Cognitive Phenomenology: A Non-Reductive Account

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COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY: A NON-REDUCTIVE ACCOUNT

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A la Maria

Al meu pare i a la meva mare

A l'àvia Lola

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I present a non-reductive account of cognitive phenomenology, which is divided in three main parts. Firstly, I clarify the relevant issues involved in the cognitive phenomenology debate and I discuss how to approach the experience of thinking. Secondly, I defend my account with the obvious argument, the phenomenal contrast argument and the epistemic argument, resisting the main strategies against this kind of view (restrictivism and the ontological argument). Finally, I propose a specification of cognitive phenomenology in relation to intentionality and its two main components in conscious thought, cognitive content and cognitive attitude.

RESUM

En aquesta tesi presento una teoria no reductivista de la fenomenologia cognitiva, la qual divideixo en tres parts principals. Primerament, clarifico les qüestions rellevants del debat sobre fenomenologia cognitiva i examino quina ha de ser l'aproximació metodològica a l'experiència del pensament. En segon lloc, defenso la meva teoria amb l'argument obvi, l'argument del contrast fenomènic i l'argument epistèmic, i argumento en contra de les principals estratègies que s'oposen a aquest tipus de teoria (el restrictivisme i l'argument ontològic). Finalment, proposo una especificació de la fenomenologia cognitiva en relació a la intencionalitat en els seus dos components principals en el pensament conscient, el contingut cognitiu i l'actitud cognitiva.

PUBLICATIONS

Some ideas have appeared previously in the following publications:

Jorba (forthcoming). "Intencionalitat". Anuari de la Societat Catalana de Filosofia (accepted).

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Jorba (2011b). "Thinking and Phenomenal Consciousness", *Balkan Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, p. 101-110.

Jorba (2011a). "La intencionalidad: entre Husserl y la Filosofía de la mente contemporánea", in *Investigaciones Fenomenológicas: anuario de la Sociedad Española de Fenomenología*, Vol 8, p. 79- 91.

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During these four years I have thought many times of how it would be like to write the acknowledgements of my dissertation. Now that the moment has arrived, the words don't seem to find its way out of my head, probably because I have so much to say, or maybe because of what it means as the end of a long way.

My philosophical trajectory after the "llicenciatura" (BA) was directed towards phenomenology, the study of experience (in a broad sense) and the main authors who contributed to this tradition. I initiated research in this direction with Francesc Pereña, the director of the GEF (Group of Phenomenological Studies) through whom I became a member of the group. I there began to present and discuss my work in a friendly and philosophically stimulating environment. When I started my PhD, I became a member of the LOGOS group coordinated by Genoveva Martí, which has profoundly influenced my philosophical training. Since then, my philosophical interests have remained between phenomenology and analytic philosophy of mind; in fact, one of the motivations of my initial dissertation project was to provide useful bridges between both philosophical traditions. Now that I have finished it, let met just say that the envisaged bridges have become little points of contact in this old and complicated relation. Struggling with this challenge was, in any case, more than worthy.

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CONTENTS

Part I

INTRODUCTION

1

THE TOPIC

PRELIMINARIES

The nature of conscious thought is an issue that has occupied philosophers since old times, and still many questions in this domain remain unanswered. In particular, we can focus on the experience we have when we undergo a certain cognitive mental episode. Is it an experience like our other sensory or perceptual experiences, or maybe like our emotional experiences? Or is it rather a very different sort of experience? What are the properties involved in such a mental episode? Experiences are usually characterized by a what-it-is-likeness for the subject to be in them, which is usually taken as the mark of the presence of phenomenal consciousness. Within the extension of phenomenal consciousness, should we include or exclude conscious thought? And if we recognize certain experiential properties in conscious thought, what is their relation to other features of conscious thought like its intentionality? The main question of this dissertation is thus the relation of phenomenal consciousness and thought in these particular ways mentioned. In contemporary philosophy of mind, these questions fall under what has been called the 'cognitive phenomenology' debate. This title, however, includes many different topics and problems, which I will try to elucidate in this introduction.

"Cognitive phenomenology" is an expression that is likely to sound unfamiliar, to say the least, to a number of significant philosophers who have been working in mainstream philosophy of mind since the second half of the twentieth century. In general terms, with regard to their relation to phenomenal character or what-it-is-likeness (Nagel, 1974), cognitive states and sensory states have been two separate realms. While sensory experiences are widely recognized as phenomenally conscious mental states, cognitive ones do not seem to bear any direct interesting relation to phenomenal consciousness. In addition, it used to be the orthodoxy in the field to divide mental states into those that are intentional and those that are qualitative (Block, 1978): intentional mental states were paradigmatically exemplified by cognitive states and qualitative states by sensations or "raw feels", such as pains, tickles, and moods. Since then, this orthodoxy has been challenged from many angles, for instance by philosophers who defended that qualitative states are also intentional (Tye, 1995).

The discussion of phenomenal consciousness and its puzzles and mysteries has thus mainly revolved around sensations, visual perception, and even emotions, leaving cognitive states aside. This ortho-

doxy in philosophy of mind will seem strange to philosophers trained in the phenomenological tradition, who depart precisely from the opposite starting point, namely, from the view that intentionality is one of the main features of consciousness (Brentano, 1874/1973) and, more importantly at present, that the pervasive form of intentionality is what we now can call phenomenally conscious intentionality (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970). It is no coincidence that the concept used by Husserl to refer to intentional mental states, "intentional lived experiences" (*intentionale Erlebnisse*), includes in itself its being a mental state for which there is something it is like to be in it, that is, a phenomenally conscious mental state. This being the case for phenomenologists, we would have the rather obvious result that conscious thought is both intentional and phenomenally conscious. Classical phenomenologists, though, have mainly focused their analysis on perceptual experiences and many other sorts of experiences (imagination, emotions, memory, and so on), without attending primarily to the structures of the experience of thinking as such.

Against the background that I have minimally sketched here, the aim of this dissertation is precisely to focus on this forgotten domain where phenomenal consciousness and cognition or thought coalesce, the experience of thinking and, as we will see in a secondary way, some possible cognitive experienced elements in perceptual experiences. Within the topic of the experience of thinking, I would like to tackle a more concrete question, which has already generated a great deal of discussion in contemporary philosophy of mind:

- EXISTENCE QUESTION: *Is there a phenomenal character for conscious thought?*

This is a question on the *alleged existence* of a phenomenal character associated with conscious thought. A negative answer to this question points to the extreme position of eliminativism about cognitive phenomenal consciousness. A positive answer to it opens the scope of the discussion to a second important question:

- NATURE QUESTION: *What is the nature of this phenomenal character?*

This question amounts to giving a response to whether the phenomenal character associated with conscious thought is specifically cognitive or is *reducible* to other kinds of phenomenal characters like the sensory, emotional, and so on. Most of the debate on cognitive phenomenology has revolved precisely around this reductionist controversy. Still within the question of the nature, other questions arise. Firstly, one could naturally ask about the relation of this cognitive phenomenal character (of whatever kind) and other features of the conscious thought like its intentionality, that is, the feature that endows thought

with an intentional content and an intentional attitude towards this content.[1]

The existence question and the nature question carry in themselves a third question that brings our topic into the perceptual domain. Independently of the answer we give to these two questions, the issue arises as to what is the relation of cognition to perceptual experiences, in the sense of whether thoughts or thought constituents (concepts) influence, inflect or have an impact on perceptual experiences and whether this in itself implies the presence of a cognitive phenomenal character. Even though I will touch on the issue, the main line of argumentation revolves around the experience of conscious thought. In any case, all these questions configure the starting point of this thesis, which is organized as follows.

The dissertation has three main parts. The first part is the INTRODUCTION and includes the first two chapters. In Chapter 1 I mainly introduce the issue on cognitive phenomenology and clarify the two main terms involved: 'phenomenal character' and 'thought'. Much of the literature on the topic contains arguments which seem to talk past each other because there is no consensus, or there is a lack of shared conceptions about what counts as phenomenal and what counts as cognitive and thought. There is the need to appropriately define the terms in a way as to provide a common ground from which the arguments can be assessed. After this I provide a map of the positions involved in the debate and conclude with further motivations for the study of the topic. In Chapter 2 I explore different approaches to the study of the experience and carefully examine their main problems. I realized that perhaps one of the most difficult ones is the role that each approach attributes to introspection and introspective evidence, as it is one of the main sources of information about our conscious mental lives. Introspection has some philosophical and psychological problems I highlight in order to propose my own approach to the issue.

The second part of the dissertation, MAIN ARGUMENTS IN COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY, is devoted to showing that there is a specific phenomenal character for thought as an answer to the existence and nature question. This part has two chapters, which examine the main arguments in the literature regarding cognitive phenomenology. In Chapter 3 I first examine an obvious argument for the existence of conscious thought with phenomenal character and I defend it against

1 Sometimes the existence question appears to be the same as the nature question; this happens when the authors define cognitive phenomenology in a way that assumes more substantive claims about its nature, as when the cognitive phenomenal character includes by definition the cognitively *specific* phenomenal character. Then, of course, the debate can be cashed out just in terms of the existence question. However, the characterization in two main questions I offer helps to understand different positions within the nature question, as we will see.

some possible ways to reject it. In Chapter 4 I present the phenomenal contrast argument and the main cases in favor of cognitive phenomenology. I also discuss an objection to the method. In the following Chapter, 5, I analyze the main ways to resist the results of the previous chapters and I argue that they do not succeed in showing what they aim to. I continue with a presentation of another positive argument in Chapter 6, the epistemic argument in the versions I develop, which I defend against some possible objections. In Chapter 7 I consider the ontological argument against cognitive phenomenology, which I evaluate and object to, extending the conclusions to some remarks regarding the ontological status of thought and its temporal structure.

The third part, the SPECIFICATION OF COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY, contains an original proposal of specification for the relation between cognitive phenomenal character and intentionality. In Chapter 8, the proposal I call Experienced Conceptual Network is presented regarding the relation of cognitive phenomenal character and cognitive content and in Chapter 9, I examine the relation between cognitive attitude and cognitive phenomenology and I propose my own account. A final summary and conclusions are presented in 10.

1.1 TERMINOLOGY: PHENOMENAL CHARACTER

One of the main goals of this thesis is to examine whether there is cognitive phenomenology and, if so, to establish the nature of such phenomenal character. An important first issue is to clarify the sense of 'thought' and 'cognitive' and the sense of 'phenomenal character' or 'phenomenology' at stake.

When theorizing about phenomenal consciousness, part of our task is to characterize the terms in such a way as to make some progress on the question, given the amount of controversies generated by some uses of phenomenal consciousness:

> Although when contemplating paradigmatic, uncontroversial cases of phenomenal consciousness we have a clear and distinct grasp of what the notion involves, it is notoriously difficult to articulate this grasp crisply in a theoretically neutral yet informative manner. As a result, when we approach controversial cases of phenomenal consciousness, we enter a maze of ambiguities and possible reinterpretations that make progress elusive (Kriegel, forthcoming, Ch. 1, p.6).

Paradigmatic cases of phenomenal consciousness include pains, itches, tickles and conscious perceptual representations connected to the senses. More controversial cases include high-level perception (seeing as cases) or conceptual thought, as will become clear. In what

follows I distinguish several possible senses of the term 'phenomenal character' and clarify which one I am going to use.

1.1.1 *Extensional notions*

Normally, the notion of 'phenomenal character' is introduced *extensionally,* that is, as comprising the qualitative features of perceptual experiences and pains, bodily sensations, emotions, imaginations or dreams. This extensional gloss is meant not to be exhaustive but it is exclusive, that is, it excludes certain mental states such as thoughts. Thus, 'phenomenal' is by definition associated with a restricted set of mental states. This *definitional restriction* has two possible interpretations or can mean two different things. If the definitional restriction is to sensory states (leaving aside for a moment the inclusion of other mental episodes), the meaning I have mentioned is that *only sensory states have phenomenal character*, a claim that precludes non-sensory states from having phenomenal character. A quite different claim is, however, that *phenomenal character is sensory in kind.* 'Sensory' in general would thus be applicable to mental states or episodes and 'sensory in kind' to features of mental states or episodes. This last sense does not preclude the possibility of thoughts and other mental episodes as having phenomenal character and thus allows for a position which defends that there is a phenomenal character for thought but that it is of the kind that comprises certain images or verbal sounds, etc.[2] If one takes the *first* reading of the definitional restriction, though, the investigation cannot get off the ground, as it is precisely one of the issues under investigation. That we should not start with this definitional restriction does not mean that the restrictive position is not sound beforehand: if after examining the case (in conditions under which this examination is possible) one ends up endorsing a restrictive view of the matter and claiming that just sensory states are phenomenal, for example, then, a restricted notion of 'phenomenal' is warranted.[3]

It should be added that this definitional restriction not only occurs with terms like 'phenomenal character', but also with 'experience', 'qualia', etc., that is, with all the terms related in one way or another to what we understand as the experiential domain.

I do not think that this use of phenomenal character as restricted by definition is justified in either of the readings mentioned. On the one hand, I see no independent motivation for restricting 'phenomenal character' to sensory states which is not question begging for the exa-

2 This amounts to the reductionist strategy explored in 5.2.

3 Notice that the distinction between these two senses of 'sensory' is also valid for cognition and cognitive: we can have *cognitive states* (with their phenomenal character, of whatever kind) and other mental episodes with features that are 'cognitive in kind' if they include cognitive phenomenal character (perceptual states, for example, with cognitive phenomenal character). This point will be treated in 4.2.

mination of cognitive phenomenology, that is, that it does not assume beforehand what it is meant to show. The first sense of the definitional restriction does not allow the debate to get off the ground. On the other hand, when 'phenomenal character' is restricted by definition to episodes that are sensory in kind, it does allow the debate to get off the ground but directly amounts to a reductionist position and so is not neutral either.

Another extensional notion of 'phenomenal character' is that of *co-extension* with consciousness: all conscious mental states are phenomenal and all phenomenal episodes are conscious. Because this question needs a more detailed treatment, I deal with it in Chapter 3.

1.1.2 *Intensional notions*

1.1.2.1 What it is like

The notion of 'phenomenal character' can also be introduced *intensionally,* that is, by way of specifying the properties or conditions an aspect of the mind must satisfy in order to count as having phenomenal character. In the literature we find different intensional notions of the term. The first one, and the most used, is whatever can be characterized by the expression '*what it is like*' for the subject to undergo a certain mental state. This expression was introduced by Farrell in his 1950 essay "Experience" and made famous by Thomas Nagel's 1974 paper 'What It Is Like to Be a Bat?'.[4]

In his article, Nagel puts forward the idea that 'what it is like' to be that organism or to be in a certain mental state is precisely what makes it the case that we can talk of phenomenal consciousness or experience (Nagel, 1974, p. 74). The 'what it is like' provides us with *necessary* and *sufficient* conditions for phenomenal conscious mental states. The element which makes the conscious experience possible is the *subjective point of view* or the subjective experience the organism has, that, for Nagel, is not reducible to functional analysis. One point stressed by the author is that we first have to have an idea of what this subjective character of experience is in order to try to reduce it to something else (Nagel, 1974, p. 437). He sets the question of consciousness (as phenomenal consciousness) as what makes the mind-body problem unique: the problem of how it is posible, if in fact it is, to explain the mind in physical terms.

With respect to this notion, one should be aware of the fact that there is a *technical* usage and a *non-technical* usage of the term; the non-technical one is the sense the expression has when we speak of what it is like to play basketball, to be tall or to eat something (Siewert, 2011). But this is not the sense normally used when trying to speak

4 Lormand (2004) provides an analysis of the use of the phrase in the current literature.

about phenomenal consciousness, but rather a *phenomenal* usage of the locution (Kriegel, forthcoming; Siewert, 2011).

It should also be noted that the expression 'what it is like' has the qualifier *'for the subject'*, which is needed in order to point to the relevant phenomenon, because the question can be asked with respect to entities like cookies, shoes, ships, to which we normally would not ascribe phenomenal consciousness. It is not begging the question to say that not *all* uses of the expression are relevant or point to phenomenal consciousness, for if we take 'what it is like for the subject to undergo a certain experience', it is clear that there is nothing it is like to be a cookie for the cookie itself. Perhaps the core of the expression what-it-is-likeness is captured by the German expression 'wie es sich anfühlt', which could be translated into English as 'how is it felt' and includes the subjective reference.

Some concerns have been raised regarding the use of this expression as a marker of the presence of phenomenal consciousness. One such criticism is due to Kriegel and it is put forward precisely with respect to the cognitive phenomenology debate:

> Intuitions about the applicability of the 'what it is like' locution in this specialized usage appear to lie downstream of theoretical commitments about the scope of phenomenology: cognitive phenomenology enthusiasts will confirm that 'what it is like to think that 2+2=4' is intuitive to them, while cognitive phenomenology skeptics – who claim to be cognitive zombies – would insist that, at least in the pertinent sense, 'what it is like to think that 2+2=4' is counter-intuitive. Such intuitions are therefore of no dialectical force (Kriegel, forthcoming, Ch. 1, p. 18).

As we will see below, this is one reason that leads him to propose another intensional notion for phenomenal consciousness related to the epistemic challenges raised by it. He therefore proposes to abandon the expression as a mark of phenomenal consciousness. I think we can agree with Kriegel that the locution can lead to different intuitions and opinions and therefore that they *by themselves* are of no dialectical force, but nevertheless, I will argue, this is not enough to abandon it and propose another notion. What I propose is to take it as a first intuitive grasp of phenomenal consciousness, but not as a definitive one or one that can settle the issue by itself.[5] Some further arguments and discussion will be needed for this second step.

Another worry related to the use of the expression to point to phenomenal consciousness has been raised by Kim (1996), who argues that the 'what it is like' locution may not be an indication of phenomenal character precisely because 'what it is like' and phenomenal character come apart. They do so because there are mental states such

5 I will propose a similar remedy for some objections raised against introspection.

as conscious beliefs to which the 'what it is like' talk can be applied but we do not find any *sensory* phenomenal character:

> . . . it is evident that there are conscious mental states with no special phenomenal character. In general, mental occurrences that we call 'experiences' appear to be those that possess phenomenal properties. If this is so, *the idea of phenomenal character and the idea of there being something that it is like come apart*. For it certainly seems that there is something that it is like to believe something, to suspend judgment about something, to want something, and so on. But as we saw, at least many instances of these states don't have any phenomenal, *sensory* quality' (Kim, 1996, p. 159, my emphasis).

As it is clear in this quote, 'what it is like' and 'phenomenal consciousness' come apart only if we adopt a definitional restriction of phenomenal consciousness in the first sense, which I previously objected to, and in the second sense, which presupposes that the what-it-is-likeness of thought must be sensory in kind and so the debate starts on the reductionist side from the beginning. Once these restrictions are removed, the worry that the 'what-it-is-like' locution may not be an indication of phenomenal character seems to disappear.

1.1.2.2 Epistemic challenges

A second intensional notion makes use of the *epistemic challenges* normally associated with consciousness. These epistemic challenges are sometimes used as markers or indicators of the presence of phenomenal consciousness and have been used to argue against physicalism, the metaphysical view that everything is physical or supervenes on the physical. A first proposal is to appeal to the argument of *the explanatory gap* between phenomenal properties and neuronal or functional properties (Levine, 1983). Carruthers and Veillet (2011, p. 45) use this notion of phenomenal character: a property is phenomenal only if it contributes to the hard problem of consciousness, and in particular, only if it gives rise to an explanatory gap. Kriegel (forthcoming) also proposes an informative notion of 'phenomenal' which uses the explanatory gap argument and does not preclude the question of cognitive phenomenology beforehand:

> For any mental property F, F is a phenomenal property iff there is an explanatory gap between F and physical properties (Kriegel, forthcoming, p. 20).

A second intensional notion within the group of epistemic challenges is based on the *knowledge argument*. In the knowledge argument Jackson (1986) purports to show that even if we have all possible knowledge of physical and functional properties, this does not suffice to have

knowledge of phenomenal properties. This notion takes as phenomenal those instances amenable to this argument. If one can construct the argument for a certain type of mental state, then it means that this state has phenomenal character.

The third option within the epistemic challenges are zombies. Intuitions about *zombies* may play a role in indicating the presence of phenomenal consciousness. In accordance with the conceivability argument, it is conceivable that there might be creatures (zombies) that are physically and functionally identical to us but that lack phenomenal properties (Kirk, 1974; Chalmers, 1996). Horgan (2011) also uses the conceivability of partial-zombies to argue in favor of cognitive phenomenology. Partial zombies are creatures functionally identical to us but lack a part of our overall phenomenology, namely, cognitive phenomenology. Besides the whole range of issues raised by this kind of argument (regarding the nature of consciousness, the relations between conceivability, imaginability and possibility, etc.,), what this proposal wants is to turn the intuitions about the conceivability (and maybe possibility) of zombies as markers of the presence of phenomenal consciousness.

I think there are two interesting issues worth mentioning with respect to this second kind of intensional notion via epistemic challenges. First, we could ask which intensional criterion is best suited for our purposes and choose one among them. This is Kriegel's (forthcoming, Ch. 1) strategy, where he sees the criterion of the explanatory-gap as superior to the knowledge argument and the zombie argument:

> insofar as it relies on the pre-theoretical appreciation of how consciousness is problematic and does not require acquaintance with subtle arguments against physicalism that may or may not turn out to be technically valid (Kriegel, forthcoming, Ch. 1, p. 27-28).

