Transparency of Experience

The topic of transparency of experience is directly related to the issue of introspective availability of conscious experience. The idea is that if experience is

not transparent to its subject, then it makes no sense to say that it is available, either introspectively or not. It is more importantly related to the arguments relying upon introspection in the vein that the transparency of experience is formulated in such a way that it grounds the base for representational theories of phenomenal character. Recall that representationalism is the view that phenomenal character supervenes on representational content of experience, and that representationalism is parasitic upon an act/object model of phenomenal consciousness. So formulated, the idea guiding the transparency thesis is also based upon the same scheme, namely that, what is available to the subject of the experience is what the experience is about, that of its object.

Earlier formulations of transparency thesis can be found in Moore's

*Refutation of Idealism:*

Whether or not, when I have the sensation of blue, my consciousness or awareness is thus blue, my introspection does not enable me to decide with certainty: I only see no reason for thinking that it is. But whether it is or not, the point is unimportant, for introspection *does* enable me to decide that something else is also true: namely that I am aware of blue, and by this I mean, that my awareness has to blue a quite different and distinct relation. It is possible, I admit, that my awareness is blue *as well as* being *of* blue: but what I am quite sure of is that it is *of* blue..." (450)

Here Moore explicitly represents the act/object model for phenomenal character, and he further claims that the phenomenality is due to the object of experience, blue, in this occasion. I think it is also important to see Moore defending his judgment by appeal to his introspective capacity. 'What else could he form his judgment upon, with respect to the blueness of *his* experience?' one might ask. And he would be certainly right in asking such a question – after all we are concerned with the availability of the experiential content from the first person perspective. But this line

of reasoning is biased and so quick to dismiss the possibility of phenomenality belonging to the experience, as it is obvious in Moore's case, given his failure of finding any reason for holding that it does, and his inability of introspectively detecting so.

At the same page of his *Refutation of Idealism* where the above quoted passage appears, Moore claims that experience is "diaphanous" in those lines. It is diaphanous only in so far its object is available to its subject, and nothing beyond. The object of experience is *sense data* in Moore's version, and it is the object being represented in representationalism, however, the structure of conscious experience remains the same for both Moore and representationalists. This alliance stipulated here between Moore's sense data theory and representationalism might seem obscure and bizarre to a careful reader, for the transparency of experience is mostly held to be an objection to sense data theories, in its claim that what is transparent in one's experience is the mind-independent object of it, not a non-representational, subjective entity called sense data. However, as I have outlined in the previous chapter, both sense data and the represented object can be subsumed under a category of intentional objects, and that the apparent similarity in act/object structure strengthens my interpretation.

Notice that, from an adverbialist point of view, it is quite the contrary. Not that experience is non-transparent – adverbialism does not defend such a claim – but that the phenomenally transparent element of experience is the way it occurs and not that it's so-called object, since there is no act/object distinction within an adverbialist framework. Defending adverbialism shall be understood as a way of emphasizing the actual character of consciousness as not independent of what it is an experience of,

whereas the orthodox view of representationalism takes the object of experience as the primary source of phenomenality.

Recent versions of the transparency thesis can be found in Harman and Martin. According to Harman, phenomenal properties are intrinsic properties of experience and intentional properties are relational properties of it. So Harman can be considered to be a separatist with regard to phenomenality and intentionality of the mind. He argues that phenomenal character of experience is not transparent to its subject, by guiding us with the following example:

Eloise is aware of the tree she is now seeing. So we can suppose that she is aware of some features of her current visual experience. In particular, she is aware that her visual experience has the feature of being an experience of seeing a tree. That is to be aware of an intentional feature of her experience; she is aware that her experience has a certain content. On the other hand ... that she is not aware of those intrinsic features of her experience by virtue of which it has that content”(667)

Martin, in a similar vein to Harman, thinks that the only introspectively available entity to a subject of experience is the object of the experience. He writes that in attending to “what it is like for me to introspect the lavender bush through perceptually attending to the bush itself while at the same time reflecting on what I am doing. So it does not seem to me as if there is any object apart from the bush for me to be attending to or reflecting on while doing this” (380-81). The idea of Martin is that in introspecting one’s experience, one is not reflecting on the phenomenality of his experience apart from its object. Since the phenomenality of experience is a matter of having a represented object in one’s experience, one cannot introspect the phenomenal properties let alone in isolation to the representational properties. The experiential properties, thus, in support of representationalism, are not object independent, according to Martin.

So the idea of experience being transparent does not provide a unified framework regarding the introspection of phenomenal properties. If one is a representationalist, then he can hold a view that the phenomenal character of the introspected mental episode can be known via the representational properties of the object of experience being known. If one thinks that phenomenal properties are non-relational and also holds the transparency thesis to be true, then the introspective availability of phenomenal properties is not available for him, since, again, the only introspectively knowable properties are properties of the object of experience.

The transparency thesis thus formulated is not in alliance with adverbialism for a very simple reason: adverbialism lack objectual talk. It must be constantly kept in mind in my forthcoming evaluation of the introspective arguments in favor of cognitive phenomenology.

I have presented some views on the transparency of experience and suggested, based on the versions of Moore, Harman and Martin, that the only kind of introspectively available feature of conscious experience is its object, whether it's a sense data or a represented object. In that sense, it can also be said that what is available to introspection is the intentional content of experience, although I am not sympathetic to the view for holding an adverbialist account of conscious experience and its phenomenal character. I will now treat some of the arguments from introspection on behalf of a sui generis cognitive phenomenology. I believe these arguments will not persuade conservatives and reasons for it will be apparent as the discussion proceeds.



## Pitt's Version of the Argument from Introspection

Pitt's argument is one of the most reaction deserving arguments on behalf of cognitive phenomenology within the literature. He argues that we are immediately acquainted with the phenomenal character of our cognitive experiences, namely, via introspection. Here is the argument:

Normally – that is, barring confusion, inattention, impaired functioning, and the like – one is able, consciously, introspectively, and non-inferentially (henceforth, “Immediately”) to do three distinct (but closely related) things: (a) to distinguish one's occurrent conscious thoughts from one's other occurrent conscious mental states; (b) to distinguish one's occurrent conscious thoughts each from the others; and (c) to identify each of one's occurrent conscious thoughts as the thought it is (i.e. as having the *content* it does). But (the argument continues), one would not be able to do these things unless each (type of) occurrent conscious thought had a phenomenology that is (1) different from that of any other type of conscious mental state (proprietary), (2) different from that of any other type of conscious thought (distinct), and (3) constitute of its (representational) content (individuative). That is, it is only because conscious thoughts have a kind of phenomenology that is different from that of any other kind of conscious mental state that one can Immediately discriminate them from other kinds of conscious mental states; it is only because type-distinct conscious thoughts have type-distinct phenomenologies (of the cognitive sort) that one can Immediately distinguish them from each other; and it is only because a conscious thought that *p* has a phenomenology that constitutes its (representational) content that one can Immediately identify it as the thought it is. Hence (the argument concludes), each type of conscious thought has a proprietary, unique phenomenology, which constitutes its representational content. (7-8)

This lengthy quote is also quite rich in content. Pitt claims, first of all, cognitive phenomenology is *sui generis* (i.e. proprietary, e.g. non-sensory) and second, for each different thought there is a different phenomenology. The strongest claim of Pitt is that phenomenology of thought constitutes its content (representational content, as Pitt holds it to be). One can easily be persuaded that, assuming that Pitt is right and

that there is cognitive phenomenology, the kind of phenomenology found in introspection is indeed proprietary and distinctive, since e.g. believing and wondering are different mental types and thus must inhere into different phenomenologies, and further, believing p also differs from believing q so that they must have differing phenomenologies. But what does it mean exactly that cognitive phenomenology constitutes the content? A representationalist, for example, would find it quite hard to accept for he holds that it is quite the contrary: the representational content constitutes the phenomenal character.

The individuating character of cognitive phenomenology, namely its grounding the intentional/representational content, is the strongest claim of Pitt. And it has taken to be an issue that is treated on its own under the label phenomenal intentionality.<sup>10</sup> I will not address this issue during the present chapter. Right now, I am merely concerned whether Pitt's argument suffices it to say that the intentional content is grounded in the phenomenal character. My inclination is that it does not, and this is because Pitt's model for introspection is based upon an act/object structure.

If the act/object structure inherent in Pitt's introspection model is not obvious yet from the lengthy passage quoted above, consider Pitt's insistence on the Immediately knowing one's own thoughts as 'they are the thoughts they are'. Pitt describes the identification of individual thoughts of one's own by appealing to knowledge by acquaintance, as he writes:

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<sup>10</sup> For the discussion of the topic phenomenal intentionality See Loar, Horgan and Tienson, and Kriegel 2007 et al.

Immediate identification of a thought is introspective knowledge by acquaintance (primary epistemic introspection) that it is the thought it is, and that this is not possible without simple acquaintance, which itself depends upon the introspected state having phenomenal character.” (11)

Thus, according to Pitt, what bears the phenomenal character is the “introspected state”, in other words, the object of the act of introspection. Thereby he claims that the “thought” introspected do possess proprietary, distinctive and individuating phenomenology. But the individuatingness of the thought depends upon its being distinctive, as Pitt writes that “identification of a particular thought requires immediate discriminative awareness of its distinctive phenomenology” (11).