As already mentioned, for Kriegel this is also better than the 'what it is like' talk. He proposes to see the explanatory gap, the knowledge argument and the zombie argument 'as *symptoms* of a single underlying philosophical unease regarding consciousness (Kriegel, forthcoming, Ch. 1, p. 28). But prior to this first question, there seems to be the question of whether it is *legitimate* to use these intensional notions (relying on the arguments that support them) as markers of the presence of phenomenal consciousness.

A complication I see in this respect is the following: if we *define* 'phenomenal character' as the property responsible for the explanatory gap, or the property amenable to the knowledge argument, or the property responsible for quasi-zombies, what consequences would this have for those arguing against the existence of this gap and for those giving responses to the knowledge argument and the quasi zombies?

Let's take as an example Kriegel's proposal: 'phenomenal character' is the *explanatory-gapable property*. It seems that deniers of this gap would turn out to be eliminativists about consciousness, as they argue that there is no such gap. But, as Kriegel suggests, we should look at the distinction between TypeA and Type B materialists[6] (Chalmers, 2002). While Type A materialists deny that any gap exists, Type B materialists concede that there is an explanatory gap but deny that an ontological gap follows from it. Kriegel is aware of the objection:

> It would seem that any characterization of the phenomenal in terms of an explanatory gap casts type-A materialists as eliminativists: philosophers who deny the existence of phenomenal consciousness. Yet many would insist that they are realists about the phenomenal (Kriegel, forthcoming, Ch. 1, p.).

In order to examine this critique, a further distinction within Type A materialists is needed, that between Type A1 and Type A2 materialists. Type A1 materialists are those who deny that there is an explanatory gap but believe that there is a *rationally warranted appearance* of that gap (and that this is due to a peculiarity of consciousness, our access to it or something else) and Type A2 materialists are those who deny a rationally warranted appearance of this kind. They might claim that any appearance of such a gap is purely fabricated – a "social construct", perhaps. With this new distinction, we obtain a better definition in terms of 'appearance':

> For any property F, F is a phenomenal property iff there is a rationally warranted appearance that an ideal epistemic agent could not reductively explain F in terms of physical properties (Kriegel, forthcoming, Ch. 1, p.).

Type A1 materialists would accept this definition while Type A2 ones would be among the eliminativists about phenomenal consciousness. He then considers a second objection, namely, that the explanatory-gapable property is pervasive in nature and thus is not sufficient for phenomenal consciousness, but he argues that the *special* character of the gap for phenomenal consciousness is given by the fact that it is an *empirical non-derivative* explanatory gap. He finally gives this sufficient condition:

> For any mental property F, F is a phenomenal property iff there is rationally warranted appearance (to a sufficiently reflective normal subject) of an empirical non-derivative explanatory gap between F and physical properties (Kriegel, forthcoming, Ch. 1, p.).

6 Meaning the same here as physicalists.

Kriegel's intensional approach to phenomenal consciousness may be useful as a working definition, sufficiently informative and neutral with respect to our topic. But nonetheless I have some *reservations* about it. I will explain them in what follows. I think they are general for the kind of epistemic challenges I have mentioned, so they also apply to the knowledge argument and the zombie argument as markers of the presence of phenomenal consciousness.

First, these proposals seem to be *too theoretically charged,* in the sense that many philosophical assumptions are built into them to take them as a marker of phenomenal consciousness. To take the property *amenable to the knowledge argument* as the one characterizing phenomenal consciousness makes the awe for cognitive phenomenology dependent on just this type of argument and thus excludes the possibility of there being cognitive phenomenology even if the knowledge argument does not apply to conscious thought. I think we should leave this possibility open. It is too theoretically charged also in the sense that it guides the discussion by relying excessively on philosophical discussion which may not be useful for empirical research. Arguably, consciousness studies need, at least, a "working definition" of 'phenomenal consciousness' that could help neuroscientists investigate what they look for when they seek to discover the neural correlates of consciousness. There seems to be no way in which a definition of the type of Kriegel's could be a working definition for scientific disciplines, besides philosophical exploration.

A related problem might arise, especially for the gapable-property proposal. We should note that this definition appeals to an *extrinsic* property of consciousness: the explanatory gapable property is not a property consciousness has in virtue of itself, but in virtue of its relation to our explanatory capacities or powers. This is in agreement with Block's characterization of the main four aspects of closing the gap:

> The problem of closing the explanatory gap (the "Hard Problem" as Chalmers, 1996 calls it) has four important aspects: (1) we do not see a hint of a solution; (2) we have no good argument that there is no solution that another kind of being could grasp or that we may be able to grasp at a later date (but see McGinn, 1991); so (3) the explanatory gap is not intrinsic to consciousness; and (4) most importantly for current purposes, recognizing the first three points requires no special theory of consciousness (Block, 2009, p. 1113).

One might ask what the problem is in defining phenomenal consciousness with an external property. The problem, as I see it, is not to point to the presence of consciousness by appealing to an external property but rather appealing to external properties that are our

explanatory capacities or powers, as it again over-intellectualizes the definition of consciousness and makes the attribution of phenomenal consciousness to some animals, for example, problematic. However, that at least some animals enjoy phenomenal consciousness seems difficult to deny. This notion, thus, makes it difficult to see how we should decide the question of whether some animals have phenomenal consciousness without giving a negative answer by definition.

A third problem with the epistemic notions is that this definition relies too much on puzzles which arise (or seem to arise) for the *perceptual* domain, having as a consequence that the issue of cognitive phenomenology has to be decided on a criterion based on arguments within perception. In relation to this, it could be that these kinds of puzzles arise for perceptual phenomenology (and precisely due to some peculiarities of it) and not for cognitive phenomenology, without needing to deny the latter. As Bayne and Montague (2011a) note, the knowledge argument, the explanatory gap and the zombie argument normally invoke secondary qualities (colors, tastes, flavors, etc) and they do not normally appeal to primary ones (shape, motion, spatial relations, etc). Maybe these arguments are stronger with respect to the experience of secondary properties, but this does not mean that there is no phenomenal consciousness associated with primary qualities. In fact, they argue, there is little doubt that this phenomenology is proprietary of the kind of episodes they are.

The upshot of this discussion is that to build these arguments in the intensional notion of phenomenal consciousness is not a good strategy to deal with the cognitive phenomenology debate, for the reasons mentioned. I think we should regard them in relation to our topic, and as worth investigating, but not as intensional definitions of phenomenal consciousness.

1.1.3 *Summary*

From the extensional notions, I have argued that the first reading of the definitional restriction, namely, when 'phenomenal character' is restricted by definition to sensory states, is not warranted because it is not neutral in our debate. It does not allow the debate to get off the ground. The second reading, when 'phenomenal character' is restricted by definition to episodes which are 'sensory in kind', does allow the debate to get off the ground but amounts directly to a reductionist position, so it is not neutral either. The second extensional reading, when 'consciousness' is co-extensive with 'phenomenal' is treated separately below in Chapter 3.

From the intensional notions, I think it is useful to continue using the 'what it is like' expression without theoretically charging 'phenomenal character' too much: it is be better to leave the epistemic cha-

llenges (*explanatory-gapable property* notion, *knowledge* argument notion and the *zombie* notion) *out* of the criterion or definition and consider independently whether these arguments can be applied or not to conscious thought and, in each case, what they deliver for thinking episodes.

Before finishing the section, there are two more elements that need to be pointed out. The first is an ambiguity in the field of application of the word 'phenomenal', which needs clarification. The phenomenal character can be instantiated by *mental states, processes, acts, events* or just by some *features* of these instances, namely, some qualitative features of these mental states, processes, acts or events. In this first case, an instance of pain is the bearer of phenomenology, whereas in the second case, the painfulness of pain is an instance of phenomenology, a phenomenal feature of the mental state of pain. I will take the second sense of 'phenomenal', that is, as certain features of mental episodes. The second element worth mentioning is that I will use 'phenomenal character', 'phenomenality' and 'phenomenology' interchangeably with no specific change between them and referring to the what-it-is-likeness of experience in the sense described in this section.[7]

1.2 TERMINOLOGY: THOUGHT

The term 'thought' can be used in many different ways and the aim of this section is to elucidate some of them in order to finally opt for the notion which best suits the project of this dissertation.

1.2.1 *Thought as* cogitatio

There is a sense of thought that goes back to the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries and that includes everything that is going on in our mental conscious lives. 'Thought', in the sense of *cogitatio* means the following for Descartes:

> By the term 'thought' I understand everything which we are aware of as happening within us, insofar as we have awareness of it. Hence, *thinking* is to be identified here not merely with understanding, willing and imagining, but also with sensory awareness (Descartes, 1644/1985, 1.195 Principles 9).

Descartes's use of 'thought' can be also found in Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Reid. The term 'thought' includes all those mental states that share one feature, namely, they are all mental states *we are consciously aware of*. I am not going to use thought or cognition in this sense, as

7 When I refer to phenomenology as the philosophical tradition, I will specifically say it.

it is too broad and does not express many of the distinctions that will be relevant here.

1.2.2 *Thought as conceptual*

Another common distinction associated with thought is the conceptual domain. The pair of terms normally associated are cognitive/-conceptual and sensory/non-conceptual. It seems natural to equate cognition to the conceptual domain, as concepts are normally seen as the building blocks of propositions or as the marks of the cognitive in nature. In this direction, sometimes the cognitive phenomenology debate has been framed as a debate on whether the phenomenal infuses the conceptual or not, and also the other way around: whether the conceptual infuses the phenomenal.

On the one hand, 'thought' as concept-involving is normally useful in debates about the contents of thought, the role of concepts for certain capacities, etc., and in this regard it seems a good characterization. It also seems to be in accordance with the idea that there are no non-conceptual thoughts. This claim depends of course on what one understands by conceptual, but I think it is a standard view to agree on this.[8]

I think, however, that this association may be more confusing than useful for our debate. The reason, as Kriegel (forthcoming, p. 10) notes, is that it does not seem theoretically neutral. First, it does not allow people who believe that sensory states are not contentful to enter the discussion. Travis, for example, thinks that sensory states do not have content; obviously they will not have *conceptual* content either; still it seems that he must be able to draw a distinction between the sensory and thought or the cognitive. This framing would also leave without the distinction between sensory and cognitive those people denying the existence of concepts (Machery, 2009). Problems will also arise for proponents of the conceptual content of perception (like McDowell, 1994), because they would be forced to say that all perceptual states include thought.

The conceptual/nonconceptual distinction, though, can be rightly used independently of its association with the perceptual/cognitive domain, and so I think it is preferable not to characterize 'thought' as conceptual. Even if 'conceptual' won't be the label to characterize thought, I will use it in some parts of this thesis to refer to conceptual aspects that are involved in mental states like perceptions, emotions, etc.

8 There seems to be a disanology with the case of perception, where the question of non-conceptual contents has its place. Since Evans (1982), who introduced the notion of non-conceptual content, there have been a number of arguments defending that the content of perception is non-conceptual (Crane, 1992); for a helpful overview of the discussion, see Toribio (2007). However, the analogous debate for thoughts cannot arise.

1.2.3 *Thought as cognition/cognitive*

From the sense in which thought is understood as *cogitatio*, we can narrow the domain slightly and use a sense of 'thought' as referring to the cognitive. This sense would collect all the uses in the literature in which 'thought' is introduced as a member of the *exhaustive pair* 'thought/something else' for the mental realm. We encounter 'thought' as a member of this pair in Montague's (2009) distinction between belief and feeling, for example.

But sometimes these pairs of definitions imply a sharp distinction between the perceptual and the non-perceptual domain and this can lead to confusions. One of them is the following. There are philosophical traditions that deny such a distinction: classical empiricists, like Locke and Hume, claimed that all mentality is perceptually based; concepts are copies of percepts, and thoughts are combinations of concepts. From an empiricist point of view, it would seem that the more coherent position regarding cognitive phenomenology would be restrictivism, in virtue of the theory of thinking empiricists have. But as Prinz (2011b) notes, this would be misleading, as there has to be a characterization of the debate which blocks the inference from empiricism to restrictivism, precisely because there is the possibility that an empiricist can accept cognitive phenomenology, if she claims that sophisticated thoughts can be conscious.

So to frame 'thought' as cognitive is also problematic in the sense described. To avoid such direct consequences of these dichotomies, I think it is useful to follow Strawson's negative characterization of the cognitive as a matter of the non-sense/feeling domain (Strawson, 2011). This characterization, however, includes the class of emotional phenomenal properties, for example, so it would be too inclusive if we want to focus in thought. In the same line, Kriegel (forthcoming) also proposes a negative characterization, with a *causal* component, and leaving aside other mental episode besides the non-sensory ones:

> For any mental state M, M is a *purely or impurely* cognitive state iff there is a system S, such that (i) S does not produce states with a sensory, somatic, emotional, or other relevant (e.g., conative) phenomenology and (ii) S produces M (Kriegel, forthcoming).[9]

His proposal is to read this as a *criterion* (a sufficient condition) and not as a definition: it would be enough for the debate to get off the ground if we could agree on a criterion for picking out a certain aspect of the mind as being cognitive. A criterion is a weaker requirement than a definition, because it does not need to pick out essential

9 A purely cognitive state is, for Kriegel, when 'S is a causal factor in the production of M' and an impurely cognitive state is when 'S is sufficient for the production of M'.

features of the phenomenon in question: a criterion for identifying humans is that humans are the only animals who have dessert, and so we can characterize humans as desserting animals, but having dessert is a totally accidental property of them. This criterion, however, must meet two *desiderata:* it has to give an *informative* account (substantive and literal) and it has to be *neutral,* in order not to prejudge our present question.

However, notice that Kriegel's characterization precludes the system S from producing a cognitive state that *also* produces sensory, somatic or emotional phenomenology and this is something that should not be excluded in the very characterization of what is a cognitive state. In fact, even proponents of a specific cognitive phenomenology also accept that there are cognitive states with other non-cognitive kinds of phenomenologies.

So I propose to stick to the use 'thought' in the sense of *cognition* (as mutually interchangeably labels) and in a *negative* sense: thought are those mental episodes which are not sensations, perceptions and emotions, without pressupposing anything about the kind of phenomenology they might have. I think this negative characterization can be supplemented by a *positive* extensional classification of different kinds of cognitive episodes such as judging, reasoning, understanding, intending, doubting, and so on, as it will become clear in 9.At the same time, it will be recognized that 'cognitive' is not exhausted by thought so that I will be open to talk about cognitive elements (basically concepts) that can also be attributed to the perceptual and emotional domain: in this case, the use of cognitive as conceptual will be useful and informative, even if it is not the main use throughout the thesis.

Besides considering thought as cognitive in the negative characterization explained, we must keep in mind that the kind of cognitive episodes I will be concerned with are composed of *particular mental representations* with a certain content.[10] The notion of content is perhaps one of the most used in philosophy of mind and language, and many times a source of confusions. I will use 'cognitive content' to refer to the content of cognitive states, as this is a way to distinguish them from the broader notion of 'intentional content' in general, which refers to the content of all kinds of intentional states, these being those states that exhibit intentionality or *aboutness:* they are about something or they are directed towards something (Brentano, 1874/1973). Similarly, I will refer to the other side of intentionality in conscious thought, namely, the different ways in which subjects can be directed towards contents, like doubting, wondering, intending, desiring, etc. These different ways of being directed towards contents have traditionally been called 'attitudes', and the usual way to refer to them is to speak of 'propositional attitudes', an expression invented by Russell

10 More on this below, 8.3.1.1.

(Crane, 2001, p. 108) and applied to those intentional states that have propositions as intentional contents, that is, their intentional content is assessable as true or false. As my focus is on thought or cognition, I will speak of 'cognitive attitudes' to refer to the intentional attitudes present in this domain (see also Strawson, 2011) without presupposing, as we will see, that the contents of cognitive attitudes are always propositional.

It is also important to note that the mental episodes I am concerned with are *occurrent* episodes, leaving aside dispositional states like beliefs, which as such I take not to have phenomenal character. This is motivated by the idea that experience is something actual and occurrent and there is no what-it-is-likeness in dispositions or other unconscious states. I will treat this issue in more detail in 3.2. Moreover, as Crane (2001, p. 105-108) argues, it is a category mistake to think that there is such a thing as 'occurrently *believing* that P', a process one can undergo. As a state, to believe that p is not an event, in contrast to coming to believe that p, or forming the belief that p.

A final point regarding terminology: I will use ' mental episode' as a general category that includes mental states, events, processes, achievements, etc., even if sometimes I also use 'state' to refer to this general category, as is also common in the literature. When the general category 'state' is used in a more concrete sense, as in 7, then I make it explicit.

1.2.4 *Summary*

In this subsection I examined three possible senses of thought: *cogitatio,* conceptual and cognition/cognitive. I argued that the first is too broad and uninformative for our purposes. The sense of thought as conceptual, while broadly used, has some problems, as I have argued. Even if 'conceptual' won't be the label to characterize thought, I will use it to refer to conceptual aspects that are involved in mental states like perceptions, emotions, etc., and so this will be one sense of 'cognitive'. The other sense, cognition in general, will characterize thoughts, negatively, as those mental episodes which are not sensations, perceptions and emotions. This is supplemented by a positive extensional classification of different kinds of cognitive episodes such as judging, reasoning, understanding, intending, doubting, etc, that will be further examined in the last chapter of this dissertation. To sum up: 'thought' will be exhausted by 'cognitive' but 'cognitive' won't be exhausted by 'thought' because it will include the conceptual elements we might find in other non-cognitive domains (perceptual, emotional, etc).

1.3 VIEWS

Once the use of 'phenomenal' and 'thought' is clear, we are in a position to present the main views on cognitive phenomenology. The issue concerning the nature of cognitive phenomenology is related to, among other things, the question of the *reach* of phenomenal consciousness (Bayne, 2009). The reach of phenomenal consciousness can be explained in terms of which kinds of mental episodes are phenomenally conscious and which are not. Expressed in this first sense of the question, different views on the reach of phenomenal consciousness do not necessarily commit themselves to the specific nature of the phenomenology in question, and so the question of the reach divides positions between phenomenal eliminativists regarding some mental states versus more permissive views of the extension of phenomenal consciousness.

But the question of the reach of phenomenal consciousness is intimately related to the question of the nature of cognitive phenomenology in a second and more interesting sense of the former: given the acceptance of phenomenal properties throughout the experiential domain, positions divide between those that accept different kinds of mental states with specific phenomenologies, and those that only accept one kind of phenomenology of certain kinds of mental states. As general views, we can thus distinguish between *expansionist* and *restrictivist* views (Prinz, 2011b). These labels normally include different views and characterizations,[11] but in a broad way, restrictivists limit the extension of phenomenally conscious states to sensory and perceptual experiences, or even the emotional domain, while expansionists tend to include many other kinds of mental states as phenomenally conscious by themselves.[12] This 'by themselves' is important: expansionist positions include mental states in the domain of phenomenal consciousness that enjoy a specific phenomenology of the kind of state they are, thus excluding the view that claims that their phenomenology is conferred by other kinds of mental states that are

11 And terminology varies a lot here: Bayne (2009) labels the positions as adopted by 'phenomenal conservatives' versus 'phenomenal liberals', Kriegel (forthcoming) prefers 'phenomenological inflationists' versus 'phenomenological deflationists', and Siewert (2011), talks about 'inclusivism' versus 'exclusivism'.

12 Among views that are restrictivist (broadly conceived as to include those that are sympathetic to, assume, or argue for restrictivism) we find Byrne (2001), Carruthers (2006; 2011), Dretske (1995), Jackendoff (2007; 2012), Jacob (1998), Langsam (2000), Levine (2001; 2011), Lormand (1996), Robinson (2005; 2011), and Tye (1995); Tye and Wright (2011). And among views that are expansionists (broadly conceived as to include those that are sympathetic to, assume, or argue for expansionism) we might include Brown (2007), Chalmers (1996), Chudnoff (2010), Flanagan (1992), Graham et al. (2007), Goldman (1993), Goff (2012), Horgan and Tienson (2002); Horgan (2011), Klausen (2008), Kriegel (2007; 2011a; forthcoming), Loar (2003), Lycan (2008), Montague Montague (2011), Nes (2012), Peacocke (1998; 2007), Pitt (2004; 2009; 2011), Shields (2011), Siewert (1998; 2011), Smith (2011), Soldati (2005); Soldati and Dorsch (2005), and Strawson (1994/2010; 2008; 2011).

already recognized as phenomenally conscious. The dichotomy between restrictivist and expansionist views covers a wide range of positions regarding high-level perceptual properties, emotional episodes, etc., so it is a distinction that serves as an umbrella for many different theories of the reach of phenomenal consciousness.

The relation between the nature of the phenomenal character of thought and the reach of phenomenal consciousness is, thus, the following: on the one hand, proponents of a specific cognitive phenomenology, non-reductionists, defend the claim that phenomenal consciousness includes cognition or thought by itself, so they are expansionists. On the other hand, proponents of non-cognitive phenomenologies, reductionists, are thus restrictivists, although their positions vary depending on how restrictivists they are. Within the *cluster* of loosely related approaches we find regarding the reach of phenomenal consciousness (Bayne, 2009), we might distinguish authors who defend that only low-level perceptive properties (color, shape, movement, space location, illumination and depth) have phenomenal character (Tye, Dretske); others defend that low-level and high-level perceptive (seeing an animal as a cat) properties also have phenomenology (Bayne, Siegel)[13]; others hold that some propositional or cognitive attitudes can be phenomenally conscious (Shields, 2011; Siewert, 1998; Pitt, 2004; Klausen, 2008).

From this 'cluster of related approaches' we should distinguish *two main questions* in the debate: one question refers to the issues related to the phenomenology of conscious thought or thinking. Within it several questions arise, like what the experience of thinking amounts to, what kind of phenomenology we are talking about, and what the import of this phenomenology is to other aspects of the mind and other debates about consciousness.

Another question concerns the set of issues related to the phenomenology of other non-cognitive mental episodes such as emotions, epistemic feelings, high-level perception, and so on, where some views about cognitive phenomenology have been defended, as we will see.

With respect to this second issue, we can ask: why might the phenomenology of emotions, epistemic feelings, and high-level perception be important for the phenomenology of conscious thought? I see two interesting things to explore here. First, one possibility for the defender of cognitive phenomenology is to see them as a bridgehead for her view: if we have reasons to believe that there are cognitive experienced elements involved in these experiential domains, then why should we deny it in the case of conscious thought? And the other possibility: if such domains do possess a distinctive phenomenal character, why should we preclude thought from also having a distincti-

13 Strictly speaking, it is the *representation* of these properties that is low-level or high-level.

ve phenomenal character? This second question indirectly motivates the question of cognitive phenomenology and I will refer to it in various occasions, but it will not be the focus of the thesis, which centers mainly on the phenomenology of conscious thought.

Now, from the general restrictivism/expansionism distinction sketched before, we can draw finer-grained views:

ELIMINATIVISM. There is simply no such thing as conscious thought, in any meaningful sense.

This eliminativism can be considered as an independent view or as a consequence from a more general eliminativist approach to consciousness. This position is not considered in this thesis, as it is a very general claim whose consideration would go far beyond our scope. Hence, the main remaining positions involved can be construed as follows:

PHENOMENAL ELIMINATIVISM. Conscious thought is conscious but not phenomenal; it holds that there is a non-phenomenal kind of consciousness and that thoughts are conscious only in this non-phenomenal sense.

REDUCTIONISM. The phenomenal character of conscious thought can be reduced to the phenomenal character of other concomitant or associated states, non- cognitive in nature (basically sensory or emotional).

Defenders of this position do not claim that there is no phenomenology of thought (as eliminativists and phenomenal eliminativists do), but that the phenomenology present in thinking is to be accounted for or can be reduced to other non-cognitive kinds of phenomenology. Reductionism is a restrictivist position regarding conscious thought, but it is not committed to reductionist positions regarding emotions and other non-perceptual episodes, even if it is certainly a position that reductionists can adopt, as we will see. The difference between PHENOMENAL ELIMINATIVISM and REDUCTIONISM can be seen as a terminological one, as Schwitzgebel states:

> I am inclined to read the disagreement between the "no phenomenology of thought" and the "imagery exhausts it" camps as a disagreement about terms or concepts rather than about phenomenology—a disagreement about whether having an image should count as "thinking." However, I see no similarly easy terminological explanation of the central dispute (Schwitzgebel, 2008, p. 258, footnote19).

Even if the disagreement has this reading, I think we should not regard the debate as merely terminological, for PHENOMENAL ELIMINA-

TIVISM *denies* any sense in which we can say that conscious thought is phenomenal, something REDUCTIONISM is not committed to. The fourth view is

SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY. There is a specific phenomenal character of conscious thought that is not reducible to other kinds of, non-cognitive, phenomenal character.

The key point of this position is not to deny that there is a sensory or emotional phenomenal character in conscious thought, but rather to defend that the phenomenal character of these states is not the only phenomenal aspect there is when we think; and, more importantly, it is not what characterizes the experiential aspect of thinking as such.

In what follows, I shall provide some brief historical remarks in order to better understand the stage of the art of this issue in relation to some other philosophical conceptions.

1.4 HISTORICAL REMARKS

Most of the work on consciousness has been done in the sensory and perceptual domains. Terminology, arguments, examples, and many efforts have been focused on trying to elucidate what we mean by phenomenal consciousness in the experience of seeing a red apple, of hearing a noise, etc., and how we approach it empirically in cognitive and neuronal sciences. In most of contemporary philosophy of mind, we thus find a restriction of the scope of phenomenal consciousness to sensory-perceptual experiences. This fact raises a generalized surprise when one is asked about *conscious thought*. Although a complete historical genealogy up to the present point would be very difficult, I nontheless consider it useful to provide a brief historical tour of some of the most influential philosophical views of the twentieth century which might have contributed to the present state of the matter.

The study of experiences and the objects given in them gave rise to Phenomenology as a philosophical discipline, founded and developed by Edmund Husserl. For Husserl as well as for the phenomenologists who followed him – Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, etc.– the field of experience in the mental realm was so broad as to include perception, imagination, memory, emotion, thought, etc. 'Consciousness' was disambiguated by Husserl (1900-1901/1970, V § 1) as having three senses: a first sense corresponds to the stream of consciousness or the totality of contents of consciousness, the second one to the inner perception (*Gewahrwerden*) of our own psychological mental episodes (in Husserlian terminology, 'lived experiences' (*Erlebnisse*)) and the third one to all *intentional* lived experiences. Not only intentional mental episodes were conscious for Husserl, because sensations (of color, for example) were conceived as

non-intentional but nevertheless conscious. If the sense of conscious is not restricted to intentional or non- intentional mental episodes and consciousness is characterized as occurrent and experienced, it seems clear that Husserl's notion of 'consciousness' covered what it is known as phenomenal consciousness or the *what-it-is-likeness* of experience and it is not confined to sensory or perceptual processes:

> In this sense, percepts, imaginative and pictorial representations, acts of conceptual thinking, surmises and doubts, joys and griefs, hopes and fears, wishes and acts of will etc., are. . . 'experiences' or 'contents of consciousness (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970, V § 2).

From this starting point, the project in this tradition was to study the different kinds of experiences and thus provide a phenomenological philosophical study of perceptual experience, emotions, imagination, thought, etc. This broad sense of consciousness could be traced back to Descartes, for whom 'experience' or 'consciousness' and 'thought' were not dissociated but deeply connected, as we have seen: Descartes' *cogitationes* or contents of consciousness include thoughts. It was also Kant's view that 'experience consists not only of feelings, but also of judgments' Kant (1788/1997, Preface, AK 5:14).

A little earlier than Husserl, James (1890/2007) used the concept of consciousness in connection with this tradition. Like Descartes, he talked of 'thought' in both a narrow and a wide sense, the first referring to the specific kind of mental episode and the second covering all conscious mental episodes. He introduced 'thought' in this second sense when he presented what he meant by 'stream of consciousness':

> Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" is the metaphor which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life* (James, 1890/2007, p. 155).

Clearly, James associated here 'thought' to 'consciousness' and to 'subjective life', as co-extensional terms. The philosopher G.H. Moore, a contemporary of Husserl's, also included thought, in the form of understanding, as an event in consciousness:

> 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 understanding their meaning (Moore, 1910-11/ 1953, p. 57).

But it would not be historically true to deny that in the first half of the twentieth century there was also a more restricted view of

the scope and extension of consciousness: **Lewis (1929)**, for example, did not explicitly deny the existence of cognitive phenomenology but contrasted 'qualia', the subjective elements in immediate experience, with the interpretational/conceptual elements of thought. An author who might have had influence in this direction is Gilbert Ryle with his book *The Concept of Mind* (1949), where he finds no use of for the phrase stream of consciousness, unless that it perhaps refers to a "series of sensations", which, by their very nature, are incapable of being correct or incorrect, and manifest no quality of intellect (see Ryle (1949, pp. 203-5)). His behaviorist project sought to explain mental concepts in terms of public, observable performances and dispositions to them. If there was a class of mental states for which it seemed difficult to apply this behaviorist treatment, this was the sensory one (sensations, words and tunes "heard" in one's head), what constituted the "Ghost in the machine" (Ryle, 1949, p. 15).

Perhaps even more influential was Wittgenstein (1953) or some of his interpreters, for whom qualitative properties were related only to the sensory and were contrasted with propositional attitudes and the conceptual domain. This dichotomy prevailed in some form or another through many authors of the second half of the twentieth century. It became a commonplace to characterize consciousness as J.J.C. Smart does in this quote:

> ... for a full description of what is going on in a man you would have to mention not only the physical processes in his tissues, glands, nervous system, and so forth, but also his states of consciousness: his visual, auditory, and tactual sensations, his aches and pains (Smart, 1959, p. 142).

With functionalism as a popular and important view on the mind, the nature of mental states was understood with respect to their function in the cognitive system, so that a mental state was to be determined by its causal relations to sensory stimulations, other mental states, and behavior. Sensory experiences seem to be the only kind of mental states that resist functionalization because of their qualitative or phenomenal aspect. Whether this resistance can be overcome or not, the point I want to stress is the establishment of this restrictive view on consciousness to the sensory domain. Many philosophers educated in the Anglophone environment since the 1950s have found the following picture familiar: the division of the sensory and the cognitive, and the equating of the former with the phenomenal domain and the latter with the intentional one (focusing on propositional attitudes)[14]. The mind is thus divided between the qualitative aspect which is purely sensory, and some behavioral/functional aspects related to intelligence and the use of concepts. Moreover, for some decades it was a very common view to hold that the latter is all there is to the

14 Perception is a domain that exhibits both features

mind, since the former happens to be reducible (to representational properties, for example), or illusory and eliminable.

Post-behaviorist philosophy of mind and cognitive science have thus proceeded under the assumption that both intentionality and phenomenal consciousness can and should be treated separately. It is important to note that, according to this line of reasoning, although there may be complex states that are both intentional and phenomenal, their phenomenal and intentional aspects are separable. The separation strategy can take several forms: we can denote by "metaphysical separatism" the thesis that states the division between two metaphysically different aspects of consciousness, or we can have a "pragmatic separatism", which amounts to a research strategy which can be adopted independently of one's stance on metaphysical separatism (Wilson, 2003). The pragmatic separatism strategy involves in itself two options. The first assumes that the division provides the basis for conceptual and empirical advances in what we know about the mind, and this has been done hand-in-hand with classical computational theories, research in artificial intelligence, etc., which have modeled intentionality independently from consciousness. The second option contends that if we treat intentionality as a unified phenomenon for both mental and non-mental realms (including thus those non-mental phenomena which are surely non-conscious), this will turn out to have much the same benefits; this is the strategy of informational and teleological approaches to intentionality. And cognitive states thus have been examples of intentional but not (distinctively) phenomenally conscious states.

The contrast between the late nineteenth/early twentieth century way of thinking about consciousness and the latter half of the twentieth century philosophy of mind now becomes evident. With this picture of the mind, it is understandable why questions such as "does conscious thought have phenomenal character?" are quickly answered negatively. It seems, however, that the fact that this is a plausible understanding of the history through the contribution of some of its authors cannot provide a *justification* for this picture of the mind (Siewert, 2011). Of course, arguments in both directions are called for.

The contemporary debate on cognitive phenomenology began in the nineties, and an important contribution to this was Goldman (1993), who did not preclude the idea of there being experiential or qualitative aspects of thoughts:

> 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 (Goldman, 1993, p. 24).

This paper was followed by a response from Lormand (1996), which we will consider later. A view on this line was put forward by Galen Strawson in the first edition of *Mental Reality* (1994), where he argues for the reality of cognitive experience presenting the case of the understanding experience. In the early nineties the contemporary debate on cognitive phenomenology emerged and started to establish itself in the philosophy of mind, and it has not been until recently, in 2011, that a whole edited volume dedicated to the question was published by Tim Bayne and Michelle Montague as editors and with significant contributions by leading philosophers (see Bayne and Montague (2011b)).[15] The reasons for this revival may be very varied, but it may have been partially due to the proposals of various models of consciousness as higher-or-same order monitoring of mental states (as Prinz (2011b) notes) and, certainly, to the interest in forms of intentionality as phenomenal intentionality in which intentionality is grounded in phenomenality.[16] The interest in this paved the way for a new approach to the mind and its main features that contrasted with the role that functionalist and representationalist approaches attributed to phenomenal character.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC: MOTIVATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We possess a surprising amount of scientific knowledge about many phenomena in nature and in the universe and in all sorts of scientific fields. However, although it is one of the things that is closest to us, conscious experience still remains a field in which a great deal of research is needed. Scientists nowadays know something about visual perception, about the subjective experience of seeing and about the physiology of these processes, but the phenomenal aspects of conscious experience in general remain difficult to tackle and to push forward. In this context, conscious thought and its phenomenal character is a very new topic which has engaged several philosophers and which can offer a new perspective on consciousness studies and philosophical approaches to consciousness mainly focusing on (visual) perceptual consciousness. The main motivation of this work is to contribute to these fields by examining the experience of thinking from a philosophical point of view, by way of clarifying the problems and the arguments. On the other hand, it can also contribute to the knowledge we have of an important part of cognition, namely, conscious cognition.

In this direction, cognitive phenomenology is a topic that can shed light on the concept of 'phenomenal consciousness', as the mere exis-

15 For a review of the volume, see Jorba (2012b).

16 See Kriegel (2013b) for a presentation of the phenomenal intentionality research program.

tence of this debate tells us something about our current conception of 'what-it-is-likeness' and phenomenal consciousness: we might be in a very initial research stage. It highlights a dimension of mentality which is usually deprived from phenomenal consciousness with a justification that maybe does not stand up to scrutiny, due in part to the fact that intentionality and in particular cognitive mental states are considered part of the "easy problems" of consciousness (Chalmers, 1996). If a defense of a specific cognitive phenomenology succeeds, it seems that the hard problem can not be separated from the easy problem so easily, or it might turn out that there are no easy problems of consciousness after all, as Shields (2011, p. 217) also points out.

Besides the importance on itself of cognitive phenomenology, it is also a topic related to other philosophical important issues such as the relation between *intentionality* and phenomenal consciousness, one of the questions examined in this thesis. If a non-reductive view of cognitive phenomenology is right, then this would cast doubt on the contemporary picture of the mind, which could have consequences for explanatory frameworks. As already introduced before, one such picture is a *separatist* view between intentionality and phenomenal consciousness (see Horgan and Tienson, 2002 for an overview). If the specific cognitive phenomenology thesis is right, inseparatist views arise as more plausible (Montague, 2010). As conscious thought is a paradigmatically intentional state, all the questions on mental content and propositional attitudes become relevant in connection to phenomenal character. Some of these issues include the *internalism/externalist* debate on the determination of thought's content or the nature of *concepts* and conceptual content, etc. The topic is also relevant for debates about *introspection*, regarding its realiability and the kind of evidence it provides, as it will later be clear.

In this direction, if cognitive episodes have phenomenal character, as well as sensations, perceptions and so on, then it could be argued that the reach of the experiential domain in wider and remains unexplored in a great part of its extension. The prospects for investigation in this topic are, thus, extremely fruitful. It can become a new field of research, for both consciousness studies and research on cognition.

As a general and final remark, we might add that cognitive phenomenology this topic is at the interface of different disciplines and philosophical approaches and as such can be relevant for all of them and for interdisciplinary research on the question. Within philosophy, both analytic philosophy of mind and phenomenology as philosophical traditions can help to shed light on the topic, with the difficulty of finding a common ground beyond different particular approaches and interests. The examination of the topic can also shed light into similarities and differences between these traditions, often thought to be completely alien to each other. Moreover, a philosophical study of the kind presented here might be relevant for empirical approac-

hes to the study of consciousness (as it will become clear in the next chapter) and, in general, for consciousness studies and approaches to cognition or thought.

2

HOW TO APPROACH THE EXPERIENCE OF THINKING

After examining the main questions of cognitive phenomenology, we now need to explicate how this phenomenon can be approached. In this chapter I will review some ways to do this and outline my particular approach in this dissertation. This task is important for our topic because the study of experience in general and of phenomenal properties in particular has created many controversies and debates, specifically regarding the role of introspection and the evidence from introspective reports, as we will see.

The approach I endorse for studying the experience of thinking and its phenomenal properties is *phenomenological* insofar as it is a *study* of the *experience* of thinking and attributes an important role to this experience and its properties in accounting for what conscious thought or cognition is. However, it will be differentiated in this chapter from other phenomenological approaches. My approach to cognitive phenomenology will also be *systematic* rather than historical, although I provide a brief history of the topic. Moreover, to make the project of this thesis explicit, it is important to say that I will deal with the structural features of consciousness at a *horizontal level,* which seeks to explore the relations between features of experiences, between phenomenal character and intentional content and cognitive attitude, between kinds of phenomenal character, and so on. This excludes in general any view regarding the deep nature of consciousness or the *vertical* level, which has to do with the relation of consciousness to the physical world. At this point, I will assume that conscious states are grounded in brain or neuronal states and will set aside all the discussions tied up with this relation. With the little progress made on cognitive phenomenology so far, a prior investigation of the kind I intend is required in order to obtain more information to study the relation between consciousness and the brain. In any case, both kinds of studies must run in parallel and mine is restricted to the first kind.

After these brief remarks, an important question any approach to experience faces is its relation to introspection and introspective methods. Introspection is one of the main sources of information about our inner lives and has traditionally been taken to be a very "easy" method: just "look" into our stream of consciousness and report what you see, described in a very crude way. 'Introspection' has been used to label what James described as follows:

> Introspective observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always. The word introspection need

> hardly be defined – it means, of course, looking into our own minds and reporting what we there discover (James, 1890/2007, p.).

Philosophical and psychological accounts of experience have traditionally suffered from objections regarding the role they attribute to introspection, and introspective methods were abandoned in the field of psychology for the most part of the twentieth century and also dismissed as a philosophically valuable tool. With the revival of the interest in consciousness in the 1990s, introspection has re-entered psychology and philosophy and cognitive sciences with little reflection or without acknowledging or solving the problems that introspective methods faced at the beginning of the twentieth century. Note that cognitive neuroscientists studying experience ask their subjects about their felt experience when using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) methods, that is, a procedure that measures brain activity by detecting associated changes in blood flow.

Within philosophy, the main problems are what I will describe as problems of disagreement, linguistic silence and description. I will argue that the source of these problems relies in taking introspection to be *the sole method* of philosophy dealing with experience and as being central to philosophical disputes. In the field of psychology, I present the imageless thought controversy as an example of what lead psychologists to dismiss introspection across the board. Against the background of these problems, both in philosophy and in psychology, I describe the philosophical approach I will apply in the dissertation in order to avoid the problems presented. To do so, I distinguish between two kinds of introspective methods in doing philosophy that mark two different kinds of understanding the study of experience: the common-sense phenomenological approach and the reflective phenomenological approach.[1] Endorsement of the first kind of method leads to the problems presented, so I argue that the second one is better suited for studying experience from a philosophical point of view. An example of detailed reflective phenomenological method is Husserl's phenomenological reductions and eidetic variations, which I will examine and criticize. With respect to the empirical psychological problems of introspection I present an introspective methodology put forward by Russell Hurlburt and colleagues, the Descriptive Experience Sampling Method (DES) in order to point to an empirically informed psychological method for the study of conscious experience. Focusing on this method will be important as it is a method that takes the historical criticisms of psychological introspection and, moreover, is the only empirical method currently implemented that delivers interesting results for our topic at hand. Finally, I compare this method

1 These labels were suggested to me by Fabian Dorsch, although my implementation of the distinction might be different from the one he intended.

to similar ones and to other experimental approaches and conclude by highlighting the main lines of my approach.

2.1 COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY AND INTROSPECTION

2.1.1 *Three problems for philosophers*

The relation of cognitive phenomenology with introspection is manifold. At first glance, when we are dealing with the phenomenal character of a certain state, it seems that introspection, regardless of which conception we have of it, must play some role. In philosophy there has been a great deal of debate between infallibilist and fallibilist views on introspection, the first claiming that our introspective knowledge is infallible (Descartes, 1641/1984; Lewis, 1946; Ayer, 1963; Rorty, 1970) and the second kind of views holding that it is possible in principle to be mistaken about one's own conscious experience (Armstrong, 1963; Shoemaker, 1994; Churchland, 1988). Both sides in this controversy agree, though, that introspection is *generally* a reliable process for coming to know one's experiences, at least in favorable circumstances (see Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 43-44, 53). It can play a role as a *method* for acquiring certain information about our mental states, and in particular about the phenomenology of some cognitive states. It's true that the topic of introspection has a wider extension and problems than cognitive phenomenology, but cognitive phenomenology seems a particular interesting debate for introspection.

Some arguments against the phenomenology of thinking rely on a critique of introspection in this sense: the disagreement in the cognitive phenomenology debate has been conceived as a disagreement on what introspection reveals (Schwitzgebel, 2008; Spener, 2011): defenders or cognitive phenomenology affirm, and oppponents deny, the existence of cognitive phenomenology on an introspective basis.