However, “Immediate discriminative awareness” of the particular thought is a completely different matter. Pitt claims that “subject S is introspectively acquainted with a conscious mental particular M (a state, a thought, an image, a feeling, a sensation, etc.) if S differentiates M from its mental environment purely on the basis of *how it is experienced* by S”, and how M is experienced by S is a matter of phenomenal character (9-10). Now, for Pitt, the phenomenal character belongs to M, since, I argue that, he is committed to act/object model of introspection. But the question is whether he can succeed in arguing for his conclusion given that he relies on the notion of immediate acquaintance.

Pitt says that the way he takes introspection to be is analogous to Dretske’s notion of “simple seeing”, accordingly “an object *O* is simply seen by a subject S if S *differentiates O* from its immediate environment *purely* on the basis of how *O looks to S* (how it is *visually experienced* by S)” (8). Now, it must be noted that Dretske’s notion of simple seeing serves for the possibility of a subject’s not being able to identify (i.e. to entertain his conceptual repertoire upon the object) yet still being able to *see* an object in an epistemically special way – the possibility of locating

nonconceptual content into perception. If that is the case, then Pitt's model for introspection, given his claim that it is analogous to Dretske's simple seeing, is a perceptual model, such that in introspecting M one thereby perceives M. But in case of perception, it is wrong to ascribe the phenomenology to the object *O* alone, since Pitt himself concurs; the phenomenology is a matter of how *O* looks to its perceiver. So phenomenology does not belong to *O* but to its perceiver. Similarly, in case of introspection, since M is subject to an introspective state, the arising phenomenology is not due to M alone for the phenomenology in question is a matter of how M is being perceived (given that introspection is analogous to perception). Then, the phenomenology does not belong to M alone but to the introspective state. Therefore, Pitt is miss-locating the phenomenology by ascribing it to M and not to its introspecting state.

Recall that this conclusion is a result of Pitt's insistence on the 'Immediate acquaintance' aspect of his argument. The conclusion does not mean that Pitt is wrong in his insistence. It means that given the introspection model Pitt proposes, his conclusion for there being cognitive phenomenology that is proprietary, distinctive and individuating of thoughts does not follow. Indeed, in my opinion, Pitt's claim that a mental phenomenon must be discriminated from its mental environment "on the basis of *how it is experienced*" is so important, and in conformity with my adverbialist account. When I introspect a mental phenomenon M, that means that I introspect M-wise, and the phenomenal character of that introspective episode is *Mish* – M is to be the modification of my introspection. If M is a thinking episode, such as the occurrent thought with the content 'Bilal is not a genius', then when I introspect M-wise I consciously/introspectively know that I am thinking – that it is

an *Mish*, namely a ‘thinking’ experience – and that I also know my thinking is B-wise, where B stands for the proposition ‘Bilal is not a genius’. My suggestion here is that in defending adverbialism regarding the introspective availability of mental phenomena, one can hold that there is a *sui generis*, proprietary, and a distinctive cognitive phenomenology – whether or not it would also be individuating is not clear yet.

### Other Versions

Appealing to introspection in arguing for the existence of cognitive phenomenology is somehow characteristic for most of the liberals. However, unlike Pitt’s detailed argument, they are mostly based on the notion that sincere introspection *reveals* cognitive phenomenological properties. Such a revelatory conception of introspection is presented by Horgan and Tienson, as they claim that “attentive introspection reveals that both the phenomenology of intentional content and the phenomenology of attitude type are phenomenal aspects of experience, aspects that you cannot miss if you simply pay attention” (522-23). In a similar vein, Goldman proposed that the felt differences in confidence in one’s judgment, in strength and weakness of one’s beliefs and desires, and other aspects of one’s propositional attitude types are manifest to oneself through introspection (24).

The liberal strategy in arguing from introspection sometimes results in claims slightly different but directly related to the existence of cognitive phenomenology. Loar, for example, argued for what he calls “internal intentionality”, the view that

there is a kind of intentionality which is a matter of having a certain kind of phenomenology that is cognitive in nature, and that the kind of intentionality does not depend on truth conditions. Loar suggests that internal intentionality consists in thoughts “*purporting subjectively to refer* in various complex ways” and the fact of this subjective reference is “there for the noticing” when one introspects (230-31). I like the suggestion but I am also hesitant whether these complex ways could be transparent to its subject.

Horgan uses introspection for two different views both of which individually supporting the very existence of cognitive phenomenology. The first is that the overall contrastive phenomenology between a case in which a sentence is understood and a case in which it is not becomes apparent when one introspects. Horgan writes that there must be “a palpable difference between the two experiences, and the claim is that it should be clear, upon introspective reflection, that this is a *phenomenological* difference” (58-9). The second claim Horgan wants to argue for is that agential phenomenology (a term coined by Horgan himself) implies the existence of cognitive phenomenology. He calls attention of the reader to a thought experiment in which partial-zombies are conceivable – zombies that are like us in all respects except that they lack agential phenomenological properties, i.e., they are not the source of their behaviors. He claims that the only available answer for the conceivability of such a scenario is that there is a non-sensory, cognitive phenomenology, one aspect of which is agential phenomenology. He goes on saying that “the phenomenal aspect of *self as source* ... clearly reveals itself to introspection.” (65).

## Reactions to the Arguments

If one is slightly acquainted with the dialect between the liberals and the conservatives, it is easy then to predict the line of response given by conservatives in opposition to the claims of liberals on what introspection can reveal. Wilson, for example, responds to Horgan and Tienson in the following line:

In the spirit of Horgan and Tienson's appeal for a reader to 'pay attention to your own experience', I have just done the decisive experiment: I thought first that George Bush is President of the United States, and had CNN-mediated auditory and visual phenomenology that focused on one of his speeches. I then took a short break, doodled a little, wandered around the room, and then had a thought with the very same content and ... nothing." (417)

What might be the cause for such a vast disagreement? After all, as Siewert puts it, "Shouldn't it be introspectively obvious what's in consciousness?" (236). I will present two analysis in due time. Before doing so, I want reader to consider the following passage by Nichols and Stich:

As best we can tell, believing that 17 is a prime number doesn't feel any different from believing that 19 is a prime number. Indeed, as best we can tell, neither of these states has any distinctive qualitative properties. Neither of them feels like much at all (196)

Nichols and Stich's criticism is more modest than Wilson's, in a sense, because what they are opposing to is stronger version of the cognitive phenomenology thesis, namely the individuating aspect of thinking phenomenology, while Wilson directly rejects the very existence of proprietary cognitive phenomenology. However, both of the criticisms present us with a seemingly irresolvable feature of appealing to introspection in arguing for cognitive phenomenology.

Is there a way to resolve the issue between the liberals and conservatives with regard to introspection? The temptations diverge, as I notice. As we have seen, appealing to introspective reflection is not characteristic only for liberals. For example, Tye and Wright as one strong representative of conservatism claim that the “introspective unfamiliarity” of the alleged cognitive phenomenology must result in disclaiming it (329). Another conservative, Prinz argues for a reductive account of phenomenology of thinking, and his reason is in line with Tye and Wright as well, as he writes that “from introspection alone it’s far from obvious that there is any conscious thought prior to the sentences we utter in rapid conversation” (188). Robinson, again a strong representative of conservatism, has a different approach to Tye and Wright and also to Prinz, on the other hand, as he holds that appeals to introspection in matters regarding cognitive phenomenology must be abandoned altogether, since the “pitfalls of introspection” must already have been obvious for those philosophers (212). And it should also be noted that not all liberals argue by appealing to introspection, as Siewert is one good example, by his claim that a consensus between liberals and conservatives is not ready yet and that “it would be naive to suppose it could be achieved by simple appeal to introspection” (265).

### Treating the Disagreement

The arguments from introspection represented above are, despite being inconclusive in persuasion, insightful in other respects, especially with respect to the nature of introspection. Eric Schwitzgebel, for example, considers the debate between liberals



and conservatives as one guide for arguing the unreliability of introspection. He writes in his *The Unreliability of Introspection* in a rhetorical manner about the issue:

In my view, then we're prone to gross error, even in favorable circumstances of extended reflection, about our ongoing emotional, visual, and cognitive phenomenology. ... All this is evidence enough, I think, for a generalization: The introspection of current conscious experience, far from being secure, nearly infallible, is faulty, untrustworthy, and misleading – not just *possibly* mistaken, but massively and pervasively. I don't think it's just me in the dark here, but most of us. You too, probably. If you stop and introspect now, there's likely very little you should confidently say you know about your own current phenomenology (259).

But isn't it strange to say that we are "massively and pervasively" in error regarding our own conscious experiences? I think it is, and I don't agree with Schwitzgebel that we are wrong in our introspective judgments *pervasively*. However, I am also quite sympathetic to his suggestion that introspection might not always be a reliable apparatus of the mind. This suggestion deserves attention because of the fact that most philosophers take introspective reflections of their own as more truth-apt than conflicting introspective judgments of their opponents; at least this is the impression I get from the debate about cognitive phenomenology. There might be two possible reasons for this phenomenon. First, introspective judgments are usually biased by prior theoretical conceptions: if, for example, you are not inclined to think that there is only sensory phenomenology, then any judgment based upon introspection suggesting the existing a non-sensory kind would not suffice to persuade you that there is, and your introspective reflection is more likely to provide you reasons for otherwise. And second, following the biased nature of introspective reflection, there isn't any unified notion of introspection but a vast variety of rival concepts for it. For example, there is no consensus on whether introspection must be understood as an "inner-sense" model (e.g. Pitt) or a "reliabilist" model (e.g. Tye and Wright). The

plurality of concepts of introspection hints us to question whether introspection is a single/unified process at all.

Schwitzgebel addresses the issue in his *Introspection, What?* in detail and convincingly argues that:

[i]ntrospection is not a single process but a plurality of processes. It's a plurality both *within* and *between* cases: Most individual introspective judgments arise from a plurality of processes (that's the within-case claim), and the collection of processes issuing in introspective judgments differs from case to case (that's the between-case claim). Introspection is not the operation of a single cognitive mechanism or small collection of mechanisms. Introspective judgments arise from a shifting confluence of many processes, recruited opportunistically. (2)

He describes the plurality of mechanisms having a role in introspection process as following:

Introspection is the dedication of central cognitive resources, or attention, to the task of arriving at a judgment about one's current, or very recently past, conscious experience, using or attempting to use some capacities that are unique to the first-person case [...], with the aim or intention that one's judgment reflect some relatively direct sensitivity the target state. It by no means follows that from this characterization that introspection is a single or coherent process or the same set of processes every time. (19)

Schwitzgebel's description of introspection as a plurality of distinct processes seems correct; however, a full-blown acceptance of Schwitzgebel's negative considerations about the unreliability of introspective reflection might diverge from one to another, depending on one's degree of eligibility to be influenced by rhetorical style of writing. Schwitzgebel offers no good reasons to persuade the reader that we are massively in error in introspecting our own experiences, other than cases in which he himself finds it difficult to determine his own introspective judgments (See Schwitzgebel for a long list of examples in which he finds himself in no firm ground to determine what his introspection reveals to himself). This is why I think his

insights are mostly rhetorical with respect to the massive error of introspective judgments.

Schwitzgebel is not alone in attending the dispute between liberals and conservatives on the introspective availability of phenomenal character of experience. Spener also takes the issue into consideration and offers a resolution for the dispute. She takes the disagreement between liberals and conservatives to be an “interest among epistemologists” (269). She considers two possibilities available for an epistemic resolution of the disagreement:

At one end of the spectrum are views which say that typically, the epistemically appropriate reaction is to be conciliatory towards one’s disagreeing partner (‘Conciliationism’): disagreement with apparently well-qualified others should cause one to be less confident than before in what one originally believed, or even suspend judgment about one’s original view... On the other side are views which say that typically the appropriate reaction is to remain steadfast (‘Steadfastness’): disagreement with apparently well-qualified others allow that one maintain one’s level of confidence in what one originally believed. (269)

Spener thinks that the irresolvable disagreement between the liberals and conservatives are representative of Steadfastness. She argues that the right way to achieve peace among the two parties is to deflate Steadfastness and endorse Conciliationism. So according to her, the members of the two conflicting parties must be “less confident – or even suspend judgment – in their own introspection-based claims.” (269). I think this is a naive proposal in her account. I have suggested that one main reason for the disagreement between liberals and conservatives is due to the lack of a commonly appreciated concept of introspection. Moreover, a possible reason for the missing consensus is that views of introspection are theory-laden. Is it really possible to avoid this biased nature of introspection? I am skeptical about that. However, I don’t think Spener’s conciliationist approach to the debate takes us a step

further too. After all, even though biased and steadfast they are, the members of the two competing parties (that of liberalism and conservatism) are mostly brilliant and well-experienced philosophers of mind – I think it would even be disingenuousness to suggest them to abandon their views on introspection because of an apparent disagreement between them. One conception of philosophy is that it's an art of handling disputes. So, unlike Spener, I believe that a better proposal respecting the issue of introspection is to offer a better account for it. The availability of such an account is disputable.

## CHAPTER 4

### ARGUMENTS FROM PHENOMENAL CONTRAST

#### The Method of Phenomenal Contrast

Arguments from phenomenal contrast are direct arguments in favor of the existence of cognitive phenomenology; moreover, the idea of phenomenal contrast can also be used as a method in determining the constitutive elements of one's conscious experience into the phenomenal character of it. So before I present the arguments from phenomenal contrast, let me briefly explain how phenomenal contrast strategy can be used as a method, since I think it is an important feature of the idea.

Siegel presents the idea behind taking phenomenal contrast as a method in her

*How Can We Discover the Contents of Experience?:*

The method of phenomenal contrast is a way to test hypothesis about the contents of experience. The main idea behind the method is to find something that the target hypothesis purports to explain, and see whether it provides the best explanation of that phenomenon... It is thus a way of testing hypotheses, rather than a way of generating hypotheses in the first place. (134)

I think it would be correct to say, by following how Siegel puts the idea above, that the method of phenomenal contrast, when applied as an argument, would be an instance of argument to the best explanation. One may also evaluate the method as being applied to test a hypothesis that which is provided independently of the method itself, however, this is not necessarily the case, for according to Siegel:

Since contents are supposed to be phenomenally adequate, any target hypothesis will predict that any two experiences differing with respect to the hypothesized contents will differ phenomenally as well. It is thus possible to use the phenomenal contrast as the thing to be explained. The ‘target explanation’ will say the experiences contrast phenomenally because one of them has the hypothesized contents, while the other one does not.

So the idea, when applied to the question of the existence of cognitive phenomenology, follows like this: We have a hypothesis, namely that there exists a non-sensory, cognitive phenomenology. To test the hypothesis, we consider cases in which there is an apparent phenomenal contrast between two given experiences. The phenomenal contrast between these two experiences cannot be explained by appealing to sensory phenomenology, for the phenomenal contrast scenario is provided such that the two experiences are alike (if not identical) with regard to their sensory phenomenologies (notice that this is the most controversial component of the procedure). The phenomenal contrast between the two experiences then is best to be explained by either the absence or the presence of non-sensory (supposedly, cognitive) phenomenology. Then, by argument to the best explanation, there is non-sensory – cognitive phenomenology.

Another formulation of the use of phenomenal contrast as a method can be found in Kriegel’s *The Phenomenologically Manifest*, although he does not explicitly use the word ‘method’. His description of the procedure is as follows:

Say S is a perceptual state with properties F1,..., Fn. To determine whether Fi is a phenomenologically manifest feature of S, try to imagine a perceptual state S\*, such that (1) the only difference between S and S\* is that S instantiates Fi whereas S\* does not, and (2) what it is like to be

in S is different from what it is like to be in S\*. Ability to imagine such an S\* would create presumption in favor of the thesis that Fi is phenomenologically manifest in S, inability would create a presumption *against* that thesis. (126)

Note that there is a minor difference between Kriegel's presentation of the idea and Siegel's formulation, which is the lack of use of *subject* in Siegel's formulation whereas its presence in Kriegel's version. And also Siegel never mentions the conceivability or actuality of the alleged phenomenally contrasting experiences. Though, I take it that they both present the same insights about the notion of phenomenal contrast serving as a method in determination of the constitutive elements of experience to its phenomenal content. The procedure of phenomenal contrast strategy will become clearer when looked at individual examples of it.

It is popular among the defenders of a sui generis cognitive phenomenology to present an argument based upon the idea of phenomenal contrast. One obvious reason is that it is a powerful argument in favor of cognitive phenomenology. And another implicit reason is, as I have stipulated in the previous chapter that direct appeals to introspection is a weak method. However, as I will suggest, some (if not all) versions of the argument from phenomenal contrast are based upon introspective inclinations as well. So it would be a mistake to treat arguments from phenomenal contrast as if they are not subject to some charges that arguments from introspection have to deal with.

One may find an early representation of the argument from phenomenal contrast in Strawson's *Mental Reality*. His source of inspiration is the following passage by Moore from *Propositions*:

I will now utter certain words which form a sentence: these words, for instance: Twice two are four. Now, when I say these words, you not only hear *them*—the words – you *also* understand what they mean. That is to say, something happens in your minds – some act of consciousness – *over and above* the hearing of the words, some act of consciousness which may be called the understanding of their meaning. (57)

This passage has been considered as suggesting a kind of experience that is non-sensory in nature, and providing reasons for Strawson in his suggestion:

The spectrum of experience ranges from the most purely sensory experiences to the most abstractly cognitive experiences. In between, the sensory and the cognitive are inextricably bound up with each other: virtually all experiences have both sensory and cognitive content in varying and unqualifiable proportions. (Some think that there are no pure cases at the ends of the spectrum, but it is not clear why there could not be.) (4)

Strawson then provides his own example in order to make the same claim that Moore does, namely that there is an experience kind, which must rightly be called ‘understanding experience’. However, unlike Moore’s description of understanding experience, Strawson presents his example as in the form of a phenomenal contrast argument, which goes like this:

[D]oes the difference between Jacques (a monoglot Frenchman) and Jack (a monoglot Englishman), as they listen to the news in French, really consist in the Frenchman’s having a different *experience*? ... The present claim is simply that Jacques’s experience when listening to the news is utterly different from Jack’s, and that this is so even though there is a sense in which Jacques and Jack have the same aural experience... Jacques’s experience when listening to the news is very different from Jack’s. And the difference between the two can be expressed by saying that Jacques, when exposed to the stream of sound, has what one may perfectly well call ‘an experience (as) of understanding’ or ‘an understanding experience’, while Jack does not... As a result, Jacques’s *experience* is quite different from Jack’s. And the fact that Jacques understands what is said is not only the principal explanation of why this is so, *it is also the principal description of the respect in which his experience differs from Jack’s* (5-6; my emphasis).