The first explicit contemporary dispute on this topic was protagonized by Goldman (1993) and Lormand (1996). Goldman puts forward an argument for cognitive phenomenology stating that subjects introspect differences in strength or intensity between their propositional attitudes—strength of desire, firmness of intention, happiness with this or that state of affairs, confidence in judgment:

> My third argument is from the *introspective discriminability* of attitude strengths. Subjects' classificational abilities are not confined to broad categories such as belief, desire, and intention; they also include intensities thereof. People report how firm is their intention or conviction, how much they desire an object, and how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with a state of affairs (Goldman, 1993, my emphasis).

Lormand responds that where Goldman *seems to introspect* a 'what it is like' attaching to a thought, a doubt or a disappointment, what he is *really introspecting* is the qualitative characters of the accompanying imaginistic representations (Lormand, 1996, p. 259)

More recently, we also find arguments against cognitive phenomenology that rely on introspection:

> The primary source of resistance [to the phenomenology of thought thesis] emerges from *introspective* unfamiliarity with the kind of phenomenology in question (Tye and Wright, 2011, p. 326 , my emphasis).

Prinz (2011b) also notes the 'introspective elusiveness' of purely cognitive qualities, and Carruthers and Veillet (2011) claim that they can not find in the contents of their introspection anything that could qualify as cognitive phenomenology.

But Horgan and Tienson think, to the contrary, that a kind of phenomenology tied to intentionality is manifested introspectively:

> 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 (Horgan and Tienson, 2002, p. 252-253, my emphasis).

Moreover, they claim that what introspection reveals is *obvious,* as it is shown when they present the understanding case:

> ...it is *obvious* introspectively that there is something phenomenologically very different about what it is like for each of them: one person is having understanding experience with the distinctive phenomenology of understanding the sentence to mean just what it does, and the other is not (Horgan and Tienson, 2002, p. 523, my emphasis).

It thus seems that the idea is that somehow cognitive phenomenology is (or should be) *introspectively manifest,* and moreover, in a kind of *obvious* way.But exactly *what* it is that introspection reveals is controversial. These quotes are representative of some of the authors engaged in the discussion on cognitive phenomenology, and they show that at least in one respect the debate on the topic is seen as a problem about the *disagreement* we find when we *introspect*:

> The debate between conservatives and liberals is precisely about what *introspection* reveals (Bayne, 2009, p. 14, my emphasis)

> ...the kinds of limitations to which *introspection* is subject seem unable to explain why conservatives might be

> unable to introspect the phenomenal states that, according to the liberals, characterize thought (Bayne, 2009, p. 15)

> If conservatism is right then *introspection* is guilty of sins of commission; if liberalism is right then it is guilty of sins of omission: either way, *introspection* proves itself to be an unreliable witness when it comes to the reach of phenomenal consciousness (Bayne, 2009, p. 18, my emphasis).

If introspection cannot decide between one side of the debate and the other, and moreover, the kernel of the debate is seen as an introspective problem, then there really is a problem about how we should proceed in order to expect results in our debate:

> It is clear methodologically that when the first-person perspective is in play, one can expect reliable results only when there is agreement among individuals' first-person reports, agreement that is lacking in the type of case before us [agreement about the existence of a uniform feature in the phenomenality in thought] (Georgalis, 2006, p. 16)

A natural movement at this point would be to argue that introspective methods are not suited for the purpose investigators ascribe to them, precisely because introspection is an *unreliable* method. Schwitzgebel points to the *unreliability of naïve introspection* in order to undermine the claim that this method could provide reliable information for our topic:

> If introspection can guide us in such matters [the phenomenology of thought debate] – if it can guide us, say, at least as reliably as vision – shouldn't we reach agreement about the existence or absence of a phenomenology of thought as easy and straightforwardly as we reach agreement about the existence of the table? (Schwitzgebel, 2008, p. 258).

Schwitzgebel finds evidence in the disagreement presented for the unreliability of introspection. He has forcefully argued for a skeptical position regarding the reliability of introspective evidence (more on this below). His line of reasoning points to saying that something else is needed besides direct appeal to introspective methods. In a similar vein, Spener (2011) claims that the nature of the debate itself undermines the introspective warrant that each side attributes to its own view: introspection is not able to give evidence for either position. This diminishes the power of introspective judgments with respect to our topic.

The problem presented until now can be summarized as the problem of *disagreement*, namely, the idea that introspection turns claims about phenomenology into somehow indefeasible claims, these being those that are not apt for the realm of reasons. Besides the alleged unsolvable disagreement presented, introspection also presents two other main problems: the problem of linguistic silence and the problem of description.

It is argued that introspection makes the phenomenology of thought *linguistically silent*, given that the phenomenal character of properties of our *experience* is *ineffable*:

> can you tell me what it's like to experience the smell of a flower? At that point your linguistic resources run out. A Q-property [qualitative property] can be described by an ordinary English word; WIL [what it is like] to experience that phenomenal colour cannot easy be described in public natural language at all (Lycan, 2008, p. 11).

In addition to the disagreement and the linguistic silence problem, a third related worry is the possibility of *description*: introspection doesn't tell us how we should describe or specify the character of thought in terms of x and not y. An assumption in the discussion about experience seems to be that what appears, what is phenomenologically manifest, is *obvious* to us:

> A common assumption in most philosophical discussions of appearances and experience is that, when one does engage in just such reflection, the character of how things appear to one is just obvious to one (Martin, forthcoming, p. 1).

It might be that this assumption is what really should not be supposed when talking about experiences and phenomenology: if the nature of experience was just open to simple introspection, how can there be room for any serious disagreement? The persistence of the disagreement would suggest that the inner lives of the philosophers are much more varied than we had reason to suspect, or that at least one party in the debate must be deeply confused.[2]

In this section we have seen that cognitive phenomenology and introspection are related in two main ways: some philosophers think that the debate on cognitive phenomenology is a debate about introspection, and some (if not all) philosophers put forward arguments based on direct introspective evidence, sometimes claiming that what is introspectively manifest should be *obvious*. Moreover, the evidence of disagreement in this matter has served to support the unreliability of introspection (Schwitzgebel, 2008). The debate based on introspective evidence leads to three main problems: disagreement between

2 For a development of the claim that the debate on cognitive phenomenology is really a debate about semantic disagreement, see Bayne (manuscript).

parties regarding the existence of cognitive phenomenology in the first place, the problem of linguistic silence, and the problem of description.

2.1.2 *Methodological Problems for Psychologists*

We have seen that direct appeals to the introspective evidence of subjects do not seem to help resolve the question of whether or not there is a specific cognitive phenomenology. The problems of disagreement, linguistic silence and description are aspects of the same sterility of introspectionist methodologies. Some claims of the philosophers quoted above echo the introspective disputes of psychologists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on precisely an aspect of the topic that occupies us, known as the "imageless thought" controversy.

The imageless thought controversy was a debate on psychology between E.B. Titchener at Cornell and a group of German psychologists loosely called the Würzburg School. Titchener held that all thoughts had at their core some sort of image, which sometimes was clearly available to consciousness but other times was only dimly perceived.

> Every 'experience has an elemental core and a meaning providing context. Perceptions have sensory cores and ideas have imaginal cores' (Wertheimer, 1987, p. 111).

This was the position of the sensationalists. The Würzburg school, in contrast, held that introspections revealed a form of thought that had no imaginal core whatsoever, which they called "imageless thought". The two schools conducted 20 years of research and in the end both sides maintained their respective hypotheses. This apparently unsolvable conflict served to discredit introspection as a psychological method, and it was banished from psychological discourse. Other contributors to the dismissal of introspection were Freud and behaviorism. For Freud, the unconscious held the most important features of ourselves and introspection, which was only able to investigate conscious contents, was a very limited tool. Behaviorism in psychology advanced a psychology that focused only on externally observable behavior and ignored inner experience.

But from another side, clinical psychologists recognized they had to inquire about thoughts and feelings if they were to understand their subjects, and this brought conflict in the discipline. Introspective investigation in general is recognized to have been a failure. Initially it was a mainstay of early psychology's exploration of consciousness, and with its failure, due in part to the imageless thought controversy, it was banned from psychology. Introspective methods were consigned to being a "historical footnote describing introspection's inadequacy" (Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, VII).

Monson and Hurlburt reviewed the controversy and showed that the two factions '*did in fact agree with each other's reports of the phe-*

nomenon which was called imageless thought' (Monson and Hurlburt, 1993, p. 20, italics in the original) like the existence of 'vague and elusive processes, which carry as if in a nutshell the entire meaning of the situation....'. So Monson and Hurlburt showed that at the level of description, both sides remained in agreement, but they differed in the theoretical interpretations of those observations. They think this debate should be understood as contributing to the knowledge about how to explore inner experience.

Apart from the skeptic legacy of the imageless controversy, there have been some contemporary attacks and skeptic positions regarding introspection. As we already mentioned, Schwitzgebel argues for the unreliability of introspective methods, mainly for the following reasons (Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007, p.48-53):

First, experience is *fleeting* and *changeable*, and thus proves difficult to study.

Second, we are not in the *habit* of attentively introspecting our experience, as we generally care more about the external world and the physical objects around us. If introspective reports require some sort of skill then we seem to be in a difficult position.

Third, the *concepts* and *categories* used to describe our conscious experiences are limited and derived from the words we use to describe external objects. This might cause confusion among people, he argues, between categories applied to external object and categories we should apply to our experience of them.

Fourth, introspection requires *attention* to experience with the aim of producing accurate reports. But, as many philosophers have argued, introspective attention either destroys or alters the target experience: as soon as we think about or attend to our current sensations, for example, it flits away. This problem is known as the 'refrigerator light' mistake. The name is borrowed from the following analogy: suppose you open the door of your fridge and you see that the light is on. If you do not know how a fridge works, you may infer from your observation that the light is always on inside the fridge. In the same way, when you attend to something and then report some features of it, you may infer that these features were there all the way long.

And fifth, Schwitzgebel claims that reports about inner experience are likely to be influenced and distorted by *pre-existing theories*, opinions and biases, both cultural and personal, and situational demands.

The upshot of his view is, then, that, *pace* Descartes, we have only a very poor and untrustworthy knowledge of our conscious experiences. From these criticisms, the point regarding attention can be seen as a version of the problem of how to test the presence of phenomenal consciousness without access consciousness or cognitive accessibility (attention is a form of access).[3] This seems to be a very general and pervasive problem for all studies on consciousness, including the one

3 For a reference to this, see 11 and (Shea, 2012).

I will present in 2.3. Some ways to avoid the other problems will be presented below.

As a general strategy in front of the problems of introspection, perhaps scientists could avoid introspective methods for the study of consciousness, but it is doubtful that such an approach is possible or likely to succeed, given that reports are needed even when using methods to measure brain activity. So it seems that the science of consciousness must take people's reports and observations about their own experience as a fundamental source of data for their studies. But this source must be depurated so as to avoid the old criticisms. I think this holds for, and should be applied to, psychological and philosophical studies as well. In what follows, I present what I take the philosophical approaches should do with regard to introspection and I present a psychological approach proposed by Hurlburt and Akhter that puts forward a new kind of introspective methodology.

2.2 COMMON-SENSE AND REFLECTIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

In this section I suggest that the philosophical problems surrounding introspective methods can be solved if we have in mind two different kinds of philosophical methods and the role they attribute to introspection. The source of the problems of agreement, linguistic silence and description is that introspection is taken to be *the sole method* of philosophy dealing with experience and it is thought to be central to philosophical disputes. Moreover, claims of obviousness should be avoided, as I will argue.

I first distinguish between two introspective models, the one adopted by what can be called "common-sense phenomenological philosophy" and the one adopted by "reflective phenomenological philosophy". I call them both 'phenomenological philosophy' because I understand the term as philosophical studies referring to the *study* of *experience*.[4] The first model assumes that we can reach results by appeal to introspective reports and, to some extent, with our common pre-reflective intuitions in order to describe certain phenomena. Instances of this model can be attributed to those authors that take introspective reports as obviously showing x, which leads to sometimes conclude that the cognitive phenomenology debate cannot be resolved, or that it is a misguided problem, or that it is the revival of the old psychological problems of introspection. Endorsing common-sense phenomenological philosophy with a "naïve" stance towards introspection leads to unsolvable disagreements in which claims such as "it seems obvious

4 The study of experience of phenomenological philosophy is basically of the *structural* features of it, that is, of the elements and relations of the horizontal level of consciousness. This is also why I this dissertation falls within the general label of phenomenological philosophy.

to me introspectively that..." seem to enjoy the last word on the matter, and thus the end of a fruitful debate. Sometimes this is the approach favored by a purely "armchair philosophy".

On the other hand, reflective phenomenological philosophy accepts that introspection has some role to play in philosophizing, as well as common-sense intuitions, but limits their scope and claims that they need to be supplemented or replaced by theoretical reflection. Moreover, this model keeps an eye on empirical research on the matter and thinks it is useful as empirical data for philosophical theories. Introspection plus theoretical reflection is the model I understand classical phenomenologists such as Husserl to have endorsed and other contemporary philosophers such as Siewert (2011)[5] and Martin:

> Even if there is a sense in which the character of our experience is somehow obvious to us, that should not be taken to preclude the possibility that we can *make discoveries* about what experience is like" (Martin, forthcoming, Chapter 2, p. 30, talking about visual experience. My emphasis).

The shared insight in this model is that introspective reports of armchair philosophy should be supplemented and revised in the context of arguments and counter-arguments when dealing with conscious experience. Obviousness claims cannot be taken at face value. Reflective phenomenological philosophy is the framework which demarcates research in which introspective reports are taken into account in the context of broader philosophical argumentation. Described as such, it can be attributed to approaches of classical phenomenology and analytical philosophy of mind alike.

With the distinction between common-sense and reflective phenomenological philosophy, we can preserve the intuition that a (weak) sense of introspection must be kept, but at the same time avoid limiting our inquiry to such poor results, given the unreliability of the method as it is practiced in armchair philosophy and in some branches of psychology. The moral is that introspection is useful and should be used but should not constitute the sole method of research on cognitive phenomenology (and in general on consciousness studies), because it leads to the three problems described. Reflective phenomenological philosophy is in a position to avoid this problem because it embeds introspective reports and evidence in the context of argumentation and philosophical analysis.[6] The problem of cognitive phenomenology should thus be approached at this level and not at the level of common-sense phenomenological philosophy.

5 Siewert advocates a first-person reflection (introspection) on the context of *arguments* (Siewert, 2011)

6 In this sense, Smithies (forthcoming, p.12) says: 'We need to bring introspection and theory into reflective equilibrium'.

2.2.1 *Husserlian Phenomenology*

Within reflective phenomenological philosophy, the Husserlian methods have been important as they represent a first systematic way to deal with experience. The Husserlian model has been linked to the

> widespread misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, of his method of *reflective* phenomenology of conscious awareness as being the study of conscious awareness *through introspection* (Marbach, 1993, emphasis in the original).

Husserl's two well-known methods for phenomenology as first philosophy were the eidetic variation and the phenomenological reductions. The *eidetic variation* (1900-1901/1970; 1939/1973, 87) is a method that seeks to find the essences of experiences (and thus, the "*eidos*"), in a movement from particularity to generality. The method departs from particular instances of experiences and aims to discover essences, those features without which the experience in question would cease to be what it is.[7]The method proceeds by variation, that is, it starts with an object of experience, which is then arbitrarily varied in imagination (in size, volume, posture, etc.). During this process of variation, Husserl argues, one has to carefully attend to the properties that remain identical in every possible variation. In the grasping of the identical aspects, we are oriented towards the synthesis of coincidence that occurs among all variants of the same object. This process is different from the inductive process, which always departs from existing facts. The eidetic variation can be done by starting from an object of imagination, for example, which is not possible in inductive processes.

> To seize upon an essence itself, and to seize upon it *originarily*, we can start from corresponding experiencing intuitions, *but equally well from intuitions which are non-experiencing, which do not seize upon factual existence but which are instead "merely imaginative"* (Husserl, 1913, § 4).

The eidetic variation can be seen as Husserl's implementation of the theoretical reflection that I was claiming as important for philosophical accounts, where introspection has its place only as a first moment in order to further point to the general structures or essences.

To this eidetic method, which was shared by early phenomenologists, Husserl adds the *phenomenological reductions* (Husserl, 1913) which are composed of two stages: the *epoché* and the transcendental reduction. The *epoché* is the suspension or the bracketing of the thesis in the existence of the external world, which is the presupposition of the natural attitude we normally have towards experience and the world. This is not to deny the existence of the external world but just

7 For a good exposition and discussion of the eidetic method, see Lohmar (2007).

constitutes a methodological step in which suspension of judgement is required for phenomenological analysis. The attitude which results from such a movement is described by Husserl as the proper phenomenological or transcendental attitude. In this attitude, the structures of conscious experiences and particularly the correlates of experienced objects are to be analyzed, given that the subject discovers that everything perceived or thought is the object of some act of *consciousness* and as such it is not directly perceived or thought without relation to our experience of it. As an ultimate source of experience there is a transcendental subject, to which all acts of consciousness belong to.[8]

The Husserlian methodology of reflective phenomenological philosophy is not explicitly endorsed here as a concrete methodology. I share the importance of focusing on experience for studying certain phenomena, plus the focus on the structural features, but I do not endorse the eidetic variation nor the phenomenological reduction as such. I think the aim of discovering essences is something difficult to achieve with the eidetic variation, given the acknowledged problem of "when to stop" in the imagistic variation. The problem can be summarized by saying that there seems to be nothing in the process of variation that tells you when you have "reached" the essence and so you must stop (for a detailed analysis, see Lohmar, 2007). At the same time, it seems difficult to compare and gain agreement between particular imagistic variations of different subjects. Comparison between subjects has been argued not to be a problem for Husserlian phenomenology in, for example, Gallagher and Zahavi (2012, Chapter 2) because it is an open-ended process that happens within all sciences and constitutes a fourth step within the method (after the epoché, the reduction and the eidetic variation).[9] Even with this reply, I still find it difficult to be able to obtain the promised shared results without the involvement of something else. Moreover, once the intersubjective part is integrated after introspection, then I do not see the eidetic variation as a very different method from, say, intuition pumping and thought-experiments as they are used in analytic philosophy of mind.[10]

The Husserlian methods presented can be *complemented* with some empirical work that would justifiably adjudicate a kind of objective verdict on disagreement, as for instance is provided by the Descriptive Experience Sampling method I will present below. Even if among phenomenologists the question is not uncontroversial, I think phe-

8 This is a claim Husserl endorses but is not shared by other phenomenologists such as Sartre or Merleau-Ponty.

9 The fourth step is: intersubjective corroboration, which is concerned with replication and the degree to which the discovered structures are universal or at least sharable (Gallagher and Zahavi, 2012, Chapter 2).

10 For a developed argument in this line, see Bayne (2004).

nomenological proposals can work with empirically oriented science, although this was not Husserl's primary concern.[11]

Regarding the *epoché* and the transcendental reduction, I should say that I do not use them explicitly in the thesis, but this does not mean that my results are incompatible with endorsing them. Also, the specific proposal I put forward regarding cognitive phenomenology in the two last chapters is compatible with accounts that do not accept the *epoché* and the transcendental reduction but nevertheless see experience and first-person knowledge as important when studying consciousness. As we will see, the empirical results regarding unsymbolized thinking make use of a method that *does* appeal to the *epoché* and the bracketing of presuppositions even if they do not pursue the discovery of essences, as the eidetic reduction proposes.

MY APPROACH

We are in a position to understand and present the particular approach of this dissertation. I advocate a study that is phenomenological insofar as it seeks to study the *experience* of thinking and attributes an important role to this experience in accounting for what thought or cognition is. The approach I endorse does not take the debate on cognitive phenomenology as a debate just about introspection, and it accepts that mere appeals to brute introspectionist reports and obviousness claims do not succeed and lead to the problems of disagreement, linguistic silence and description. The idea is that introspection should not play a more important role here than the one it may play in other philosophical debates, and armchair introspection *per se* cannot adjudicate on our issue. It seems that the way to solve our problem is not by improving our ability to introspect, because progress in philosophy is not carried out by a "better" introspective ability of the philosopher, but by obtaining a better theoretical grasp of the issue at hand and better arguments with which to argue.[12] In this regard, I subscribe to Pitt's claim that it is not that phenomenological approaches to the study of the mind can not get past initial clashes of introspective judgment, but rather sometimes the problem is a matter of underarticulation of the question which leads to the appearance that this is so (Pitt, 2009). All this is of course shared with other philosophical approaches. In addition, I keep a close eye to empirical findings that might be relevant for the topic, even if this dissertation is a fully philosophical enterprise. In the next section I discuss in more detail an empirical method to study conscious experience that provides some results on cognitive phenomenology.

11 For other attempts to build methods relying both on Husserlian phenomenological insights and cognitive science, see the neurophenomenology method proposed by Varela (1996), Thompson (2007), among others. I do not discuss these approaches here because I do not find that they provide any concrete results for cognitive phenomenology.