This passage, well-famous and frequently quoted, represents the phenomenal contrast method explained by Siegel and Kriegel in the previous section. The hypothesis



Strawson wants to test is that there is an understanding experience which is not phenomenal just in virtue of sensory phenomenology. To test his hypothesis, Strawson uses the method of phenomenal contrast by presenting two phenomenally contrasting experiences that are also similar in sensory phenomenological respects. And the best explanation for the phenomenal contrast in question is the hypothesis that he wanted to test at the very beginning, that there is an understanding experience which is non-sensory in nature.

Notice that the most controversial component of the argument is the alleged identification (or similarity) of the sensory phenomenologies of the two contrasting experiences, where Strawson says that “there is a sense in which Jacques and Jack have the same aural experience”. Strawson predicts the possibility of being charged for his claim, and addresses it within a footnote at the same page. The controversy regarding that aspect of the argument arises from such a view that identity or massive similarity between sensory phenomenal characters of two distinct experiences, is impossible. For example, in Jack’s experience of hearing French, the words are not parsed by him whereas in Jacques’s experience they are, so their sensory phenomenologies differ vastly as well. But the ‘parsing’ criticism can be handled easily, according to Strawson. The presence of understanding/meaning experience is not solely a matter of understanding a natural language. The phenomenal contrast arguments can be constructed in such a way that the participants of the hypothetical scenario would be exactly alike in all respects except the phenomenally relevant difference which would rise in producing a phenomenal contrast between their experiences.

I believe the probability for designing a thought experiment in which the two subjects have exactly the same sensory phenomenal character (while differing in other phenomenological respects, which are not my immediate concern here) is very low, if not zero. My reasoning follows from a very basic intuition: having a phenomenology requires bodylines, or at least a point of view – that means to say, the subject of experience must occupy a space-time region (this characterization dismisses the possibility of swamp brain scenarios) – this holds true even if the subject of experience is a brain in a vat. Accordingly, the collection of sensory stimuli that is received by a subject of experience is necessarily received from a particular point of view, and his point of view can only be occupied by himself and not by any other subject (only if ‘seeing from the eye of another’ type scenarios are impossible). Then it is unjustified to infer the possibility of there being two subjects with the exact same sensory phenomenology from the very basic intuition of there being a subject with some sensory phenomenological character. The only kind of scenarios that would conflict with my reasoning would be phenomenal duplicate scenarios, which I believe to be viable possibilities. But I doubt that a phenomenal contrast argument can be designed so that its participants would be phenomenal duplicates. My personal opinion on the spirit of phenomenology is something like this: worldlier the scenario is, more likely it convinces its audience.

Another example of phenomenal contrast argument is due to Siewert, again concerned with the phenomenon of understanding, but this time directly related to the existence of cognitive phenomenology. He writes that “on some occasions someone utters a sentence, and you momentarily understand it one way ... and then are struck by the realization that the speaker meant something else altogether ... one

can note a difference in the way it seems to understand it, depending on which way one takes the story” (278 -9).

According to Siewert, cases of “momentarily understanding” and “sudden realizations” are paradigms for cognitive experience. The phenomena of ‘suddenly realizing something’ or ‘noniconic thinking’ is crucial for Siewert in claiming that these paradigm cases for cognitive experience directly functions as a counter-example to those reductionist arguments put forward by conservatives.<sup>11</sup>

Another example of phenomenal contrast argument is presented by Siegel, to whom we owe the term ‘phenomenal contrast’. Although Siegel’s primary concern in her version of the argument is the constitutive aspects of one’s recognitional capacities to her phenomenal character, her argument can also be treated as being in favor of the existence of cognitive phenomenology understood in the way concepts contributes to one’s overall perceptual phenomenology. She draws attention to the following scenario in her *Which Properties are Represented in Perception?*:

Suppose you have never seen a pine tree before, and are hired to cut down all the pine trees in a grove containing trees of many different sorts. Someone points out to you which trees are pine trees. Some weeks pass, and your disposition to distinguish the pine trees from the others improves. Eventually, you can spot the pine trees immediately: they become visually salient to you... Gaining this recognitional disposition is reflected in a phenomenological difference between the visual experiences had before and after the recognitional disposition was fully developed. (491)

Siegel designs her example so that it doesn’t involve two distinct subjects of experience, unlike the way Strawson does. This aspect of Siegel’s argument provides it efficiency in evading the criticism that Strawson’s example is subject to. The criticism charges that the sensory phenomenology of the two subjects (Jacques and

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<sup>11</sup> Reductionist arguments will be sketched during the next chapter and will be treated in detail.

Jack) cannot be identical or massively similar to each other so that the best explanation for their contrasting phenomenal characters is the very existence of a non-sensory phenomenology. Accordingly, the argument from phenomenal contrast is better off if it involves only one subject and takes into account of two contrasting phenomenal episodes of the same subject which are supposedly the same with respect to their sensory phenomenology while differing in non-sensory phenomenological features. Note that the characterization I just proposed is not completely true of Siegel's example, for she discusses how the subject's *visual* experiences differ after she gains recognitional capacities. However, I think this is not a problem, since what Siegel calls our attention to is the phenomenal contrast between two cases one in which the subject has a physical stimuli but lacks the relevant conceptual repertoire to recognize it and the other in which the subject has the *same* physical stimuli plus the recognitional capacity.

Another instance of argument from phenomenal contrast can be found in Horgan and Tienson and Horgan. In arguing for the existence of an agentive phenomenology, which is a kind of cognitive phenomenology, Horgan writes that:

Suppose that you deliberately do something – say, holding up your right arm with palm forward and fingers together and extended vertically. What is your experience like? To begin with, there is of course the purely bodily motion aspect of the phenomenology – the what-it's-like of being visually and kinesthetically presented with one's own right hand rising with palm forward and fingers together and pointing upward. But there is more to it than that, because you are experiencing this bodily motion not as something that is “just happening,” so to speak, but rather *as your own action*. You experience your arm, hand, and fingers as being moved *by you yourself*; this is the what-it's-like of *self as source*. (66)

Being an agent, according to Horgan, is being a cognitive agent. And this must seem obviously correct; human beings are cognitive agents so that we think, deliberate,

form intentions, plan the future, etc. If Horgan is right in claiming that being an agent bears its own kind of phenomenology - that is having an agentic phenomenal character represented by the judgment 'I am the source of my own actions' – then it follows from his claim that there is a kind of sui generis cognitive phenomenology (i.e. agentic phenomenology in this case).

Horgan and Tienson use the argument from phenomenal contrast to support the idea that intentional content is narrow and depends on the phenomenal character of the intention-forming subject. In other words, intentional content is determined by phenomenology. This proposal is cashed out in terms of phenomenal intentionality, a topic I will not be going in detail. Horgan and Tienson present the argument in a way that the contrasting experiential episodes are cognitive episodes; in a sense, the argument presupposes the very existence of a proprietary cognitive phenomenology and argues for its content-specific character. It follows like this:

There is a relevant phenomenal difference, for instance, between these two states: (i) believing that Bill Clinton was U.S. President, and (ii) the state you are in when you say (without believing) that Santa Claus brings presents. The salient difference turns on the fact that the phenomenal character of the first state includes the what-it's-like of accepting the existence of Bill Clinton, whereas the phenomenal character of the second state includes the what-it's-like of believing that Santa Claus does *not* exist. Similarly, suppose you hope or fear that an object of a certain description will be found. There is a clear phenomenal difference between the case in which you know full well that there is such an object and the case in which you do not know whether or not there is such an object. (527)

The conclusion of the argument of Horgan and Tienson supports the stronger version of cognitive phenomenology thesis. It is also a bit extreme of that conclusion since it ascribes cognitive phenomenology to states of knowledge as well. This is because

cognitive phenomenology is taken to be a matter of occurrent mental phenomena, and mental states are, arguably, not of the kind those phenomena that occur.

Finally, there can be arguments in favor of cognitive phenomenology that are also to be treated as phenomenal contrast arguments. These arguments are based upon the experience of ambiguous figures, e.g. the duck-rabbit figure, and ambiguous sentences, e.g. “visiting relatives can be boring” (Horgan and Tienson). The argument from ambiguous figures goes like this: in looking at a duck-rabbit figure, there is a phenomenal contrast between seeing it as a duck and seeing it as a rabbit and this contrast is best explained by the phenomenal contributions of duck-recognition-capacity and rabbit-recognition-capacity into the overall phenomenology of seeing a duck-rabbit figure. Since the sensory phenomenology is one and the same, then the resulting phenomenological contrast must be an instance of deployment of a non-sensory phenomenology. The argument from ambiguous sentences goes along with the same lines: in hearing the sentence “visiting relatives can be boring”, one can entertain two different and phenomenally contrasting understanding experiences, one in which the sentence means that the *act of* visiting relatives can be boring and one of which treats it to mean that *relatives* are boring when they are visiting. Notice that both arguments are based upon *sudden* shifts in one’s conscious experience of one and the same sensory stimuli, a line of thought that is represented by Siewert and presented in previous sections.

Having been presented various versions of phenomenal contrast arguments, I will present some conservative responses to the arguments from phenomenal contrast during the next chapter. Before doing so, I feel as if I need also to present three further arguments on behalf of cognitive phenomenology briefly.

## Argument from Higher-Order-Thought

Brown and Mandik present a general argument in favor of a *sui generis* cognitive phenomenology which is a direct appeal to Rosenthal's higher-order-theory of consciousness. According to a higher order theory of consciousness (HOT), to be conscious is a sub category of mentality. Not all mental states are conscious, and the ones that are conscious are so due their being targeted by a higher order mental state, that which characterizes the notion of consciousness. The phenomenal character of a conscious state is explained, e.g. by Rosenthal, by being subject to a higher-order-thought which "is sufficient for there to be something it's like for one to be in the state the HOT describes, even if that state doesn't occur" (433-34). Moreover, Rosenthal states that a HOT state must not be confused with an introspective state for their being both higher order states that are directed upon lower order states. He says that when "we introspect a state, we are conscious of it in a way that seems attentive, focused, deliberative, and reflective. When a state is conscious but not introspectively conscious, by contrast we are conscious of it in a way that is relatively fleeting, diffuse, casual, and inattentive" (110). Accordingly, what is the *real bearer of phenomenal character* is a HOT rather than the state to which the HOT is targeting.

So the argument by Brown and Mandik goes like this: HOTs are the real bearers of phenomenology, and HOTs are cognitive states by their nature, therefore, all phenomenology must be cognitive (4). The conclusion of the argument is too general, and it is questionable whether it applies to conscious phenomena that are

exhaustively sensory, e.g. pain experiences. The second premise of the argument is also dubious; it derives its force by the characterization of the higher order thoughts being responsible for a state's being conscious. But it is not clear whether the kind of cognitive states that the proponents and opponents of cognitive phenomenology thesis have in mind are akin to higher order thoughts. The commonality in the use of thought does not guarantee that they are so. And finally, the argument of Brown and Mandik is parasitic upon the correctness of higher order theories of consciousness, which is a dispute on its own. A natural demand for a theory of cognitive phenomenology is that it must be neutral respecting first order theories and higher order theories of consciousness.

### Tip of the tongue phenomenon

The argument from the tip of the tongue phenomenon is first presented by Goldman. Goldman is explicitly one of the early defenders of the idea that not all experientiality are sensory by nature, as he writes that the “terms *qualia* and *qualitative* are sometimes restricted to sensations (percepts and somatic feelings), but we should not allow this to preclude the possibility of other mental events (beliefs, thoughts, etc.) having a phenomenological or experiential dimension” (24). Then in support of this view, Goldman cites Jackendoff and presents the tip of the tongue phenomenon as a characterization for his non-restrictive concept of *qualia*. He writes:



When one tries to say something but cannot think of the word, one is phenomenologically aware of having requisite conceptual structure, that is, of having a determinate thought-content one seeks to articulate. What is missing is the phenomenological form: the *sound* of the sought-for word. The absence of this sensory quality, however, does not imply that nothing (relevant) is in awareness. Entertaining the conceptual unit has a phenomenology, just not a sensory phenomenology. (24)

Goldman's suggestion for there being a non-sensory phenomenology, followed by the phenomenon of tip of the tongue, has been a kick start for the discussion of cognitive phenomenology. Eric Lormand, an early representative of conservatism, criticized Goldman's use of the tip of the tongue phenomenon in favor of the very existence of non-sensory phenomenology. Although Lormand has several arguments in opposition to there being non-sensory phenomenology, I will only present Lormand's response to Goldman regarding the tip of the tongue phenomenon. His arguments are representative of reductionism with regard to cognitive phenomenology, and I will be treating reductionism during the next chapter in length. So, Lormand's reply to Goldman's interpretation of the phenomenon of tip of the tongue is in the following manner:

[I]f anything, Jackendoff provides the seeds of a response to Goldman's argument. Jackendoff uses the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon to 'demonstrate' that 'conceptual structure is *excluded* from [phenomenological] awareness' (1987, 290). He distinguishes the aspects of what the experience is like into a soundless 'form' and an 'affect' of effort, so that 'one feels one is desperately trying to fill a void' (1987, 290 and 315). Neither of these aspects seem[s] attributable to nonsensory attitudes... [T]here is something sensory that having the 'void' is like, akin to what *hearing silence* (as opposed to being deaf or asleep) is like... [T]here is something sensory that the feeling of effort is like, namely, what *feeling physical effort* is like. (247)

I'm not so sure of what is meant by hearing silence, and I treat Lormand's response as consisting as an explanaton for the kind of phenomenology Goldman is speaking of, in terms of having a sensory phenomenology of *feeling of effort*. The line of

reasoning is characteristic to conservatism, as it will be apparent in the next chapter. Whether or not it can resolve the disagreement between the liberals and conservatives is a matter presented to reader's interpretation, although I will suggest a way of resolving the reductive claims about cognitive phenomenology.

### Argument from noniconic thought

Note that until now, even though I haven't treated the issue in detail, I have been hinting about the kind of reasoning that conservatives have in mind. The reasoning is straightforward and simple; it consists in denying the liberals' claims that there is a non-sensory phenomenology and arguing that what is being thought of as non-sensory phenomenology can and must be explained purely in sensory phenomenological terms. In opposition to the way the debate proceeds, Siewert proposes that not all phenomenal aspects of conscious experience are spread out through time in the way sensory phenomenological aspects do. Siewert argues that noniconic thinking, for example, is a paradigm case of having non-sensory and cognitive phenomenology. He describes noniconic thinking as "instances in which a thought occurs to you, when not only you do not image what you think or are thinking of, but you also do not verbalize your thought, either silently or aloud, nor are you then understanding someone else's words" (276). To convince that noniconic thinking is an actual feature of conscious experience, he calls the reader's attention to the following example:

Somehow this thought of my philosophical preoccupations and parenthood, and an analogy between their effects, rather complex to articulate, occurred in a couple of moments while I approached the cashier, in the absence of any utterance. I think you will, if you try, be able to recognize examples from your own daily life, similar to these I have mentioned, of un verbalized noniconic thought ... [that is] without imagery, condensed, and evanescent. If you agree that you have such un verbalized noniconic thoughts, and the way it seems to you to have them differs from the way it seems to have imagery and sensory experience, then you will agree that noniconic thinking has a phenomenal character distinct from that proper to iconic thinking and perception. (277-8)

Notice that Siewert's suggestion is based upon introspection, a kind of puzzlement that I have treated during the previous chapter. So it must then be easy to predict the line of response that might be given by the conservatives: they would simply deny that they become aware of such a feature in introspection that Siewert calls for attention. For example, Robinson responds to Siewert in a way that captures both the introspective unfamiliarity of Siewert's idea in his own introspection and also the general line of reasoning inherent to conservatives' reductive claims. He writes:

My own introspection leads me to believe that I have had experiences of the kind that Siewert means to be indicating: I am denying only that the proffered phenomenological account matches anything in my experience... What I believe occurs is a few words in subvocal speech (we might call them 'key words'), perhaps a rather vague sense of a diagrammatic sketch, and perhaps some pictorial or kinaesthetic imagery. (554)

Another line of response that might be given to Siewert's claims would be denying that thoughts (in general) lack the kind of temporal shape that is required for them to be occurrent. This kind of response is provided by Tye and Wright in their appeal to an understanding of 'thoughts' given by Geach.

And finally, the very idea of there being 'noniconic thoughts' has been questioned by Prinz. According to Prinz, "concepts can be conscious by means of

sensory images that have no distinctively cognitive phenomenal qualities”, and he thinks that this must also be true of thoughts (183). And then Prinz provides some historical background for the discussion of imageless thoughts. He dates the discussion back to the debate between Würzburg school and introspectionist psychology tradition at the beginning of 20th century. Prinz claims that the discussion of noniconic thought was based upon the introspective reports of the subjects of the experiments, and since introspection can provide no firm ground for whether or not noniconic thinking is actually happening in subject’s mind, there is no good reason to suppose that it is some actual feature of the mind – i.e. the subjects might just be wrong in their reports on what there are in their minds. Indeed, Prinz claims that phenomenon was one of the main reasons for the fall of introspectionist psychology.

So, in conclusion, one may ask whether there is a way of arguing for cognitive phenomenology thesis that does not appeal either directly or indirectly to introspection. And this is a good question to ask, as I have been suggesting that even though the arguments are not directly based upon introspection, they are indirectly tied to the introspective validity of the claims made by them, whether the arguments take the form of phenomenal contrast or the ones provided by Goldman or Siewert. Even though these arguments have their own strength (and their weaknesses in some occasions) independent of views about introspection, it is an important feature of the way liberals argues for the cognitive phenomenology thesis.