12 For a detailed defense of this idea, see Gallagher and Zahavi (2012, Chapter 2)

2.3 THE DESCRIPTIVE EXPERIENCE SAMPLING (DES) METHOD

If the introspective approaches in philosophy can and should be replaced by approaches in the context of further argumentation and reflection, and obviousness claims should be avoided, a similar movement can be made with respect to the methodological problems tied to introspectionist psychology. One of the approaches that tries to put forward an introspective method that avoids the problems of traditional introspective psychology is *The Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES)* method. In this thesis I take into account the empirical results of this method. It should be noted that experiments in cognitive phenomenology are almost non-existent, probably due to the novelty of the topic and to the focus consciousness studies have placed on sensory and perceptual experiences. This absence of empirical results has one exception within psychology, which are the investigations of Russell Hurlburt and colleagues at the University of Nevada. Since the 1970s, Hurlburt has been working on and developing an introspective psychological method for the study of experience. It shares some important ideas with the phenomenological tradition, and thus can be said within its framework, but it develops an empirical original method to test inner experience. Hurlburt and colleagues proceed from a diagnosis of the dismissal of introspectionist methods, then provide some guidelines that must be observed if good introspective research is to be conducted, and then propose the particular methodology of DES with its justification. In the following points I present the DES method in this order.

2.3.1 *Diagnosis of the dismissal of introspection*

Controversies like the imageless thought debate and the investigations carried out by the Titchener laboratory and the Würzburg school lead psychologists to abandon introspection as a whole.

> Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior. Introspection forms no essential part of its methods, nor is the scientific value of its data dependent upon the readiness with which they lend themselves to interpretation in terms of consciousness (Watson, 1913, p. 158).

But this dismissal left a sense that experience and introspection was somehow missing a necessary element when dealing with clinical psychology and with cognitive psychotherapy. Introspective reports are used in the diagnosis of some mental disorders, like Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or Major Depression, and a somehow robust introspective approach is needed if research in those domains is to

be successful. Even some cognitive scientists recognize the pervasive use of introspection in their investigations:

> Introspective observation is not just a pervasive feature of our personal lives. Cognitive scientists use this source of evidence to inform virtually every stage of their work (Jack and Roepstorff, 2002, p. 333).

Cognitive psychotherapists and other clinical psychologists thought that introspection was something "easy to achieve", and could proceed by way of asking questions to the patient like "what do you think about x?" or "how do you feel about this?". I would say that cognitive therapists can be seen as the psychological counterpart of authors endorsing common-sense phenomenology in philosophy. This is the situation as described by proponents of the DES method (Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006).

Their diagnosis of the dispute is that both sides are correct in a sense: researchers are correct to point out the unreliability of the clinician's introspective methods and the clinicians are correct to point out the sterility of approaches that overlook inner experience. They, thus, try to make a step forward between those who think that exploration of inner experience is easy (just ask about it), cognitive psychotherapy, and the scientist's view that it is impossible (methodological behaviorism).

Within the position that hold that inner experience is impossible to explore, Hurlburt and Heavey refer to the reviews studies of Nisbett and Wilson (1977), the result of the imageless thought controversy, and positions attributed to Skinner. Nisbett and Wilson reviewed studies in which participants gave causal attributions for their behavior. They draw general conclusions against introspective methods, but Hurlburt and Heavey note that they also recognized the following:

> we also wish to acknowledge that the studies do not suffice to show that people *could never* be accurate about the processes involved. To do would require ecologically meaningless but theoretically interesting procedures such as interrupting a process at the very moment it was occurring, alerting subjects to pay careful attention to their cognitive processes, coaching them in introspective procedures, and so on (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977, p. 246, my italics).

They claim that this theoretically interesting procedure is DES. Regarding this source of resistance, they recall how Skinner pointed to the limitations on the scientific use of private events: he argues that verbal behavior about private events may be impoverished because it is difficult for the verbal community to shape a person's inner experience (Skinner, 1953, p. 258-259). He also claimed that private events

receive impoverished differential reinforcement, which means that introspective reports are normally not able to differentiate between different types of thinking, for example. By 'thinking' sometimes subjects mean 'talking to oneself', or 'seeing a visual image' or 'feeling a sensation...'. Hurlburt and Heavey acknowledge this as a fair criticism of some introspective methods, but they think that training is required in order for the subjects to learn to differentiate the talk about such experiences, precisely because the verbal community has not recognized such differences.

Within the positions that hold that exploration of inner experience is easy (you just have to ask), they claim that they rest on the assumption that people know the characteristics of their inner experience. But this is not true. People are sometimes surprised after the sampling results. Faced with introspective reports such as "I have recurrent unwanted thoughts", they raise two possible interpretations: the subject *has* indeed these thoughts or she *thinks* she has such thoughts but is mistaken. Traditional introspective methods have the problem of not being able to differentiate between these two alternatives because, they argue, they do not ask about experience with adequate care. In this position we also have a renewed interest in introspection via neuroscience. Historically, neuroscientists were the most skeptical with respect to self-reports, and now they are asking subjects for introspective self-reports of inner experience while performing tasks in an fMRI scanner (Jack and Roepstorff, 2003). Hurlburt and Heavey claim that in some of these studies the old criticisms of introspection have not been taken into account, and introspective research in the 21st century has to show why and how it is better suited for this enterprise than 20th century introspective investigation.

2.3.2 *Guidelines for successful introspective research*

In order to design an empirical method suited for exploring inner experience but avoiding the old criticisms, Hurlburt and Heavey provide fifteen guidelines, distilled from 100 years of psychological science and intended to help introspection overcome its inherent challenges.[13] I mention them briefly here.[14]

1. If psychology is to re-engage seriously in the study of inner experience, it has to develop adequate introspective methods.

2. Skepticism is appropriate when it comes to the accuracy of direct subjects' self-reports. Be careful not to overstate the accuracy of their conclusions.

13 Other methods that follow some of these guidelines are the Experience Sampling Method (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson 1987; Larson and Csikszentmihalyi 1983) and the Ecological Momentary Assessment (Schiffman 2000; Stone and Shiffman 1994; Stone et al. 1998) (Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, p. 60).

14 For more details, see (Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, p. 46-60)

3. Introspect with little delay to avoid the distortions of memory.

4. Target specific, concrete episodes, to avoid people engaging in theory-guided recall over time, to be based on romantic memories, etc. Introspection should avoid semantic memory of experience over time.

5. Keep the target experience brief: there are likely to be severe limitations on the amount of introspective material a person can be expected to remember.

6. Disturb the experience as little as possible. A concern in all forms of measurement is that the process of measurement alters that which is being measured (James, 1890/2007, p.244). Investigators should use methods that are as open ended as possible and do not invoke processes beyond attempting to capture and report on the experience.

7. Explore natural situations: in order to be able to generalize the results and not to confine oneself to situations in the laboratory and other artificial environments.

8. Minimize demands: the interviewer and the subject interviewed have biases regarding all sorts of beliefs about the world, in other words, they have presuppositions. In the spirit of phenomenology, they propose to bracket pressuppositions, and a double blind experimentation is one attempt to avoid biases and try to bracket pressuppositions. [15]

9. Terminology is problematic: experimenters should pay substantial care to illuminate to the fullest extent possible the meanings of words used to represent inner experience.

10. Don't ask participants to infer causation: people are often incorrect when identifying the causes of their own behavior, so the recommended to avoid asking 'why?' questions. This is the lesson taken from Nisbett and Wilson (1977).

11. Abandon armchair observation: casual observation about inner experience is not likely to yield scientifically valid results.

12. Separate report from interpretation: psychologists should not ask introspectors to provide anything more than descriptions of phenomena, they should avoid asking for interpretations of them.

15 They acknowledge that this is extremely difficult and that it is not a generally accepted method (see Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, Chapter 10).

13. Introspection has limitations, like the unconscious domain, so considerable research (and not a priori analysis) will be required to determine which processes are amenable to introspection and which not.

14. Be aware of the benefits of value prospective research: prospective studies gather presently-occurring data that might be relevant to some future condition.

15. Situate introspective observations in a nomological net: integrate results in broader domains of psychology.

2.3.3 *The details of the DES method*

With these general guidelines, Hurlburt and Heavey propose and test the Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) method, a method first developed by Hurlburt in the 1970s. As already mentioned, it is basically an introspective method which seeks to avoid the failures of traditional introspective approaches and proceeds on the assumption that it is possible to provide accurate descriptions of inner experience that will advance cognitive science. By 'inner experience' they understand 'anything that is going on in your awareness at any particular moment', 'anything that emerges, or coalesces, or becomes a phenomenon, or is experienced, out of the welter of inner and outer stimuli that simultaneously impinge on a person'(Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, p. 1) They argue that it is possible to make accurate introspective observations if an adequate method is used, for example, by focusing on *one single moment at a time*, and by asking the one legitimate question: "what are the details of your inner experience *at this very moment*?"(Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, VII). The idea is that from a mosaic of such truly described moments faithful descriptions of individuals can be construed.

The DES method gives subjects a beeper that emits a sound through an earphone at random times. The subject wears this beeper in her natural environment as she engages in everyday activities – cooking, working, driving, cleaning, playing sports, writing, reading, and so on. At the beeper's random beep, the subject has to pay attention to the experience she was having at the moment the beep began, and then to write down notes about it. She is supposed to write whatever it takes for her to recall in detail what the experience was like at the moment it was occurring. The experience is repeated during eight sampling days and subjects are asked to wear the beeper three hours each day, and it is calculated that taking notes takes about two minutes. Within 24 hours, the investigator interviews the subject about the six sampled moments of the day and they engage in a one-hour discussion. This is repeated typically for five more days. After interviewing, they extract the salient characteristics of the experiences

subjects describe, some of which they did not notice. They then compare them to other subjects' reports and can extract conclusions from subjects sharing certain conditions (depression, for instance).

This implementation of the method allows the DES researchers to offer a response to Schwitzgebel's *first* and *third* worries. The first was that experience is fleeting and changeable, and thus proves difficult to study. The idea behind the method is that, although this is so, there is a systematized way of exploring experience through different sampling days in a guided way so as to be able to generalize some results beyond the changing character of it. The second worry was that concepts used to describe our conscious experiences are limited and derived from the words we use to describe external objects. With respect to this, the interviewing process is important in order to locate possible confusions in subjects when using certain terms and concepts to describe their experience. This would minimize Schwitzgebel's third point.

The motivation and aim of this method is to focus on the *phenomena* and not on underlying processes or theories of mental processes. In contrast to Titchener's introspective methods, DES focuses on obvious incidental occurrences. An important feature of the method is to try to get the experience *at the moment* it is occurring, that is, at the moment of the beep. It is obvious that what happens at that very moment is that the beep sounds, but what they want instead is to focus on the experience occurring the millisecond *before* the beep began.

In the book they discuss and justify the presence of every element in the process, but here we will review only the most significant ones. First, the using of the beeper has some benefits over other devices. [16] The most important one is the time sampling *per se,* which asks about the "last undisturbed moment" prior to the beep and to thus minimize the disturbance of evanescent phenomena. The beep is not an annoying device. A possible criticism is that responding to the beep puts the subject in a reflective stance, and thus beep-triggered information does not explore unreflective consciousness. They acknowledge this, and that's why they talk of 'inner experience' rather than 'consciousness'. They try to discard all those descriptions of thoughts, feelings, etc., that took place after the beep as a reflection on the process triggered by the beep (triggered-by-the-beep thoughts). They also discuss the characteristics of a good signal: unambiguity, easy detectability, rapid onset, privacy, portability, etc.

Second, they value the importance of natural environments, because as already mentioned in the guidelines, relying on laboratory studies risks an inordinate sacrifice of generality and relevance.

Third, they carefully distinguish actual descriptions from retrospective or general ones and they also differentiate the *actual inner expe-*

16 For the details on advantages and possible problems of using beep, see Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, Chapter 5.

rience from what one *thinks* inner experience is and, more interestingly, what they *say* about them. The method does not take at face value every introspective report, because it acknowledges that subjects sometimes can be mistaken about their own experiences and getting accurate descriptions of inner experiences is usually difficult. Prior to the task, this seems to be a very difficult demand. Moreover, people frequently get it wrong, and 'when they are in the process of getting it wrong, they have no awareness of the wrongness of their getting' (Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, p.32). Generalizations from their different sampling just occur after a long sequence of accurate observations.

Fourth, another interesting point is the way the relation between DES subjects and experiments is established. Investigators are understood as co-investigators, and collaboration on both sides is needed. For this purpose, investigators do not want to impose their way of talking and they give the subject the minimal information about what she should say or how the sampling process might go besides the established rules. This flexibility allows for unexpected comments and proposals from the side of subjects and for future improvement in the method. This fact, together with the duration of the studies (six or more days of sampling plus subsequent interviews) are measures to avoid what Schwitzgebel describes as the problem of not having the habit of introspecting and so to amend this difficulty of introspective methods, as far as I see.

Fifth, an important and controversial issue is the bracketing of presuppositions. A presupposition is a kind of preconception, something it is taken for granted about the world, about ourselves, etc., and which exists prior to critical examination. Borrowing from Husserlian phenomenology, to bracket a presupposition is to take it out of play, to act as if it didn't exist, to suspend the effect of the presupposition. Presuppositions can distort DES samplings because people can fail to recognize they are experiencing something precisely because they presuppose certain things about themselves. To bracket is not to presume it to be false, which would be another presupposition. Some presuppositions are held with respect precisely to our issue: many people believe that thinking always occurs with words or images. The procedure to neutralize this presupposition is, for them, the following:

> To bracket presuppositions is to hold all these possibilities (in words, not in words, clear, not clear, adequate apprehension but descriptive difficulty, inadequate apprehension, etc) at bay, to be indifferent to which of these possibilities turns out to be the accurate description (Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, p. 157).

One way of doing this is to tell the subject to describe something and give some possibilities (images or not images, for example) and add

"either way is very valuable for me". However, as they also mention, the bracketing of presuppositions that they try to put to work has important differences with the Husserlian *epoché*. While Husserl tries to get the essence of a phenomenon, their goal is more pragmatic, as they want to come pretty close to the subject's experience in order to get empirical generalizations, and to minimize systematic distortions about that experience. They list some presuppositions with thinking, feeling and inner speech and explain their different way of minimizing them in concrete cases (see Hurlburt and Heavey (2006, p. 170)). The aim of bracketing presuppositions in the method would be a possible response to Schwitzgebel's *fifth* worry about the pre-existing theories and opinions we all carry that affect our introspective reports.

2.3.4 *DES compared to other methods*

This method shares important insights with qualitative research and with phenomenological psychology. Regarding the latter, which is more close to our concerns, they refer to Amedeo Giorgi as the principal proponent of phenomenological psychology, which influenced DES method, together with, more generally, the works of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. The DES method shares with phenomenology the centrality of the phenomenological reduction, the importance of description, the mistrust of theory, and the value of bracketing presuppositions, and departs from phenomenological psychology in the following ways.

Firstly, with respect to Giorgi's approach (Giorgi 2009; 2012), it must be said that he used *retrospective* reports; his study begins with reports, precisely when the experiential phenomena has been lost. To focus on reports rather than on the experience itself is not unique to Giorgi's method, but has also been claimed for what Dennett has called 'heterophenomenology', in which the reports are data, they are not reports of data. Dennett's goal is to explain every mental phenomenon within the framework of contemporary physical science, by constructing a theory of consciousness on the basis of data that are available from the third-person scientific perspective (Dennett, 1991, pp. 40, 71).

The debate between first-person science of consciousness and third-person one has generated a wealth of literature (Goldman, 1997, 2001; Chalmers, 2004; Dennet, 2002, on (Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 217)) but at this point I subscribe to Schwitzgebel's and Hurlburt's criticism in that the difference between "first-person science" and "third-person science" has distracted the research on consciousness from the more important question, from what *should* be the central methodological question: *when, under what conditions* and *to what extent* people's reports about their experience are trustworthy (Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 217).

Secondly, Giorgi's approach didn't require subjects to engage in the phenomenological reduction, because he thought they were not capable of doing so. In contrast, DES subjects do adopt the phenomenological reduction stance, inasmuch as they ask them to report *even if* it doesn't correspond to reality.[17]The main difference between the methods is *who* does the reduction: in the DES method both the subject and the researcher must take this stance, whereas in phenomenological psychology it is only the researcher. Hurlburt and Heavey believe it is desirable that the subject interviewed should also do it because it is "unlikely that a researcher can restore the reduction if it hasn't been made by the subject"(Hurlburt and Heavey, 2006, p. 206).

Thirdly, and regarding phenomenology as a philosophical approach, the DES method differs from it in the eidetic ideal. The eidetic reduction is the process of discovering the essential features of consciousness (Husserl, 1964, p. 70). As already noted above, DES does not work with the eidetic variation because it is not interested in what is essential in experience but rather in the main characteristics of observed moments of experience. They focus on all the features, essential or not, and then try to produce true *generalizations* of samples experienced after a long sampling recording.

With the presentation of this method I hope to have pointed to an empirically sensitive way of approaching conscious experience that avoids the problems of traditional introspectionist methods.[18] What I have not done, though, is to show the particular results of some of their experiments for conscious thought; I leave this task to 5.3.1.2, when I discuss some reductionists approaches to cognitive phenomenology.

2.4 OTHER EXPERIMENTAL METHODS?

We should say that the empirical method of DES is not the only one that tries to approach the cognitive experience, as there are some interesting neuroscientific studies that could be very useful for our topic. The Parmenides Center for the Study of Thinking, in cooperation with the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich is an interdisciplinary center investigating complex thinking with imaging techniques as well as on more conventional behavioral approaches (Kraft and Pöppel, 2009). One aspect of investigation is the gap that remains between a rather well developed understanding at the cellular level and some insight into complex thinking at the level of cognitive psy-

17 Even if they refer to this process by the expression *phenomenological reduction,* the proper expression for the suspension of presuppositions about the existence of the external world is *'epoché'*, considered as the first step in the phenomenological reduction as such, the second one being the acknowledgment of the role of consciousness in the constitution of objects in experience.

18 For a summary of other sampling methods, see Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel (2007, p. 16).

chology, focused on the question of how complex thinking is actually implemented in and executed by the human brain.

This kind of investigation sounds promising for identifying the implementation of complex thinking in the brain, which could arguably be related to experience of thinking. But a lot more needs to be said on this front, distinguishing between cognitive processes (reasoning, problem solving, decision making, free floating thought, intuitions, etc.) and then providing a *link* to theories of consciousness. Because it is a very unexplored territory, I will not go further into it here and hope this thesis serves at least to encourage neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists to focus some of their research on the question of cognitive experience.

This fact also makes it difficult to relate cognitive phenomenology with standing theories of consciousness in a way that can be informative or useful for either debate. The already known results on the neural areas activated during thought processes, the prefrontal cortex and possibly the parietal areas too, together with the neural activity related to first order representations, the early sensory regions, do not, *by themselves,* have direct implications for the cognitive phenomenology debate. Knowing the neural activation of certain brain areas when perceiving or thinking has lead to many different theories of consciousness. According to Block (2009), the main theories of consciousness that are empirically informed nowadays are: (1) the biological model (Block, Crane, Place, Smart, Lamme) that claims consciousness is some sort of state of the brain; (2) workspace theories (Baars, 1988), which is a functional theory of consciousness or an integrated information theory and (3) higher-order theories Rosenthal (1997; 2005), which claim that higher-order thoughts are required for consciousness. He also acknowledges representationists theories (Tye (1995), Byrne), but he dismisses them as not being popular among neuroscientists.

Taking a stance on one of these theories or advancing a new theory of consciousness is not the task of this dissertation. The problem for my purpose is that they basically rely on experiments for visual consciousness, and much of the research does not take into account other perceptual modalities and, even less, conscious thought. This does not mean that their proponents deny the existence of cognitive phenomenology, but most of them just remain silent on it.[19] I think the account I am proposing in this dissertation is compatible with different theories of consciousness, and it may be helpful indeed in the task of discovering the neural correlates of consciousness and thinking, respectively. Our grasp of them nowadays seems insufficient to

19 An important exception is Brown (manuscript), who advances an argument for the claim that HOT theories of the sort put forward by Rosenthal (2005) are committed to the existence of a specific cognitive phenomenology. It must be said that their use of 'qualitative' does not match my use of 'phenomenal', as they accept cases of unconscious qualities.

adjudicate a verdict on the relation between my account and different theories of consciousness. Moreover, there is always the difficulty of interpreting neural results in order to form a coherent theory of consciousness and cognition. For all these reasons, I think it is necessary to first examine the cognitive phenomenology debate as such, without presupposing any empirically informed theory of consciousness.

Having said this, it is important to note that an assumption of this work is that conscious states are grounded in neural or brain states. This is a claim that will not play a relevant role in the rest of the dissertation, as my framework is restricted to the surface features or the *horizontal* level of consciousness and not into the deep nature or the *vertical* question of consciousness, as has already been said. Dealing with the horizontal level of consciousness is in coherence with my analysis of how to construe 'phenomenal', where I argued that puzzles surrounding consciousness (which arise only from a physicalist stance) should not be introduced in our working definition of the term.

2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this Chapter 2 I have presented some different approaches to the study of conscious experience with some of its relevant problems. From the philosophy side, I have highlighted the problem of disagreement, linguistic silence and description, and from the side of psychology, I presented controversies with the introspective methods and, in particular, Schwitzgebel's summary of the main weaknesses. I then made a distinction between common-sense phenomenological philosophy and reflective philosophy, arguing that the former but not the latter is committed to the philosophical problems of introspection. I suggested that in order to approach our topic, we should prefer the reflective phenomenological philosophy, where introspection is given a limited role, obviousness claims must be avoided and it should necessarily be complemented with other philosophical argumentation and analysis. I have also taken a skeptical stance towards Husserl's reflective methods as a viable way to get results for cognitive phenomenology. From the psychological side, I suggested that the DES method can overcome most of the problems tied to introspection in psychology and, thus, it can constitute the basis for useful and reliable approaches to conscious experience. Thus, some results of this empirical introspective method will be taken into account in various places of this thesis.