## CHAPTER 5

### A GENERAL RESPONSE TO LIBERALISM

The common strategy for conservatism in arguing against liberalism is to hold that the alleged cognitive phenomenology that the liberals argue for, either in the form of arguments from introspection or of arguments from phenomenal contrast, or even the particular arguments from Goldman's tip of the tongue or Siewert's noniconic thought, can be explained completely in terms of sensory phenomenological features of inner mental goings-on such as inner-speech or mental imagery accompanying one's cognitive activity of thinking. In other words, most conservatives believe that the phenomenology of thinking (if there is any) can be *reducible* to its accompanying sensory phenomenology. So, it has been argued that reducibility of cognitive phenomenological properties into sensory phenomenological ones overrules the probability of there being any sui generis cognitive phenomenology. I will first present the reductionist views represented by Lormand, Tye, Tye and Wright, Prinz and Carruthers and Veillet. In doing so, I will explain how these reductionist claims are supposed to apply to liberals' arguments. Then I will pose a problem for the reductionist agenda. The problem is, as I will be suggesting, that mental phenomena with sensory phenomenal character which the cognitive phenomenological properties are supposed to be reduced to, i.e. inner-speech and mental imagery, cannot be understood as being non-cognitive, purely sensory phenomenological entities. In justifying my claim, I will appeal to a modified version of phenomenal contrast argument.

## Reductionist Views of Cognitive Phenomenology

In responding to Goldman's argument from the tip of the tongue phenomenon, Lormand claims that the kind of phenomenology Goldman is proposing for, in fact, is due to a phenomenology of feeling of effort, a kind of sensory phenomenology. Also at the same page, Lormand proposes a general outlook for dealing with the claim for there being non-sensory phenomenology in one's conscious experience. His proposal is an obvious instance of reductionism with respect to cognitive phenomenology:

One's standing belief *that snow is white* may cause one to think *that snow is white*, by causing one to form an auditory image of quickly saying the words 'Snow is white' ( or 'I believe snow is white')... At least normally, if there is anything it's like for me to have a conscious belief that snow is white, it is exhausted by what it's like for me to have such verbal representations, together with nonverbal imaginings, e.g., of a white expanse of snow, and perhaps visual imaginings of words. The important point is that the propositional attitudes are *distinct* from such ... [phenomenally] conscious imagistic representations... Excluding what it's like to have [the] accompanying... [imagistic] states, however, typically there seems to be nothing left that it's like for one to have a conscious belief that snow is white. (246-47)

One must keep in mind that the passage above does not rule out that there is something that it is to have a conscious thought. What is being eliminated is the possibility of the thinking episode's having its own phenomenology. In slightly different terms, the phenomenal characters associated with the thinking episode, in fact, belong to its accompanying sensory states, verbal and non-verbal imagery. Notice that in claiming this, Lormand does not identify thinking with having these inner-sensory states that are the real bearers of phenomenology. He says that propositional attitudes exist independent of those sensory states. So, for Lormand,

thinking must be non-phenomenally conscious. There is a non-phenomenal conscious realm adequate to cognition and a phenomenal realm that its only occupants are sensations, according to Lormand.

One merit of Lormand's reductionist view is that it also applies to liberals' arguments from introspection; in such a way that according to reductionism, the introspectible features of one's thinking episode are those accompanying sensory features of verbal and non-verbal imagery. It also applies to Siewert's argument from noniconic thoughts, such that if the phenomenal features of concomitant sensory states are *excluded* from one's introspection, then "there seems to be nothing left" to notice introspectively.

Another conservative philosopher that defends the reducibility of thinking phenomenology into sensory phenomenology is Tye. In opposing Strawson's 'understanding experience', Tye writes in his *Consciousness, Color and Content* the following:

Consider, for example, phenomenal differences in what it's like to hear sounds in French before and after the language has been learned. Obviously there are phenomenal changes here tied to experiential reactions of various sorts associated with understanding the language (e.g. differences in emotional and imagistic responses, feeling of familiarity that weren't present before, differences in effort or concentration involved as one listens to the speaker). There are also phenomenal differences connected to a change in phonological processing. Before one understands French, the phonological structure one hears in the French utterance is fragmentary. For example, one's experience of word boundaries is patently less rich and determinate. This is because some aspects of phonological processing are sensitive to top-down feedback from the centres of comprehension ... Still, the influence here is causal, which I am prepared to allow. My claim is that the phenomenally relevant representation of phonological features is nonconceptual, not that it is produced exclusively by what is in the acoustic signal. (61)

In summary of the quote, Tye thinks that the differences in phenomenal character are not because of the contribution of concepts into the phenomenology of the French hearer before and after he learns to understand French. He argues that the relevant phenomenologies of the subject are sensory in nature that is *caused* by phonological structures' interaction with "centres of comprehension". In appeal to unconscious phonological processing Tye offers an explanation for the contrast between phenomenal characters of a subject before and after he learns to understand French without appealing to a non-sensory phenomenology, unlike Strawson. So which of these offered explanations serve for the best explanation for the phenomenal contrast in question is subject to further inquiries. For example, how to decide which one is the best explanation must partly be a matter of pros and cons of two competing hypothesis and partly be a matter of degree of compatibility of the hypothesis within the general scientific outlook. These are mere stipulations; none of them must be taken to be conclusive criteria for the decision process. In the end, I believe, the decision is up to the reader, depending on his inclination to find one of them more persuasive than the other. If the reader is not familiar with phenomenological issues, then it is arguably more probable for him to find Tye's explanation convincing, and if he is unfamiliar with cognitive scientific methods, then Strawson's argument for 'understanding experience' might sound closer to him. I need to say that I withhold judgment, for what I am more concerned is the structure of argumentation characteristic cognitive phenomenology debate.

Tye and Wright claim that their conservatism do not reject this thesis: "For any two conscious thoughts,  $t$  and  $t'$ , and any subject,  $s$ , what it is like for  $s$  when she undergoes  $t$  is (typically) different from what it is like for  $s$  when she undergoes  $t'$ ."



(328). What they are denying is “that what it is like for a subject when she undergoes a thought is *proprietary* and further *distinctive* and *individuative* of that type of thought” (328). So they are denying both weak and strong versions of the cognitive phenomenology thesis. This denial gains its force, “from a phenomenological perspective”, in their considering “thinking a thought” as “running a sentence through one’s head and/or (in some cases) having a mental image in mind together with (in some cases) an emotional/bodily response and a feeling of effort if the thought is complex or difficult to grasp” (329). Thus, phenomenologically speaking, thinking consists in that list of features that Tye and Wright offering. Accordingly, they say that the “only phenomenology to be found when a thought is introspected is the phenomenology of these and other such states.”

If one is willing to accept those claims made by Tye and Wright, then there is left no room for one to argue for a phenomenology of thinking that is proprietary. Goldman’s and Siewert’s arguments as well as the arguments from introspection are blocked, according to Tye and Wright. But, one might ask, what accounts for the phenomenological difference between thinking that wine is pleasing and beer is pleasing? Is the difference in phenomenal characters of thinking these two different thoughts solely a matter of having accompanying sensory states? If so, and this is what accounts for the difference according to Tye and Wright, what happens if one messes up with the words ‘wine’ and ‘beer’ and mistakenly forms an internal sentence ‘wine is pleasing’ while thinking that beer is pleasing instead? Does that mean that, *from a phenomenological perspective*, one is thinking wine is pleasing instead of thinking that beer is pleasing? Or, consider this naive suggestion: what happens if I think the thought ‘wine is pleasing’ in another language, say in Turkish?

Clearly, the sensory phenomenologies of the same thought expressed in two different languages differ. Does that mean that I am having two different thoughts?

Tye and Wright do not consider the kind of worries that the sensory phenomenology might not match up (either by mistake or not) with the thinking content. But they do speak about “cross-linguistic phenomenology” and their claims in some loose sense suggest that in entertaining the thought ‘wine is pleasing’ in two different languages, one is thereby not entertaining the same thought (330).

Similar claims against the idea of there being a sui generis cognitive phenomenology have been put forward by Prinz. He considers the question of there being a sui generis cognitive phenomenology as a question of whether or not “consciousness outstrips senses” (174). He holds the view that “all consciousness is perceptual” (175). One reason for him defending such a strong “empiricist” theory of consciousness can be found in Prinz’s *All Consciousness is Perceptual*, where he states that “having a single unified theory is, all things being equal, better than having a family of different theories for each kind of phenomenal state that we experience” (337). This must be so due to ontological parsimony, and for this to hold, the reductive strategy that Prinz endorses with regard to thinking must hold as well.

I must admit that I find Prinz’s theory plausible in some respects.. This is because of his treatment of qualitative character, which is in compliance with adverbialism, at least in one respect. Surely, Prinz would object my characterization, however, let me elaborate why I think so. The respect that I find that is common in Prinz and adverbialism is that it locates phenomenal character into the vehicle of a

mental state (175). Thus, phenomenal character is not a matter of the representational content of the experience; rather it is the way in which the vehicle of experience becomes conscious. That means to say that, for example, when I think that Bilal is not a genius the phenomenal character belongs to my thinking that Bilal is not a genius, not to the content of my thinking, namely the proposition ‘Bilal is not a genius’. And the phenomenal character of my thinking consists in, on the one hand, the for-me-ness aspect capturing the subjective character of my thinking – i.e. the thinking activity is for-me – and, on the other hand, the qualitative character that is B-wise, where B denoting the proposition ‘Bilal is not a genius’ (If an adverbialist paraphrase would be asked upon, it would be something like “I think non-genius-Bilal-wise”).