Part II

MAIN ARGUMENTS ON COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

3

THE OBVIOUS ARGUMENT

In this second part of the thesis I put forward my defense of the SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY view. I will begin by discussing an argument through which we can examine the relation between conscious thought and phenomenal character.

There is an OBVIOUS ARGUMENT[1] for the existence of a phenomenal character for thought that goes as follows:

(i) A mental state is conscious if and only if it has phenomenal character
(ii) Conscious thoughts are conscious mental states

(Conclusion) Conscious thoughts have phenomenal character

The name of this argument comes from the possible objection of seeing it as trivially true. That is, if we consider one sense of 'conscious' which just means phenomenal (Block, 1995-2007d) or analytically entails phenomenal, then the argument is trivially true. But this in fact cannot be so, as there are many who are inclined to deny (i); so the argument is not that obvious. Moreover, (C) does not seem to be necessarily true if consciousness and phenomenal character come apart in the case of conscious thought. That is, the possibility of conscious thought without phenomenal character would go against (i) and would allow one to deny (C). And the possibility of phenomenal non-conscious thought casts doubt on the idea that phenomenal is part of what 'conscious' means, so there is the possibility of phenomenal thoughts which are not conscious. This would again go against (i).

The possibility of 'conscious' meaning phenomenal or entailing phenomenal does not seem conceptually necessary because the two concepts are distinct (Burge, 1997; Lormand, 1996; Kim, 1996). If conscious and phenomenal are not co-extensive concepts with respect to thought, two possibilities are open: a) non-phenomenal conscious thoughts (conscious thoughts without phenomenal character) and (b) phenomenal unconscious thoughts (cases of unconscious phenomenology). This last case is opened by the "only if" clause in (i), that is, the direction of the conditional that says that if a mental state has phenomenal character, then it is conscious. This direction of the conditional is not needed for the conclusion to obtain and does not play

1 A similar argument is discussed by Pitt (2004), but the main difference is that he does not endorse the "only if" clause and I do not defend the argument in the same way.

a role in the whole argument of this thesis, but nevertheless I believe it is worth defending it.

In this section I discuss different proposals to cash out these possibilities and thus deny the OBVIOUS ARGUMENT. This section will shed light on the study of one *extensional* notion of 'phenomenal character' mentioned in 1.1.1, when 'phenomenal' = 'consciousness' and we will see whether it succeeds or fails.

3.1 NON-PHENOMENAL CONSCIOUS THOUGHT

There are different views that defend that we have conscious thought but that it is non-phenomenal. Reductionist positions are a prominent example: for them, the sense in which conscious thought is not phenomenal is that it is not *specifically cognitive* phenomenal, namely, that it does not enjoy a specific phenomenal character. What they deny is not that there is phenomenally conscious thought, but just that there is specific-phenomenal conscious thought. I will devote the whole Chapter 5 to the arguments put forward by the reductionists. Here I will explore one restrictivist view that is not necessarily of the reductionist sort, that is, the view that claims that conscious thought is conscious but not phenomenal. As it will become clear, not all restrictivist views are of the reductionist kind, even if there is something that can be applied to all of them: simple denial of the phenomenal character of conscious thought is not an argument against (C).

3.1.1 *An example of definitional restriction: Kim*

In **Kim (1996)** there is a way of arguing that *phenomenal* and *phenomenally conscious* may come apart: paradigmatically, conscious intentional mental states, for which there is something it is like to be in them, do not possess any phenomenal character. Mental states such as beliefs are such that the 'what it is like' talk can be applied to them but we do not find any phenomenal character. The basis of his argumentation is that qualitative sensory characters are responsible for the *type classifications* of sensations. This means that sensations are primarily (or even solely) classified on the basis of their qualitative character, understanding 'qualitative character' with the intensional notion 'what it is like for the subject' to be in a certain mental episode. We can recognize the presence of these qualitative characters in the case of emotions, but the type classification is not possible for them[2].

2 'For example, it may be difficult, or impossible, to categorize an emotion as one of anger, envy, jealousy, or any combination of the three on the basis of its felt qualities alone. Nor does every instance of an emotion need to be accompanied by a distinctive felt character; you are unhappy with the continuing budget deficits of the federal government, but is your unhappiness – must it be – accompanied by some felt quality? Probably not. Being in such a state seems more a matter of having certain beliefs and attitudes (e.g., that large and continuing budget deficits are bad

After leaving aside unconscious states as possible bearers of phenomenal character,[3] Kim asks whether *occurrent conscious instances* of belief [4] are characterized by a 'special qualitative character unique to beliefs' with a certain content. And his answer is 'no', given that a belief about George Washington, for example, may have a mental image of him or the words 'George Washington' passing through one's mind, etc., or 'no particular mental image or any other sort of phenomenal occurrence at all' (Kim, 1996, p. 158).

In this answer we see that Kim is using what I have called the *definitional restriction* of 'phenomenal character'. Phenomenal character is understood as just *sensory* phenomenal character, and given that beliefs can be accompanied by images or words or any of these elements, there is no specific qualitative character of conscious belief. As we have seen in Chapter 1, if one construes 'phenomenal character' as just sensory phenomenal character, the debate is biased from the start and reductionist positions are right.

But next he addresses the question of whether there is something like a 'belieflike phenomenal character' in conscious occurrent beliefs, that is, in beliefs we are actively entertaining. He claims that some people think that in occurrent beliefs there is a certain *feel of assertoric or affirmative judging*, something like "Oh, yes!" feeling. Similarly, an occurrent disbelief can be accompanied by an *experience of denial* and remembering is accompanied by a feeling of *déjà vu*. Wants and desires could be accompanied by a sense of *yearning* or *longing* combined with a sense o*f present deprivation*. All these experiences *could* count as specific of the belief state but, in fact, Kim describes them as the 'coming to be aware that we believe a certain proposition' (Kim, 1996, p. 159), where this coming to be aware is not accompanied by any kind of *sensory quality.* Thus, here again, we find that he is operating with the second sense of the definitional restriction. And his conclusion is reached by this procedure:

> when you are unsure whether you really believe some proposition, say, that euthanasia is morally permissible, that Mozart is a greater composer than Beethoven, or that Clinton will win in 1996, you don't look for a sensory quale of a special type (Kim, 1996, p. 159).

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for the country's economy, that the government should soon take drastic measures to correct the situation, etc.) than having an experience with a *distinctive sensory quality'* (Kim, 1996, p. 157-158, my emphasis). This characterization of emotions is certainly controversial, as Kim is suggesting an account of emotions based on just beliefs and attitudes. But I shall not go into details here.

3 I turn to this question below.

4 He must be referring to occurrent conscious thoughts or occurrent conscious judgements, because otherwise it is not accurate to say that there are occurrent conscious instances of belief, given that occurrently conscious instances excludes dispositional states such as beliefs. But I will continue to present his view in his own terms.

This contrasts with what happens when you are asked if you feel pain in the elbow, case in which you presumably look for a sensory *quale* of a special type.

One first thing to note with respect to Kim's position is that the definitional restriction he operates with (phenomenal as sensory in kind) precludes the possibility of a belieflike phenomenal character, but this certainly by itself does not preclude specific "feelings" of conscious thought. But what does seem to preclude this last option is what this phenomenal character is supposed to be able to do, that is, to type identify the kind of state we are talking about.

To summarize this possible dissociation between phenomenal character and consciousness, we must say that Kim is working with the definitional restriction and that this seems to be the reason why he can set apart conscious beliefs from any phenomenal character. I agree with Kim that 'coming to be aware that we believe a certain proposition' has nothing *sensory* phenomenal that can be relevant, but this does not preclude its having something *cognitive* phenomenal. It is not an option for him, certainly, because of the restriction mentioned and for the further requirement of type identification.[5]

3.1.2 *Access Consciousness or Cognitive Accessibility: Block*

A more promising way to reject THE OBVIOUS ARGUMENT is by presenting the case of access conscious thought without phenomenal consciousness. Here, Block's famous distinction between *access consciousness* (A-consciousness) and *phenomenal consciousness* (P-consciousness) may be relevant. The idea is to equate phenomenal consciousness to experience and contrast it with access consciousness. A mental state is phenomenally conscious if there is something it is like to be in it, and it is access conscious if its content is available for reasoning and the rational control of action (Block, 1995-2007d). Block provides sensory states as the paradigm example of phenomenal and propositional attitudes as the paradigm example of access conscious states.

By distinguishing between the two notions in this way, Block *encourages* the view that propositional attitudes are not phenomenally conscious, and thus thoughts would not have phenomenal character. But as he introduces both terms, he does not deny that thoughts have phenomenal character (or analogously, that sensations can be access conscious). In fact, he claims that it is unclear what the phenomenal character of thought involves:

> One possibility is that it is just a series of mental images or subvocalizations that make thoughts P-conscious. Another possibility is that the contents themselves have

5 I deal with this question in 8.1.

> a P-conscious aspect independent of their vehicles (Block, 1995-2007d, p. 201, footnote 3).

The two possibilities Block sees for cognitive phenomenology are, thus, non-specific cognitive phenomenology, for which mental images and sensory elements make the thought phenomenally conscious, and phenomenal cognitive *content*, which will not be identified with the sensory vehicles. As will become clear in 6.3 and 9, these are not the only possibilities, given that there could be phenomenal character associated with different cognitive attitudes (in addition to, or instead of, content phenomenology).

We could first notice that, contrary to what it might have seemed, the notion of A-consciousness is not really a form of *consciousness.* With respect to this, it is symptomatic that Block (2007a) gives up the notion of *access consciousness* and talks about *cognitive accessibility*, which is a functional property that underlies reporting. This change of terminology indicates that there are not two fundamental kinds of consciousness, as the term 'access-consciousness' suggests, but a phenomenal one and another notion which is purely functional. Although this might always have been the case from the beginning when he introduces the distinction, talk of access-consciousness has confused the issue. So one first source of caution goes against considering access consciousness as a form of consciousness at all, so that the possibility of non-phenomenal access conscious thoughts would not amount to a form of non-phenomenal *conscious* thoughts but to a functional property that makes the content of the thought available for reasoning and rational control of action. What has to be shown is that the existence of this functional property *precludes* the existence of phenomenal conscious thought. The only thing the existence of a cognitive accessible thought shows is that the content of this thought is available for reasoning and rational control, but there is no implication from there to thought's contents being not P-conscious.

Let's present the main line of argument. That we can have access to the contents of our thoughts is something that should be uncontroversial, because otherwise, how could we explain the conscious control that we have over our own actions? And normally, one is A-conscious of the same thing (same kind of content) as one is P-conscious of. Block seems to illustrate this, when he is discussing the possibility of P-consciousness without A-consciousness:

> Suppose that you are engaged in intense conversation when suddenly at noon you realize that right outside your window, there is—and has been for some time–a pneumatic drill digging up the street. You were aware of the noise all along, one might say, but only at noon are you consciously aware of it. That is, you were P-conscious of the noise all along, but at noon you are both P-conscious and A-conscious of it (Block, 1995-2007d, p. 174).

This way of presenting the distinction suggests that the distinction has nothing to do with different kinds of contents, so it seems reasonable to assume that we are P- and A- conscious *of* the same contents. One could try to deny this by appealing to the overflow argument, that leads Block to conclude that P-consciousness overflows A-consciousness. He refers to this issue as follows:

> One of the most important issues concerning the foundations of conscious perception centers on the question of whether perceptual consciousness is rich or sparse. The overflow argument uses a form of 'iconic memory' to argue that perceptual consciousness is richer (i.e., has a higher capacity) than cognitive access: when observing a complex scene we are conscious of more than we can report or think about (Block, 2011c, p. 1).

But notice that what Block argues is that P-consciousness has a higher capacity, but he does not deny that we are P- and A-conscious of different contents. So it seems that normally we are P and A- conscious of the same kind of content and that what is A-conscious is also P-conscious.

One could resist the claim that what is A-conscious is also P-conscious by appealing to the imaginary case of the superblindsighter, that is introduced as a case of A-consciousness without P- consciousness: the superblindsight patient is a person that can guess what's in the blind portion of her visual field without being told to guess, that is, without prompting (this is the main difference with the blindsight patient). She spontaneously says that she knows that there is an *X* in her visual field although she cannot see it. As Block notes, the thought of the superblindsighter is both A-conscious and P-conscious but what he is talking about is the state of the perceptual system, which is A-conscious without being P-conscious.[6] The superblindsighter case shows that what is A-conscious is not necessarily P-conscious. However, this is an extreme case and normally in all other cases it is true that what is A-conscious is also P-conscious, or at least this seems to be assumed in the literature. In any case, for our present purposes, in order to claim that A-consciousness is not P-consciousness in thought, one would have to show that the normal case of conscious thought is as atypical as it is the superblindsighter case in perceptual experience, and this doesn't appear very plausible.

To recapitulate: firstly, the notion of A-consciousness or cognitive accessibility (if it is a notion of consciousness at all) does not preclude

6 "Of course, the superblindsighter has a thought that there is an 'X' in his blind field that is both A-conscious and P-conscious. But I am not talking about the thought. Rather, I am talking about the state of his perceptual system that gives rise to the thought. It is this state that is A-conscious without being P-conscious"(Block, 1995-2007d, p. 173).

conscious thought from being also phenomenal. In fact, the implication from A- to P- consciousness seems to be what is assumed in the discussion of the distinction. And this implication is just questioned by the superblindsighter case, which constitutes an atypical case of obtaining perceptual information in the absence of perceptual experience. My contention is, thus, that one would have to show that in conscious thought we are normally conscious in the *atypical* way in which the superblindsighter is perceptually conscious. To my knowledge, the case for this has not been made and the prospects for doing it do not appear *prima facie* very plausible.

3.2 NON-CONSCIOUS PHENOMENAL THOUGHT

Let's turn to the second possible objection to the OBVIOUS ARGUMENT: cases of non-conscious phenomenal thought. Remember that we do not need to argue for their impossibility in order to deny the conclusion of the obvious argument, but I think it is also worth doing it. It seems a commonly held view among all the parties in the cognitive phenomenology debate that non-conscious or unconscious states have no phenomenal character (Kim, 1996; Pitt, 2004; Levine, 2011). In this sense, Levine says:

> Mental states that lack phenomenal character are all those states, including non-occurrent beliefs and desires, that are classified as unconscious (Levine, 2011, p.103).

However, in what follows I will consider two ways in which one could argue for the existence of non-conscious phenomenal thought.

3.2.1 *A Conceptual Distinction: Burge*

The conceivability of non-conscious phenomenal states has been explored by Burge (1997) through his distinction between phenomenality and phenomenal consciousness. The idea here is not to separate phenomenality from another form of consciousness but rather phenomenality (what-it-is- likeness) from phenomenal consciousness (what it is occurrently like for the individual):

> although phenomenal qualities are individuated in terms of what it is like to feel or to be conscious of them, one may have phenomenal states or events with phenomenal qualities that one is unconscious of. Thus, phenomenal qualities themselves do not guarantee phenomenal consciousness. To be phenomenally conscious, phenomenal states, or their phenomenal qualities, must be sensed or felt by the individual subject (Burge, 2007, p. 383).

Pains that are not felt because of some distraction or obstruction are an example. These may remain pains even though they are not conscious for the subject at certain points. Similarly and applied to our case, thoughts would also retain their phenomenality in cases in which they are not conscious. This would open the door to the idea that phenomenality is not enough for phenomenal consciousness and, thus, it would be absurd to maintain that an occurrent episode of thinking with some phenomenal character is a form of phenomenal consciousness. Burge suggests that there are phenomenal properties or qualities which are not felt by the subject.

An element which would make this position understandable would be to point to *attention.* If the subject does not pay attention to the pain, for example, "she does not feel it", but the pain exists with its phenomenal properties. According to this view, it would be attention that is responsible for making a state conscious. But it would be wrong to attribute to Burge the association (or equivalence) of attention and phenomenal consciousness:[7]

> In entertaining such a distinction I am not merely supposing that the individual does not attend to the pain. I mean that the individual does not feel it. It is not phenomenally conscious for the individual. Yet the individual still has it. The pain is individuated partly in terms of how it consciously feels (Burge, 2007, p. 415).

And also:

> Phenomenal consciousness is not attention. The states that I have listed can be phenomenally conscious whether or not they are attended to, and whether or not things sensed through them are attended to. When they are not the objects of attention, and when attention does not operate through them, however, the consciousness is commonly less intense or robust (Burge, 2007, p. 399).[8]

There has to be another element, then, that is responsible for the distinction between phenomenality and phenomenal consciousness. This turns out to be the *effective occurrence* of the state in front of the constitutive possibility of becoming conscious:

> The conceptual distinction is this. On the view I am exploring, *an occurrent phenomenal quality is constitutively individuated in terms of how it would be felt if it were to become*

7 A development of this idea is precisely Prinz's theory of consciousness (2005; 2007; 2012; 2011a).

8 The states he lists are felt pains, felt tickles, felt hunger pangs; qualitative elements in conscious vision, hearing, smell, or taste; feelings of tiredness or strain from effort; the feels associated with touch, phenomenal blur and phenomenal static (Burge, 2007, p. 398).

> *conscious*. Its nature is constitutively, not just causally or dispositionally, related to occurrently conscious ways of feeling. This constitutive point is what makes the quality phenomenal even when it is not actually conscious. On this view, the unfelt pain is still a pain – not just a neural state or a dispositional state that happens to be capable of producing pain under the right conditions – even though it is not occurrently felt and is not conscious for the individual (Burge, 2007, p. 415, my emphasis).

Burge thus proposes that phenomenal qualities are constitutively capable of becoming occurrently conscious, even if they are not always phenomenally conscious. This is a distinction between a *phenomenal quality* and a *conscious phenomenal quality*. This is what allows Burge to claim that there are states which are non-conscious but still have phenomenal properties. Both properties are normally co-extensive if there is no obstruction or interference.

The distinction, though, is a *conceptual* one, and Burge leaves open the possibility of its plausible empirical application. If there is no such application, he would assume that these states do not exist and he would therefore have to accept that every phenomenal quality is also conscious.[9]

I have some reservations about the use of this conceptual distinction. First, and as a minor point, it is not very clear why the phenomenal occurrent property that is not conscious is called 'phenomenal' at all if it is not felt in any way. But this is in any case his stipulation, so we will grant him that.

But then, secondly, and contrary to what he suggests, it doesn't seem possible to empirically test this distinction: what would confirm or refute this conceptual possibility? It seems difficult to establish any criteria for testing it. All the methods to empirically testing the presence of phenomenal consciousness rely, in one way or another, on the reports of the subject, even when there are fMRI methods involved: the neural activation is measured when the subject is asked a question or is required to do a task. Therefore, it is not clear how we could know that a state has phenomenal character if it is not conscious or the subject is somehow aware of it, because first-person reports would be of no use. Another way to put it would be to say that when the presence of phenomenal consciousness is shown, this would thereby also show that a phenomenal quality is also present. No empirical way to distinguish both notions seems to be available.

Third, continuing to entertain this distinction would have as a consequence the proliferation of "hard problems" of consciousness, as (Pitt, 2004, p. 3, footnote 4) notes, as there would be the hard problem of phenomenality and the hard problem of consciousness itself.

9 It should be noted that this is an exploratory distinction and not his main points about phenomenal consciousness.

This is not a *prima facie* reason to abandon the distinction, but a consequence whose characterization seems difficult even to conceptualize: what would it mean to say that there is a problem explaining an occurrent phenomenal property which is not conscious?

3.2.2 *Unnoticed Elements vs. Non-consciousness*

There is still another possibility of why someone could think that cases of unconscious phenomenology are possible. The idea has been presented in the previous section and points to cases in which attention and unnoticed states are involved. When we look with attention at a certain point in our environment, we pay attention to it but there are features of the environment which remain unnoticed. Or if we are engaged in a conversation there might be a continuous unnoticed sound in one's environment, for example. Should we count these cases of unnoticed features or states as unconscious but phenomenal?

This seems controversial. Certainly, on the one hand, consciousness involves paying attention to some items in one's 'field' of consciousness, but there are also *background* states of consciousness, mental states that are present in consciousness, although they are not the focus of attention. When attention comes into place, a variety of theories have different predictions as to the relation between attention and phenomenal consciousness. If we allow for a sense of phenomenal consciousness that is not exhausted by attention, then not all non-attended states should count as unconscious, but rather as having some other form of consciousness, like background consciousness. In this sense there is no need to think about consciousness so that everything that is not focally attended to in consciousness or is a foreground conscious state qualifies as unconscious. Thus, attention would be a sufficient but not a necessary condition for consciousness. There is also empirical evidence in favor of this (see Koch and Tsuchiya (2007)).[10] If we allow this sense of consciousness, then the very idea of unconscious phenomenology seems wrong.[11]

10 "One can have a conscious experience of red, and that experience can have whatever awareness comes with conscious experience, even in the absence of top-down attention to it" (Koch and Tsuchiya, 2007, in Block, 2009, p. 1115)

11 It should be noted that the relation between attention and phenomenal consciousness resembles that of access and phenomenal consciousness, for the reason that attention is a form of access consciousness. The issue of whether there is or can be phenomenal consciousness without access has received a lot of attention in recent years due to the difficulty of empirically showing the conceptual distinction between phenomenal and access consciousness. In short, the problem is that all empirical evidence we have to detect the presence of phenomenal consciousness comes from reports of the subjects, and reportability implies access to the reported thing, so all cases of reported phenomenal cases are cases of access consciousness as well. For a good summary and a proposal of how to overcome this difficulty, see Shea (2012).