However, besides the similarity of locating phenomenal character into the vehicle of experience, Prinz is quite on the other side of the spectrum than me. He thinks that even if there could be non-sensory properties of experience, it would be a mystery to us, for “it transcends appearance; i.e. [only] if there can be two things that are indistinguishable by the senses, one of which has the property and the other of which does not” (176), and further he says that a non-sensory experiential property (if there is any) “that goes beyond appearance has no direct impact on quality” of experience (176).

An obvious instance of Prinz’s reductionism can be found where he discusses the ambiguous figure of duck-rabbit. He seems not to be satisfied with the idea that the interplay of the concept of duck and the concept of rabbit playing a role in shaping one’s perceptual phenomenology of the duck-rabbit figure. He accepts that “conceptualization can influence perception in dramatic ways” (183) but denies that

the way concepts affect perception “requires postulation of distinctively cognitive phenomenology” (183). This is mostly because Prinz thinks of concepts as perception-like entities. He continues claiming that:

In principle, someone who had no concept of ducks *could*, with careful contrivance, have a perceptual experience akin to the one that we have when we interpret a duck-rabbit as duck... There is nothing essentially cognitive in the resulting unambiguous image. Thus, we can fully account for the phenomenology of placing an ambiguous image under a concept without assuming that conceptualization introduces non-sensory features. (183)

Prinz is not alone in dealing with the phenomenal shift in one’s experience of the duck-rabbit figure by suggesting a reductive solution. Carruthers and Veillet also handle the issue in a similar manner. They think that the question of cognitive phenomenology must follow like this: “concerning some phenomenally conscious events, is it true that a thought occurring at the same time ... makes a constitutive, as opposed to a causal, contribution to the phenomenal properties of those events?” (37). They describe the notions of constitutive contribution and causal contribution with the following analogy:

When one bakes a cake, one mixes together water, flour, eggs, sugar, and perhaps other ingredients. The result is sweet to the taste. But although the water forms a constitutive part of the cake, it makes no direct contribution to its sweetness. Likewise, it may be that the cognitive content of any given phenomenally conscious state, although a proper part of the latter, makes no direct contribution to its phenomenal qualities (37).

Thus, according to Carruthers and Veillet, thoughts are constitutive of our conscious experiences (as water does to the cake) but not of their phenomenologies (to the sweetness of the cake). This is an interesting suggestion, for accordingly it would follow that the phenomenal character of conscious experience and the conscious experience in its constitution are two distinct aspects of the very same entity. And

whereas thoughts' contribution to the latter is true of them, it is not the case that they do contribute to the former. Carruthers and Veillet reason that this is due to the fact that thoughts do contribute to the overall phenomenology of the experience only causally. If they would have a constitutive role in the phenomenal character of experience, they argue, then they would contribute to the "hard problem" of consciousness, which is, according to them, a matter of being applicable to an inverted qualia scenario (44-5). They argue that thoughts are not applicable for inverted qualia scenarios, and they argue so in appealing to 'phenomenal concept strategy'. Since this is not my present concern, I will postpone the discussion of phenomenal concept strategy and its application to the cognitive phenomenology debate for a future project.

Right now, I am concerned with the reductionist aspect in Carruthers and Veillet's thinking, and how it deals with the experience of duck-rabbit figure. They say something like this (39-40): It is not the case that when one deploys a duck concept one then sees the figure *as a duck* and when deploying a rabbit concept one then sees it *as a rabbit*. One sees a *duck-figure* in looking at the ambiguous figure of duck-rabbit when his duck concept *causes* him to attend to the features of the figure that are distinctive of a duck shape. Attending to those duck-distinctive features requires the eye movements of the subject to accord with the relevant duck detecting perceptual capacities of him (likewise for rabbit detection). Accordingly, the duck-detecting-experience and rabbit-detecting-experience are both phenomenologically and also sensorily distinct from each other. In other words, the subject does not have identical but rather different sensory phenomenal characters in cases of seeing-as-

duck and seeing-as-rabbit. Thus, there isn't any cognitive phenomenological contrast between those cases, the phenomenal contrast is really sensory phenomenological.

This, again, is a case in which the best explanation for the phenomenal contrast must be decided by the reader. I am quite sympathetic to the suggestion of Carruthers and Veillet provided so that it accounts for the phenomenal shift in experiencing ambiguous figures, although I do not want to rule out the possibility of concepts playing a constitutive role in one's phenomenal character (this possibility is ruled out by Carruthers and Veillet for reason that are not apprehensible to me, though I admit that the source of this inapprehension must be in me).

### The General Problem with Reductionism

Suppose you think about the Gaza crisis, and also suppose that your thinking activity is not to be characterized by an instant entertainment of a proposition like 'It is so sad that so many innocent people lost their lives' or instantly having a fainting mental image of an injured person being carried by others, or saying to yourself in your inner speech that 'Netanyahu is an evil person'; none of these descriptions are sufficient in capturing your thinking activity about the Gaza crisis. Instead, suppose you're thinking activity is spread out through a time period, say a couple of minutes. There must be a good reason for being able to say that, during that time interval, you are thinking about the Gaza crisis, and the reason is something like that your thinking activity is thematically unified, i.e., it is a unified thinking activity and its theme is the Gaza crisis. While being unified under a theme, you're thinking about the Gaza

crisis also involves individual tokenings of distinct thoughts; you might wonder the historical background of the crisis, or you might consider its impact on the global economy, or you might remember that years ago you were unaware of even the existence of Hamas. Now, consider your very richly altering phenomenology. It certainly encompasses a great number of elements that which instantiates their own phenomenologies. If conservatives are right in their claims, these varying phenomenologies are merely sensory, derivative of the concomitant sensory states of your thinking activity. But, remember, your thinking activity about the Gaza crisis consists in a thematic unity. Further suppose that you are a careful introspectionist, and suddenly realize that during your thinking activity, a stupid song was circling inside your head that you have failed to notice it in your engagement of thinking about the Gaza crisis. You are sure that the song didn't emerge in your mental environment at the moment you realized it but that it was all there during the whole course of your thinking. Surely, circulation of that song is a part your overall phenomenology, but is it also a part of your thinking about the Gaza crisis phenomenology?

Consider a slightly altered scenario in which you are again engaged in a thinking activity about the Gaza crisis during which you entertain a phenomenology of varying inner-speeches and mental images. However, again, you realize that some of the mental images passing before your mental eye are of purple smiling donkeys, or the face of our genius hero Bilal! Clearly, those instances in which you have a purple donkey or Bilal mental image in your head have a phenomenological aspect to them such that they are available to your introspection activity, and their phenomenologies are of the sensory kind.

Now, ask yourself: what is it got to do with those stupid images or the stupid song circling around your head? They are certainly not relevant to your thinking about the Gaza crisis (or, you may be lacking the capacity of finding the relevance – but that is not your fault – it is better off for you to see a psychoanalyst if you want to find out). These irrelevant states of your mind were part of your overall phenomenology, but not contributive to your thinking phenomenology. Your thinking phenomenology consists in your having accompanying sensory states, according to the reductionist claim of the conservative. So, what makes it the case that some of those accompanying states are of your thinking phenomenology while some of them are not? What does this ‘accompanying’ feature of those sensory states of your mind consist in?

These are questions that are posed to dispute the reductionist agenda of conservatives. This is so because conservatives never address the issue of ‘accompaniment’ aspect of sensory phenomenological states that are supposed to cash out the phenomenology of thinking. The general problem with reductionism is, I suggest, the arbitrariness and abundance of varying concomitant sensory mental goings-on. In order for reduction to work, there needs to be an account of the *relation* between the thinking activity and its accompanying and phenomenology bearing sensory goings-on. Such an account is missing within these reduction stories of conservatives. And such an account must cash out the thematic unity of your thinking and the relevant concomitant states. If thinking is a real activity that goes on one’s mind, than the ‘accompaniment’ made by those inner-sensory states must determine the texture of thinking. The general problem with reductionism is that that



texture is indeterminate (at least on some occasions) because of the arbitrariness and abundance of concomitant sensory goings-on one's mind.<sup>12</sup>

### An Argument by Phenomenal Contrast

Suppose again you think about the Gaza crisis, but this time only having relevant mental imagery both of verbal and non-verbal kind. The verbal imagery are that of screaming of Palestinian children and the images that you have are of brutal scenes of war and destruction. These accompanying states are, according to conservatives, the real bearers of your thinking phenomenology. So (some part of) your phenomenology of thinking about the Gaza crisis is disturbing and even repulsive in nature, solely because of the phenomenology bearing imagery you have. That is a sensible scenario, and there is (supposedly) nothing wrong in conceiving it from the point of conservatism.

Suppose another person, who has nothing to do with thinking about the Gaza crisis. That person indeed has no background knowledge of the crisis; he doesn't even know that there is a city called Gaza and that there is a crisis about it. However, suppose that from an unknown reason, that person has exactly the same mental imagery that you have, i.e. those of screaming of Palestinian children and the images of brutal scenes of war and destruction. Why he is having these mental imaginings is

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<sup>12</sup> Notice that I avoid using the term content and instead choose to use a general term 'texture'. One might say that it is not clear what I mean by texture, but according to my opinion, it is also not clear when philosophers use the term content – indeed, texture is less theory-laden. My preference in avoiding the term content is also because of having an adverbialist understanding of phenomenal character in background.

a mystery for that person, an unknown puzzlement. However, he actually is having those inner-states, and thus also having the disturbing and even repulsive phenomenology that are due to those states, and that which you do have too.

Is there a phenomenal contrast between you and the other person? According to the conservative story of reduction, it is hard to articulate that there is. But, it is tempting to answer to the question by saying ‘yes, there is a phenomenal contrast’. If there is a contrast, what is the best explanation for it? Of course, the answer is that you know what you are thinking about, namely the Gaza crisis, and this is why you are having those mental images. On the contrary, the other person does not know why he is having those mental images; those images are arbitrary of him. And you also know why you are having the disturbing and repulsive phenomenology but the other person is in confusion why he is experiencing such a disturbing and repulsive phenomenology. This is the reason why there is a phenomenal contrast between you and the other person. Your phenomenology must be richer than his phenomenology. What provides this richness in your phenomenology compared to his is that the mental images that you are having must have a meaning, while his experience is meaningless to him. To put it more concretely, you are having a meaningful experience, with a unifying theme and a determinate texture. The experiential content of the other person (damn, I did it!) is indeterminate.

## Towards a Reconciliation of Liberalism and Reductionism

What is there to draw from this argument? Well, one suggestion is that the relevance of the concomitant mental imagery to your thinking is provided by a cognitive phenomenological feature that you do entertain in your thinking about the Gaza crisis, and which the other poor guy lacks. In a sense, the kind of phenomenological features that you have and the other person lacks determine what mental imagery you would have in your thinking about the Gaza crisis. This suggestion must not cause anxiety for conservatives, however. It is indeed not incommensurable with conservatism. The suggestion is even in compliance with some of the things Prinz says, for example, his saying that “a mental image represents walruses by representing how they look, and an image represents subatomic particles by representing swirling circles” (182). So the argument presented above shall be taken as a reconciliation of conservatism with liberalism. It states that, on the conservatives’ side, having mental imaginings are ways of entertaining thoughts consciously, thus providing phenomenal character for those thoughts. On the liberal side, however, even though the phenomenal character of a thinking episode is a matter of having mental imagery, the determination of the way in which that mental imagery are manifest is a matter of cognitive phenomenological properties that is specific to that thinking episode.

Notice that this characterization well suits with adverbialism. A thinking episode, in one respect, consists of having mental imagery. Let’s call it image *p*. Thus having *p* is the mode of that thinking episode – it is thinking *p*-wise experience.

Moreover, that same thinking episode might also be consisting in having a q mental imagery. In that case, it would be thinking q-wise experience. But thinking p-wise and thinking q-wise experiences cannot be different from each other since, as I stated, it is the same thinking episode. And this is clear if p and q are taken to be modes of the very same thinking episodes. What determines these modes? Well, it is the cognitive phenomenological feature of that belongs to that thinking episode, irrespective of p and q. This is how the very same thought can be experienced in two different ways, e.g. in two different languages. What determines the way that thought is experienced, i.e. it's phenomenal character, is a property of that thought –it can rightly be called a cognitive phenomenological property – and the way that thought is experienced (determined by its proprietary phenomenological properties) is either p-wise or q-wise.

One might argue, predictably a conservative, that the properties proprietary to thoughts need not be phenomenal properties – there is no reason to suppose they are. I would obviously disagree, for what other kind those properties that are proprietary to thinking might be of? My respondent would claim, and I think it is the only possible claim he can make, that, if those properties are responsible for a thought to be conscious, this is because that thought is access-conscious and not phenomenally conscious. Let me treat the issue briefly, for it is quite easy for me to do so.

Access consciousness is a notion that is put forward by Block's *Confusion*. Block claims that a state is access conscious if it "is poised for free use in reasoning and for direct 'rational' control of action and speech" (382). It is a dispositional property of propositional attitude types. But how can dispositional states be available for "free use in reasoning"? It can only be available for reasoning if and only if it is a

state of *mine*. Phenomenal character is a combination of subjective character, i.e. for-me-ness aspect, and, qualitative character, i.e. the way it is like for me aspect – reddish or greenish, p-wise or q-wise. I also suggest that subjective character is more fundamental than qualitative character, that is, it remains as a phenomenal primitive and thus constant even where qualitative character alters. I further suggest that it is true of subjective character that it grounds a state's being access conscious, for without the subjective character of a mental state, even when it is a dispositional state, it would not be available for free use in reasoning. So, in modifying my initial claim against my conservative respondent, the kind of mental imagery determining properties that are proprietary to thoughts, even in case that they are access conscious, are in fact phenomenal properties in so far there is a subjective character implicit for those thoughts.

Finally, I have suggested that having a phenomenal character in one's conscious experience means having a unified phenomenology even if the overall phenomenology subsumes varying phenomenal characters. I think this idea needs no further justification, for that entirely means something like that our everyday normal experience is phenomenally unified. Right now I am enjoying various sensations and cognitions which all have their own phenomenal characters – the visual phenomenology of seeing the computer screen, the auditory phenomenology of the humming of the computer, the gustatory phenomenology of the coffee I recently took a sip, and the cognitive phenomenology of my thinking various thoughts are all unified under a single phenomenal state of mine. Unity in phenomenal character is a common feature of our everyday life.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this thesis project is to present and elaborate the cognitive phenomenology debate. It is a discussion of whether or not there is a sui generis phenomenology of thinking, which is cognitive and thus non-sensory in nature, that is flowing between the ones affirming the existence of cognitive phenomenology, i.e. liberals, and the ones rejecting its existence, i.e. conservatives. I search for the main reasons for the disagreement between the two parties.

Cognitive phenomenology debate is illuminating, though, in its result of no agreement. This phenomenon calls attention for the underlying views of phenomenal character and this is why I try to track some basic notions of phenomenality in Chapter 2. The dominance of the phrase ‘what it is like’ within the literature not surprisingly encompasses varying conceptions of phenomenal character. I argue that the resulting variety of views of phenomenal consciousness might be tracked back the very notion of what it is like. In some understanding, what it is like talk implies the notion of ‘the way it feels’ as definitive of phenomenal character. I argue that feeling talk takes us no further in a full account of phenomenal consciousness. I also argue in Chapter 2 that what it is like phrase is ill-formed so that it allows for interpretations of it involving no subjective character. This feature of the phrase, combined with ‘likeness’ component, leads to treating phenomenal character as if it is a matter of properties depending on its object. This is a common mistake, as I take it. To avoid objectual understanding of phenomenal character, and also in my

thinking that phenomenal character must be a how question instead of what, I endorse adverbialism with respect to phenomenality.

Later on, I present some of the arguments that are put forth by liberals in favor of cognitive phenomenology. The first argument class I present in Chapter 3 are arguments from introspection. I take it that the resulting dispute is parasitic upon the way on which one understands introspection. However, it is difficult to imagine how not to argue from introspection from the liberal side. They claim that the most obvious reason for there being a cognitive phenomenology is its being introspectively available to its subject. Pitt's version of the argument from introspection, for example, takes introspection to be an inner-sense for transparent objects of experience. This is a mistake, I argue. The problem Pitt's argument faces, namely the mislocating the phenomenal character, suggests an adverbialist account of introspection according to which one can become aware of the 'how' aspect of his experience through introspection. Other versions of the argument from introspection also do not suffice to provide an agreement on the existence of cognitive phenomenology. Conservatives do endorse introspective reasons as well in their denial of cognitive phenomenology. I take this feature of the debate as casting light upon a revision of the concept of introspection.

The latter type of argument is based upon the method of phenomenal contrast. Phenomenal contrast method consists in treating two phenomenally contrasting experience and try to find out the best explanation for the phenomenon. Liberals argue that the best explanation for the possibility of there being two experiences having the exact same sensory phenomenology but differing in phenomenal character overall is there being cognitive phenomenological properties in one of them while

none is the other. The experience of having meaning in one experience and lacking it in the other is a paradigm of phenomenal contrast scenarios. Phenomenal contrast arguments are the main topic of Chapter 4, although I present some additional arguments on behalf of cognitive phenomenology within it. I present arguments from higher-order-thought, tip of the tongue, and noniconic thoughts.

I take it the reductionist counter-arguments of conservatives as a general reply to liberalism for it being able to question both arguments by introspection and arguments by phenomenal contrast, and further arguments from tip of the tongue and noniconic thoughts. The claim of conservatives is that the phenomenology ascribable to thinking can be reducible to and explainable by purely sensory phenomenal character of the accompaniment mental imagery that one has when he undergoes a thinking experience. One inclination for a conservative to think that sensory phenomenology explains the overall phenomenal character of one's thinking episode is that introspection reveals merely sensory phenomenological features. I argue that the general problem with reductionism is that mental imagery can be arbitrary and abundant in order to explain the phenomenality of one's thinking experience. My argument suggests that in the absence of cognitive phenomenological features, having a sequence of mental imagery provides no phenomenality for a thinking episode characteristic to its meaningful. The meaning of a mental imagery is then provided by the cognitive phenomenological properties of the state that the mental imagery is a vehicle for it to unfold in time.



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