But this approach has several problems related with the theory of attention we endorse. To begin with, the sufficient but not necessary condition has been challenged by Prinz, who defends that attention is a necessary and sufficient condition for consciousness, in his theory of phenomenal consciousness as attended intermediate-level representations (AIRS) (Prinz,2007; 2011a). Within his theory, or any other theory that doesn't accept the existence of background states that are not attended, one can say that attention is also a *matter of degree* and thus that there is no need to postulate background states: there is the focus of attention, and in the periphery there is also attention but in different degrees. This move, although it supports the necessary claim, is not better suited for defending the existence of unconscious phenomenal states: if we accept degrees of attention, the background states would still count as conscious and phenomenal. Hence, if attention comes into degrees, it does not really help to hold cases of unconscious phenomenology.

If we do not want to appeal to the attended/non-attended distinction in order to account for unnoticed elements in consciousness, one suggestion is to appeal to foreground and background states within consciousness. This distinction can be cashed out by acknowledging the different functional role that is associated with foreground and with background mental episodes: foreground states may have very different functional roles from those present in the background. Background states do not have the capacity to enter in the inferential relations that foreground states of consciousness have, precisely in virtue of being the focus of consciousness.

Another problem with sustaining the distinction between focus of attention and background states as a way to resist cases of unconscious phenomenology is that maybe this mechanism is not at stake for the particular case of *thought*. For, the objection would go, attention is not involved in thought in the same way as in perception and thus the mechanisms of attention and background states do not function in the way required. If so, in thought we could not appeal to the distinction between foreground states and background ones as a way to account for the alleged cases of unconscious phenomenology. In response to this, we can try the following. Paying attention means making some content the "object" of your thought, of your perception, and so on. Peacocke (1998) notes that in conscious thought and conscious judgement our attention is involved, but that we may distinguish between the *object* of attention and what *occupies* our attention. Differently from perception, in thought there is no object of attention (nor is it as if there were), there is no experienced object. But from this it would be false to conclude that thought does not involve attention; what happens is rather that in thought our attention is occupied. Husserl (1900-1901/1970, LU II, § 22, 23) also considers the concept of attention as applying both to sensibility and thinking.

Now, remember that we have taken this detour to resist cases for which someone could argue that there is unconscious phenomenology. The cases of unnoticed elements or elements outside the scope of attention were alleged possibilities of non-consciousness, but notice that *nothing has been said* as to whether these cases *are also* phenomenal, if we concede that they are not conscious. I think the burden of the proof remains then for someone who endorses this position to show that when no consciousness is present, there is still phenomenology.

As a general conclusion, then, it seems that the phenomenology of a certain state implies the conscious appearance of that state, and if the state is unconscious, namely, if it has no presence at all, then we can say that it has no phenomenal character. The experiential or qualitative features that comprise the phenomenology of a mental state are conscious and qualitative just because they are consciously felt.

The direction of the conditional that goes from phenomenal character to consciousness in (i) of the argument is something I do not need to endorse for the general argumentation of the thesis, but that I think we have some reasons to believe in its truth, as I have argued.[12] Even if one is not convinced of the impossibility of unconscious phenomenal thought, this is not incompatible with the main thesis I defend in the first two parts of this dissertation, namely, that conscious thought possesses a specific phenomenal character.

12 There is still another way of understanding consciousness according to which a state may be phenomenal without being conscious. This is the case of the higher-order theories (HOT) of consciousness, according to which the qualitative or phenomenal character and consciousness come apart. According to some versions of HOT, like Rosenthal's higher-order thought theory (Rosenthal, 1997), a phenomenally conscious mental state is a state of a certain sort which is the object of a higher-order thought, and which causes that thought non-inferentially. The object of the thought, namely, the first-order state, can posses qualitative character without being conscious: "since states with mental quality occur both consciously and not, mental qualities can occur without appearing in one's stream of consciousness" (Rosenthal, 2011, p. 435). But as Block (2011a) argues, this kind of theory has two possible versions: a modest and an ambitious one. The first just pretends to give an explanation of *one kind* of consciousness, namely, higher-order consciousness, and reserves the name 'quality' to the first-order state, without pretending to explain the what-it-is-likeness of this state (the question of phenomenal consciousness). The second pretends to be an ambitious theory that explains phenomenal consciousness or what-it-is-likeness of the first-order mental state. Thus, the modest version uses a notion of 'quality' that is different from phenomenal character as what-it-is-likeness, and so it is of no interest as a possible case of phenomenology without consciousness. The ambitious version grants that there can be a qualitative or phenomenal first-order state, but this does not amount to phenomenal consciousness or what-it-is-likeness because there is not the HOT, and so there is no phenomenology without consciousness. Therefore, in both cases, the possibility of unconscious phenomenal states uses 'quality' or 'phenomenal' in a different way than 'phenomenal character' as what-it-is-likeness and thus HOT theory does not offer a candidate of non-conscious phenomenal state that would cause trouble to the obvious argument.

3.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this Chapter 3 have considered the OBVIOUS ARGUMENT, together with one main way to argue against it: the possibility of non-phenomenal conscious thought and secondly the possibility of unconscious phenomenal thought. I have examined Kim's view for the dissociation and have seen that his reasoning was based on the second sense of the definitional restriction of 'phenomenal character'. The exclusion of a specific phenomenal character for conscious thought was not explicitly argued for but the problem Kim raises against attributing phenomenal character to intentional states such as thought is that this phenomenality cannot type identify the kind of state at issue (I return to this in 8.1). Another way of separating phenomenal character from consciousness is by considering the kind of consciousness involved in thought as just access consciousness. I have argued that the notion of access consciousness should not be seen as a form of consciousness but a functional notion that, *per se*, does not preclude conscious thought from being phenomenal. Moreover, we have reasons to believe that A-conscious states are also normally P-conscious ones; its denial would imply attributing a surprising level of atypicality to conscious thought. For all this, I think it is plausible to believe that the argument holds and the conclusion is also true: conscious thoughts have phenomenal properties.

Moreover, although not needed for the conclusion to obtain, I examined the possibility of unconscious phenomenal thought: I have considered Burge's conceptual distinction and the issue of unnoticed elements. I have shown my reservations about Burge's distinction and I have argued that unnoticed elements should not count as unconscious elements, but rather conscious without being the focus of attention or conscious in the background and not the foreground sense. In addition, I have suggested a way of cashing out the distinction between background and foreground by relation to the different functional role of the states.

4

PHENOMENAL CONTRAST ARGUMENT

Once we have dismissed the reasons for rejecting the obvious argument, we now face the claim that conscious thought does have phenomenal character. Now the question arises of the *nature* of this phenomenality, whether it is specifically cognitive or is reducible to other more familiar sorts of phenomenology. In this chapter I examine the PHENOMENAL CONTRAST ARGUMENT in favor of a SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY.

4.1 COGNITIVE EXPERIENCES

One of the commonest strategies of arguing for SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY is the phenomenal contrast argument. Arguments of this kind are provided by, among others, Horgan and Tienson (2002); Siewert (1998); Strawson (1994/2010); Peacocke (1998); Kriegel (forthcoming). They paradigmatically present two scenarios where there is a phenomenal change from one to another and nevertheless the non-cognitive components (mainly sensory and perceptual aspects) remain the same. Since, it is argued, the only difference between the two scenarios is cognitive, the phenomenal contrast should be accounted for by appealing to a specific cognitive phenomenology.

The most discussed example in the literature as regards contrast arguments is the case of *understanding* (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970; Pitt, 2004, 2009; Siewert, 1998; Strawson, 1994/2010, 2011). The example goes back to Husserl (1900-1901/1970), who describes the following scenarios. Someone listens carefully to a complex of sounds that is completely new to her, so that it is merely an acoustic complexity. Afterwards, once she is familiarized with its meaning and she hears this chain of sounds in a conversation, she understands it. Or we imagine that certain figures produce in us a merely aesthetic effect, and then suddenly we comprehend that they can be symbols or verbal signs. Then he asks: what is the difference between the two states? Where does this plus of the understood expression over the articulated sound empty of meaning lie? (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970, V, § 14). Husserl's answer is that the difference lies in the "character" of the mental state. 'Character' is the general term which covers what he calls the 'Quality' and the 'Matter' of an act ('act' is the technical term for intentional experience). The Quality of the act is the type of act – a thought, an intention, an imagination, a doubt, etc.– (what is also known as propositional attitudes), whereas the Matter is the aspect

under which the object presents itself. [1] In Husserl's theory of intentionality, both elements are *experienced* elements and they account for the differences between understanding and not understanding.[2] Grasping the meaning of a string of sounds is explained in terms of how the object is presented and under which propositional attitude – elements that clearly are not sensory or emotional.

This approach defends that the experience of understanding is given in a different way from sensory experiences. The idea is that the thinking experience can – and maybe should – be given through images or other accompanying elements, but we undergo it and properly refer to it as such without taking these elements into account.

Strawson (1994/2010) offers a version of this argument. Imagine two people listening to the news on a French radio program. One of them, Jacques, speaks French, while the other, Jack, speaks only English. We can ask whether Jacques, who understands what the news speaker is saying, has an experience of a different sort from Jack, who merely hears the French-sounding words without grasping their meaning. The answer is that they both have different cognitive experiences although they have the same sensory experience (they hear the same chain of sounds). Jacques has an experience of understanding while Jack doesn't.

The crucial point is to know what accounts for the phenomenal change between understanding what someone tells you or something you read and not understanding it. Proponents of a specific cognitive phenomenology claim that the difference is due to a kind of specific cognitive phenomenology, the phenomenology associated with grasping the meaning of a linguistic expression.

In Strawson's words:

> consider what it is like, experientially, to hear someone speaking non technically in a language that one understands. One understands what is said, and one undoubtedly has an experience. How do the understanding and the experience relate? Most will agree that the experience is complex, and that it is not merely sensory, not just a matter of the sounds. But they will hesitate if it is suggested that there is experience (as) of understanding (Strawson, 1994/2010, p. 5).

The experience is 'as' of understanding because it need not be veridical:

> misunderstanding involves understanding-experience as much as genuine understanding does, for understanding-experience is experience as of understanding and need not

1 I use the capital letters for 'Quality' and 'Matter' to indicate that they are technical terms in Husserl and thus should not be confused with other senses of these words.

2 I develop this point in 8.2.2.

> be veridical. (It could be called 'meaning-experience')(Strawson, 1994/2010, p. 7).

He argues for this understanding-experience over and above visual and auditory experience. The understanding case can be construed with many different contents, but an appealing one is the understanding or *grasping a mathematical proof*, for which it seems clear that when there is a phenomenal contrast between "getting" the proof or not getting it, it is not due to any changes in the sensory inputs, because it can be arguably said that no change occurs there when one grasps a mathematical proof. Chudnoff (2013) argues that a mathematical thought is experienced in a way that depends on the *holistic* cognitive experience the subject has when grasping a mathematical proof.

Besides the experience of understanding, there are other interesting cases to motivate the view of a specific cognitive phenomenology. One such case is the phenomenal contrast of the *experience of counting* in a certain currency which is familiar and counting in a foreign currency. That is, the experience of getting the cost of familiar items, such as a lunch menu or a cup of tea, in our own currency, say euros, compared to the experience of getting the cost of these same items in dollars, for instance. Or a variation of the case applied to the counting experience in the some countries before the creation of the euro. Before 2000, when people in Spain were used to counting in pesetas it was a very common experience to be in front of a shelf in the supermarket, seeing the price of the items in euros and then comparing it to pesetas in order to have a sense of the price. This moment of comparison resembles the moment of understanding in that it is only through the comparison that the phenomenal difference between the two experiences becomes patent. Before that, when seeing a bottle of wine with a price in a new currency, one does not have the experience of grasping the price at all.

Consider also this other case, that we can call "the experience of naturalness". There are two experiences: in the first, you are looking to a natural plant and you think *this plant has green leaves*. In the second case you are looking at a fake plant which looks exactly like the natural plant and you also think *this plant has green leaves*. In both cases you know what the constitution of the plant is, whether it has real leaves or it is artificial. Is there any difference in your thought when you switch from one to the other? It seems that there is a relevant experiential difference, but what accounts for it? It cannot be a difference in the knowledge that the person possesses, because in both cases you know all the relevant information related to the kind of plant it is. Clearly, the experience is a thinking experience based on a perceptual experience, it is a case of what is called perceptual judgement or perceptual thought. But it is still thought. The idea of this case is that what accounts for the phenomenal difference it is

that in the natural plant but not in the fake one, "there is a relation to something existing and natural". The phenomenal change cannot be explained without possessing the concept NATURAL or FAKE, what suggests that they contribute to the experience. One could say that despite the way I have presented the case, what happens here is that the content expressed by the speaker in each case is different from the one I just presented. The *content* of both thoughts is different: one is 'this *natural* plant has green leaves' and the other is 'this *fake* plant has green leaves'. But notice that this again suggests that it is this content difference the one that accounts for the phenomenal contrast, and this is already accepting that the content, in particular, the conceptual content, makes a contribution to experience. To sum up, what seems interesting is that there is a "sense of naturalness" experience, which can be cashed out as a case of perceptual judgment, and which has some concepts that contribute to experience in a way that sensory elements cannot account for.

Once the phenomenal contrast argument has been presented, a remark will be clarifying: we should distinguish between *phenomenal contrast arguments* and argumentation by way of *cases* or *examples*. Although the two kinds of reasoning are similar, they are not exactly the same. It is important for the phenomenal contrast that two scenarios are available to confront the contrast, that is, to present the experience of the contrast. But in reasoning by cases, the philosophical strategy is to focus only on *one* concrete example and try to show that what accounts for the phenomenology present in that case is cognitive phenomenology. In this way, understanding can also be presented as a case for which it can be argued that there is an experience and that this experience is not reducible to sensory or emotional components. It is true, though, that in general a simple case can be converted into a case of phenomenal contrast, but an exception to this might be the case of simply *entertaining a certain proposition*, which seems difficult to interpret as intrinsically embedded in a context of contrast.

Moreover, as presented in 2.1.2, cases of imageless thought are provided as motivating the view that we experience cases of thinking without images and cases of *languageless thought* and non-iconic thinking, even if it is difficult to find cases of imageless languageless thoughts (more on this in 5.3.1.2). In the literature together we also find cases of *sudden thoughts* for which there is no time for images or words. An example of this is someone's sudden realization while driving to work that she has left his briefcase at home (Siewert, 1998).

The phenomenal contrast argument is thus a first motivation towards the idea of a specific phenomenal character, even if the argument must be supplemented with other arguments, as we will see. An important general point is that the view of a specific cognitive phenomenology does not deny that, as the paradigmatic cases show, sensory and perceptual experience is the base for cognition so that

many cognitive intentional states depend on the particular occurrence of a certain perceptual experience. More generally, we would probably not be able to have cognitive experiences if there were no sensory or perceptual experiences: a being who never has had any perceptual experience would probably also lack cognitive ones. I assume that some version of this idea is true. But what the SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY view denies is that this dependence, whatever form it may take, implies a reductionist position regarding cognitive phenomenology.

4.2 COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY IN PERCEPTION

These cognitive cases have their parallels in the perceptual domain, where some authors have argued that the method of phenomenal contrast also provides evidence for holding that different sorts of properties are experienced or represented in experience. Perhaps the most known example is the case of the *duck-rabbit phenomenon* or what has been called in general the *seeing-as* perception *or high-level perception.* The famous picture I am referring to is one in which there is a figure that ambiguosly presents a duck or a rabbit (Wittgenstein, 1953, Part II, §xi). Experience changes when we perceive the picture as a duck or as a rabbit. Seeing-as is a kind of object *recognition experience*, for which Siegel (2006) has argued that we experience and represent these high-level perceptual properties.

> 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. . . . [Y]our disposition to distinguish the pine trees from the others [gradually] improves. Eventually, you can spot the pine trees immediately. . . . Gaining this recognitional disposition is reflected in a phenomenological difference between the visual experiences you had before and after the recognitional disposition was fully developed (Siegel, 2006, p. 491).

The idea is that if the 'low-level' perceptual phenomenology remains the same before and after learning to recognize a certain object as the object it is, then the phenomenal change between the two situations must be due to some cognitive element present in high-level perceptual phenomenology.

Cases of recognition of objects as having certain properties can be applied to all sorts of cases, like the *experience of recognizing faces* as being old, or being young, etc. In these cases, what seems to be at play is a relation or a dependence on our own age, and this seems clearly cognitive and cannot be fully accounted for by appealing to sensory phenomenal elements. Kriegel (2007) goes slightly further than this in arguing that people with prosopagnosia – a condition caused by a

lesion to the dorsal visual stream in which subjects are incapable of recognizing faces– have a phenomenologically different experience to people who don't suffer from it and are able to recognize the face of, say, their mothers when they see it. Because there is this contrast, he argues, the property of being mommy's face is phenomenologically manifest in the experience (Kriegel, 2007, p. 125).

Other examples that can motivate this view on this front are the *perceptions of spatial and size relations*.[3] Here again the perception of someone as being tall, for example, is dependent on our own height, and this is something cognitive that seems difficult to account for with sensory elements. So in this perception we do not only have sensory phenomenal properties (those involved in the sensory inputs of the visual scene) but also conceptual or cognitive elements (distance, size, etc., as dependent on our own).

In general, the idea of expansionism regarding high-level perceptual properties is that concepts (perceiving something *as* X, where X is a certain concept) influence the experience in a way that here too there is a kind of cognitive phenomenology present in perception. For perceptual experience to exhibit cognitive phenomenology it is necessary not just that concepts should *influence* the perceptual experience, but also that this influence should be a *contribution* to experience and phenomenal character. The phenomenal contrast argument is a way of identifying the elements in experiences that really make a contribution to experience. I discuss this in the next section and turn to the point again in chapter 5.[4]

As a general remark for this section, it must be said that if some perceptual experiences possess cognitive phenomenal character, because concepts or cognitive elements are experienced *as such*, then this still does not speak in favor of the cognitive phenomenology of conscious thought but gives an indirect argument for the specificity view.

Before finishing this chapter, I will introduce some remarks on the method of phenomenal contrast and discuss an objection against it.

3 For a discussion on the question of whether the phenomenal ways of appearing of spatial relations can be identified with the spatial properties represented by those experiences, see Thompson (2010). And for a discussion of how size experience is represented in experience, see Bennett (2011)).

4 Another argument in the domain of perceptual experience has been provided by Montague (2011), who argues in the following way. She acknowledges that there is a fundamental phenomenological fact, that is, the fact that experiences are of particular objects. She then distinguishes between two views regarding content (generalist and particularist) and argues that neither of them can explain this fact. Her proposal is to account for it by means of the general feature of object-positing, a basic category of perceptual experiences, where this constitutive feature of perceptual experiences is, she argues, precisely an instance of cognitive phenomenology.

4.3 THE METHOD OF PHENOMENAL CONTRAST

Phenomenal contrast arguments [5] of the sort presented above are normally employed as direct arguments in favor of cognitive phenomenology and also, importantly, as a method to test which elements of the experience contribute to the phenomenal character of experience. To my mind, they can be considered as straightforward phenomenological arguments, that is, arguments that directly appeal to variations in experience and make the case clear enough to induce people to recognize such experience. But in addition, the phenomenal contrast argument involves a step in the reasoning that is best characterized as an instance of an inference to the best explanation.[6] I think phenomenal contrast arguments are *both* phenomenological arguments and inferences to the best explanation, as they describe scenarios in order to present a difference between experiences and, once the difference has been made clear, then the discussion starts as to whether which one is the best explanation for this case.

Siegel (2006) provides a detailed defense of the method of phenomenal contrast. She describes it as a way of testing hypotheses about the contents of experience (and contents here include representational and phenomenal content):

> 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. Instead of taking a specific experience as input and delivering as output a verdict on its contents, then, the method's starting point is a target hypothesis, and it aims to reach a yes-or-no verdict. It is thus a way of testing hypotheses, rather than a way of generating hypotheses in the first place.

Kriegel (2007) also argues that this method gives us a way of determining what is phenomenologically manifest in experience in phenomenological disputes, as we saw in the case of recognizing one's mother's face. Kriegel describes the method 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

5 Usually called minimal pair arguments too.

6 An inference to the best explanation is a method of reasoning in which theorists choose between hypothesis which would, if true, explain the relevant evidence.

> thesis that Fi is phenomenologically manifest in S, inability would create a presumption *against* that thesis Kriegel (2007, p. 126).

The kind of imaginability at stake is, according to Kriegel, a special case of conceivability (the case of imagistic conceivability) and this kind of conceivability is, prima facie, defeasible evidence for possibility. The imaginability of the situation S* in our case is prima facie evidence for the possibility of S* and this possibility is what actually shows that Fi is a phenomenologically manifest feature.[7] The important point of this is that this possibility gives us prima facie evidence, and not a demonstrative proof or a knock down argument in favor of a certain feature being phenomenologically manifest. This is important because some critics of the phenomenal contrast argument sometimes object that these arguments are not convincing and do not help to move the discussion on. I think the target of this objection is misguided: it is not the purpose of these arguments to provide uncontestable evidence for the respective thesis, even if some authors may want to defend this, but just *prima facie* evidence and a motivation to consider such features as contributing to experience and phenomenal character.

Moreover, a second point Kriegel notes is that it is not only that imaginability of this sort creates a presumption in favor of something being phenomenologically manifest, but also *unimaginability* creates a presumption *against* manifestation (Kriegel, 2007, p. 126). This unimaginability can occur for two reasons: (1) failure to imagine a state which differs from S only in not instantiating Fi, or (2) failure to imagine a state which, despite differing from S only in not instantiating Fi, does not differ from S in what it is like to have it. Failure of the type (1) should not be taken as evidence for the inexistence of the feature but as a failure to generate the test, while the latter does speak in favor of the inexistence of the relevant phenomenology. If the impossibility to generate the test were systematic, Kriegel adds, then (1) would also argue against that feature being phenomenologically present.

4.3.1 *A defense of the method against a critique*

This method has recently been attacked by Koksvik (manuscript), who argues that because our mental lives are rich and fluid, many different features would be able to account for the phenomenal difference and, thus, the conclusion that a certain feature *F* of the experience contributes to its phenomenal character is not warranted. These two main features of our mental lives are described as follows:

7 The method Kriegel describes here resembles Husserl's eidetic variation, but with the difference that the aim in the eidetic variation is to discover essences and Kriegel's proposal is to discover what is phenomenologically manifest.

RICHNESS At most times there is a lot going on in human mental lives: several remembered, occurrent and imagined bodily sensations, moods and emotions usually occur at the same time (or near enough), and many thoughts go through a person's head. Our mental lives are rich with activity.

FLUX Many (or most) of these goings-on are evanescent; a remembered bodily sensation may last only a fraction of a second. Attention changes around often. Our mental lives are in constant flux.

Because of RICHNESS and FLUX, his argument goes, we have every reason to believe that many of these features will differ between the two situations, and any of them could give a possible explanation of the datum. Feature *F* thus has no privilege over the other ones as being responsible for the phenomenal contrast. Koksvik himself considers some replies to his argument and provides answers to them (Koksvik, manuscript, p. 12).

The first reply to this argument that he considers claims that the magnitude of difference in phenomenal experience is greater than what differences in other contributors can account for. To explain the entire difference in experience we need to make reference to variance in the feature: called it *Fi*. Koksvik calls this '*the magnitude reply*'. He thinks this objection does not stand up:

> The first reply fails because it relies on implausibly denying poor identification and remembrance, and on claiming that we can accurately estimate magnitudes of change in overall phenomenology and magnitudes attributable to various contributors. If poor identification and remembrance is true there is no way to support the claim that the amount of difference overall cannot be accounted for by acknowledged contributors, since there will in each instance be contributors that were not initially correctly identifed or that were since forgotten (Koksvik, manuscript, p. 12).

By 'poor identification and remembrance' he understands our poor capacities to identify mental features, either because our introspective abilities are very poor or because we do not pay enough attention to them when occurring. This implies that later remembrance of them is also very difficult and subject to error.

In what follows I would like to defend the first reply from Koksvik's answer. A defender of the phenomenal contrast argument can accept our poor identification and remembrance capacities and *nevertheless* maintain that *F* is the particular feature that explains the contrast. This is because, as I said before, the phenomenal contrast argument has a phenomenological step *but also* a step of inference

to the best explanation. The level at which Koksvik poses and responds the first objection seems to be the phenomenological one, the one in which the situation is described, and here, arguably, failure to introspect some features would count against the proponent of the phenomenal contrast argument. But I think he confuses the two levels, and his reply really belongs to the level of inference to the best explanation, namely, to the level of discussion as to which is the relevant phenomenology. At this level, our introspective capacities do not really matter with regard to the feature *that explains* the phenomenal change. That we cannot introspectively identify certain features of our experiences (phenomenological level) does not mean that those features are not there and, less still, that a certain feature is not what accounts for the difference (inference to the best explanation level). For this, I think the answer that Koksvik offers to the magnitude reply is not adequade. This does not mean, of course, that the magnitude reply in itself succeeds, for I do not think that the phenomenal contrast argument directly shows that there is a greater difference in a certain parameter, it only shows that there is a certain phenomenal change between two experiences where all the other elements that by hypothesis remain identical cannot account for, and that the best explanation for that is to appeal to something else over and above the elements that remain identical. Exactly what the nature of this element is might be something that cannot be decided with this argument alone, even if it is true that it provides *prima facie* evidence for the presence of cognitive phenomenology.

Remember that Koksvic's objection is that, given RICHNESS and FLUX we have every reason to believe that many of these features will differ between the two situations, and any of them could give a possible explanation of the datum. Feature *F* thus has no privilege over the other ones as being responsible for the phenomenal contrast. The second reply he considers to this objection is that the difference in overall phenomenology is partly of a *kind* such that the differences in other contributors cannot explain (a certain aspect of) it. There are differences in other contributors, but they leave a particular kind of difference unexplained. He calls this '*the kind reply*'. To this he responds that the proponent of the phenomenal contrast argument is begging the question, as she is presupposing something she wants to show, namely, that there is a certain kind of phenomenology.

I also think that this reply is not adequate. To accuse the proponents of cognitive phenomenology to beg the question at this point is not fair, given that the method is designed precisely to test whether a certain feature contributes to the experience or not. "The privilege" that feature *F* has is pressuposed in the method from the beginning, when the two situations of the phenomenal contrast are designed and one of them lacks the mentioned feature (one of them includes the understanding experience while the other does not). Maybe the worry

is that, even if this is designed from the beginning, we can find many other features that could account for the contrast, apart from the feature that is not present in one situation. Then, Koksvic's objection seems to apply again. But notice that the method has ways to avoid this rejoinder if it introduces in the phenomenal contrast cases the parameter that is said to be responsible for the contrast over and above the one that is being tested, and thus it can generate the case again. If, for example, one says that variations in attention are responsible for changes between understanding and not understanding, then a case can be construed in which attention remains identical in both situations, and then test whether we still find a phenomenal contrast between these two cases. Thus, the method seems to have resources to discriminate between the alleged different parameters that could account for the phenomenal contrast.

4.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have presented the phenomenal contrast argument and argued that it has two levels of argumentation: the description of the cases or the purely phenomenological one, and the level of inference to the best explanation. I then presented the main cases in favor of a specific cognitive phenomenology: the experience of understanding, entertaining a proposition, grasping a mathematical proof, the experience of counting in foreign currency, the experience of "naturalness", higher order perception like perceptual recognition, (recognizing faces or the seeing-as phenomenon) and perception of spatial and size relations. I take the phenomenal contrast argument as showing that there is a phenomenal change that cannot be explained by appealing to sensory/emotional components (which, by hypothesis remain identical in both cases) and that this suggests, or is *prima facie* evidence for, the presence of a specific cognitive phenomenology.

I then considered an argument against the phenomenal contrast method in general, which claims that because of RICHNESS and FLUX, we have every reason to believe that many of the features of our experiences will differ between the two situations, and they can give a possible explanation of the *datum*, in a way that a certain feature *F* has no privilege over the other ones as being the responsible for the phenomenal contrast. A first possible reply to this argument is the 'magnitude reply', which the author rejects because it denies that our introspective capacities are very poor and subject to error. I have argued that the author's answer does not work by distinguishing the phenomenological level and the inference to the best explanation level of phenomenal contrast arguments, and arguing that it is a mistake to attribute this discussion to the phenomenological one (where introspective capacities matter) and should thus be attributable to the explanation level (where the worry disappears). A second possible

reply to his objection is the 'kind reply', the appeal to which, he answers, begs the question. With respect to this, I argued that his answer is not fair, given that the phenomenal contrast method has ways of discriminating between the alleged parameters that are appealed to in order to account for the phenomenal contrast.

5

RESTRICTIVISM

In this chapter I explore some restrictivist responses to the SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY view and I ultimately conclude that they fail to establish their aim.

5.1 TYPES OF RESTRICTIVISM

The restrictivist with respect to the phenomenal contrast arguments has some possible replies of the kinds presented in 1.3: eliminativism, phenomenal eliminativism, and reductionism. I examine them in turn and I specially focus on the last one, as it is the one that is most often presented against the specific cognitive phenomenology view.

ELIMINATIVISM

One first option with respect to the phenomenal contrast argument is straightforward eliminativism. This position would amount to deny any phenomenality in the contrast because it denies the very existence of conscious thought. A coherent eliminativism about conscious thought would probably result in a general eliminativism about consciousness, and it goes beyond the scope of this dissertation to argue against it. I would just say that if this position is to have any success, it has to be able to explain why it seems that we experience thought and that nevertheless there is no consciousness involved.

PHENOMENAL ELIMINATIVISM

Apart from the options analyzed in 3.1, another strategy available to the skeptic in the phenomenal contrast cases is to accept that there is a non-sensory contrast but to argue that this contrast is not *phenomenal* either. In the perceptual case, one could say that although we describe objects as looking like pine trees, there is room to argue that such use of 'looking' is not phenomenal at all. One way one could go would be to use what we can call the *epistemic-probabilistic* sense of 'looks'.[1] The sense of 'looks' used in sentences like 'it looks as if this tree is green' or 'it looks green' does not point to any phenomenal character but rather expresses something like: '*according to some evidence, it is probably p*'. The only similarity with the phenomenal sense of 'looks' is the connection with some evidence, because in both cases the speaker is saying something that follows from some kind of evidence. But this epistemic-probabilistic sense is to be distinguished from the phenomenal sense in that what it expresses does not necessarily have

1 And 'looks like', 'looks as though', 'seems', etc.

to do with what it is like to perceive something or to how things are presented as being. In the case I was describing, 'objects looking like pine trees' may not involve the phenomenal sense of looking but just the epistemic-probabilistic sense that would convey something like 'according to what I am seeing, the tree is probably green'. Of course this report is based on a phenomenal use of 'look', but it is in itself an instance of the epistemic-probabilistic sense. If the description of something looking like pine trees allows this sense of 'looks' just described, and not a phenomenal one, then learning to recognize a kind of object on the basis of perception does not provide any phenomenal change: it only conveys information about something we have some evidence for believing.

Regardless of whether this latter sense of 'looks' is the one at work in perception, one may ask whether this move is also available in the case of the phenomenal contrast in understanding or thought. If we take the example of reading a certain sentence twice, first without understanding and second with some comprehension of the sentence, you can apply the epistemic-probabilistic sense of 'look' to the perceptual episode involved in the understanding experience, as the written sentence on a sheet of paper. And then you can consider whether this written sentence is evidence for you to believe something (that there probably is a written sentence in front of you, etc.). But this is not to apply the sense of 'look' to the understanding experience but rather to the perceptual state involved in the understanding experience, and besides this I do not see how could you apply it directly to the understanding experience. Maybe you could say that, given some sensory information, it *seems* to you that you understand *p*, where this seeming would be cashed out in terms of 'according to this written evidence, this *probably means p*' and so the case can be construed. One particular situation could be construed thus, but how are we to construe the *contrast*? If in the contrast there is only the epistemic-probabilistic sense of 'look' involved, then it remains to be explained what has changed from one situation to the other one in which the person understands the sentence, given that the sensory inputs are the same and so the sensory evidence is the same. The option of denying the contrast is not available to this strategy, given that it accepts the contrast but denies its phenomenality. I think we should conclude, then, that this is not a successful option for the restrictivist: if one accepts the contrast and denies its phenomenality, the appeal to the epistemic-probabilistic sense of 'look' is of no help because it does not explain the contrast it was meant to explain.

Reductionism

The standard restrictivist response to phenomenal contrast arguments is to argue that non-cognitive elements do suffice to explain the alleged specific cognitive phenomenology. This line of argumentation, in contrast to the first kind of reply, does not deny that there

is a phenomenal contrast, or even that there is a *cognitive phenomenal contrast*, but rather denies that this contrast *requires* us to posit a distinctive cognitive phenomenology. In what follows, I will proceed by examining the reductionist strategy through what I see as the two main options: TYPE 1 REDUCTIONISM and TYPE 2 REDUCTIONISM. I will argue that they both fail to establish the reductionist view.

The reductionist strategy seeks to resist the attribution of a specific phenomenality to thought, arguing that although we might recognize a phenomenal character in conscious thought, there is nothing specific about it because it can be reduced to more familiar sorts of phenomenology, such as the sensory one. The general reductionist strategy is the following:

REDUCTIONISM. There is a phenomenology of conscious thought but the phenomenal character of such states can be accounted for with the phenomenology of other non-cognitive concomitant or associated states.

Tye and Wright (2011, p. 2-3) exemplify this position:

> We (...) are *not* opposing the following 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'.
> What we deny 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).

Among different kinds of reductionism, a useful way to distinguish the views is that between:

[TYPE1RED]. The phenomenology of conscious thought is to be accounted for with only *one* type of non-cognitive phenomenology.

[TYPE2RED]. The phenomenology of conscious thought is to be accounted for with a *disjunction* of different non-cognitive types of phenomenologies.

Notice that TYPE2RED includes the strategy of TYPE1RED, so the truth of the latter implies the truth of the former. I have kept them separate just to highlight that there are some prominent candidates of reductionism, such as sensory reductionism, which, if they succeed would make the reductionist strategy more simple.

It is also important to keep in mind that the debate between the reductionist and the non-reductionist is not a debate about the *existence* of a phenomenology of thinking but about its *alleged* specific phenomenology. The opponents we are considering now are not eliminativists but reductionists.

5.2 TYPE 1 REDUCTIONISM: SENSORY REDUCTIONISM

Among reductionists who favor TYPE 1 kind of reduction, the *sensory* domain is the prominent candidate. The sensory reduction strategy claims that in the phenomenal contrast in cognitive experiences like understanding, for example, variation and difference among sensory elements do suffice to explain the contrast. A proponent of this kind of reductionism is Prinz, whose general theory of phenomenal consciousness implies a reductionist view on cognitive phenomenology. I will briefly present his theory and some objections regarding the reduction he proposes.

Prinz (2002; 2005; 2012) has extensively argued for a general theory of consciousness according to which consciousness arises at the intermediate level of perceptual systems, where feature integration takes place and attention mechanisms are involved,[2] that is, with attended intermediate-level representations, or AIRs. It is an intermediate level between the low-level stage that responds to local stimulus features without integration and the high level perceptual stage that abstracts away details from the previous one. According to this theory, the neural correlates of perceptual consciousness are thus restricted to brain areas that implement this perceptual processing.

The strategy of this account, like many others, is to think that an account of perceptual experiences will give a *general* account of consciousness, so that the following conclusion serves as a slogan for the view: *all consciousness is perceptual consciousness*.[3] Once we frame the question of consciousness in these terms, the issue of the nature of cognitive phenomenology demands a quite straightforward and direct answer: whatever phenomenal character we are to find in conscious thought, it will have to be perception-like, so we end up with some form of restrictivism or reductionism to the perceptual. This makes us consider whether opposition to a specific cognitive phenomenology or to expansionism in this sense is somehow "theory-biased" in the first place, so that direct denials are provided only when certain theories of phenomenal consciousness are already accepted. Prinz, however, appeals to parsimony, arguing 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

2 For Prinz, intermediate-level mechanism is necessary but not sufficient for consciousness: attention is needed for consciousness to arise.

3 Prinz argues for the particular claim that all phenomenal consciousness is perceptual phenomenal consciousness, although he believes other uses and forms of consciousness are parasitic on phenomenal consciousness, and thus this more general claim can be defended (see (Prinz, 2007, p. 336)). This view contrasts, for example, with Peacocke's (1983), according to which conscious thought is a special case of another kind of consciousness, namely, action consciousness. Action awareness is the other case apart from thought than can provide objections to Prinz's view (Prinz, 2007, p. 341).

experience" (Prinz, 2007, p. 337). One assumption of the parsimony argument is, though, that the reduction works.

Given Prinz's theory of perceptual consciousness, the question to be asked regarding cognitive phenomenology is whether consciousness outstrips perception or the senses (Prinz, 2011b, p. 174). Prinz's argumentative strategy regarding specific cognitive phenomenology is mainly negative, as he tries to account for the cases in favor of cognitive phenomenology with the resources of his perceptual view of consciousness. Then, his positive stance consists in giving a diagnosis of the intuitions that guide expansionists in terms of introspective illusions. This last strategy is not very successful in principle, given that expansionists could appeal to a similar kind of reasoning for the diagnosis of the intuitions that guide restrictivists: when they posit just sensory phenomenology, they are in fact being blind to other kinds of phenomenologies. If we leave aside the sterility of this remark regarding introspection, Prinz argumentative strategy is mainly negative, as it will become clear.

Before presenting his way of understanding the main positions in the debate, he makes an important distinction between the vehicle, the content and the quality of mental episodes. The vehicle is a particular token that has representational content: in a sentence, the orthographic marks on the page, or the mental representations in the head. The content is what the vehicle represents: vehicles in the visual system represent shapes and colors, etc.[4] And the quality is how it feels when it is conscious, the phenomenal character. With these distinctions, the main positions in the debate are defined as follows: restrictivism is true if, and only if, for every vehicle with qualitative character there could be a qualitatively identical vehicle that has only sensory content; and expansionism is true if, and only if, some vehicles with qualitative character are distinguishable from every vehicle that has only sensory content. A content of a vehicle is sensory just in the case the vehicle represents some aspect of appearance and a content is non-sensory if it transcends appearance – if there are two indistinguishable things by the senses, one of which has the property and the other not.

The point is that the introduction of non-sensory content does not also introduce non-sensory phenomenal qualities, so that the content that goes beyond appearance does not have an impact on quality or experience. Restrictivists like Prinz, then, allow for conscious thoughts as long as there are no qualities over and above the sensory ones. Prinz accepts that conscious thought "feels like" something (there is a phenomenology), but not that it feels differently than sensory activity (all phenomenology is reducible to sensory one). He then tri-

4 Prinz endorses an empiricist view, according to which the vehicles in thought are copies of the ones used in perception and besides shapes, colors, etc., visual vehicles can also represent objects, natural kinds, or more abstract properties like numbers.

es to accommodate the phenomenal contrast of understanding and similar cases with differences in sensory elements, such as different associated mental images or inner speech or differences in the focus of attention. Briefly, Prinz's conclusion is the following: for cases of imageless thought, verbal imagery is at place and explains the phenomenology and for cases of languageless thought, non-verbal imagery is at place and explains the phenomenology. Cases in which both are absent are difficult to find or think of (Prinz, 2011b, p. 189).

Prinz is not the only one defending variations in attention and sensory elements as accounting for the phenomenal contrast cases. Fodor (1983), for example, defends a modularity thesis about the mind that entails what has been called cognitive impenetrability – that is, the view that in the modules of the mind, in this case in perception, there is encapsulation relative to information stored in central memory, paradigmatically in the form of beliefs and utilities. He defends that the *distribution of visual attention* over the spatial arrangement of the duck/rabbit figure, for instance, is different in each perception and this is what could account for the phenomenal contrast. Consistent with this, some authors argue that in the phenomenal contrast there is alteration of the purely sensory profile of the episodes, by affecting the parsing and foreground/background structure of one's *auditory* stream of consciousness – if it is auditory linguistic understanding (Jacob, 1998; Carruthers and Veillet, 2011; Prinz, 2011b; Tye and Wright, 2011).

5.2.1 *Problems with Sensory Reductionism*

Problems for the sensory reductionism view can arise in all those domains that outstrip the intermediate level, if we focus on Prinz's theory of AIRS. This is the case of high-level perceptual representations, perceptual constancies, the experience of presence in absence, motor actions and emotions. If some of these domains exhibit a distinctive phenomenology, then Prinz's theory is undermined.[5] I think the view suffers some problems, and here I am going to focus on the seeing-as cases in perception. The other problems will be presented when arguing against Type2Red in the next sections: 5.2.25.3 and, as will become clear, they are also applicable to Prinz's theory.

5.2.1.1 *Seeing-as: conceptual contribution to phenomenal character*

Remember that in the seeing-as phenomenon, experience changes when we perceive the picture as a duck or as a rabbit. Expansionists usually argue that concepts can influence perceptual experience in a way that this influence is a *contribution* to the phenomenal character. Prinz's response to this expansionist position is to argue

5 For a discussion of each of these domains, see Prinz (2011b, p. 178-181).

that conceptualization influences experience because there are shifts towards prototypicality (the phenomenon that makes the object easier to discriminate from others), verbal labeling, generation of associated images, and allocation of attention to category-relevant features. The point is that none of these requires postulation of a specific cognitive phenomenology:

> 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 a duck (Prinz, 2011b, p. 183).

Prinz's idea is that concepts influence experience in that they *produce* or *give rise* to other processes (prototypicality, verbal labeling, generation of images, changes in attention), so they have an *indirect* influence on experiences.

Against this view, there is a first reservation. It seems plausible to imagine two cases in which these features remain constant or change in the same way in two subjects faced with the duck/rabbit picture, and the overall experience is different between the one who possesses the concept and the one who doesn't. Think about subtle differences in kinds of birds, for instance: does a person without the concept of PLOVER have the same kind of experience as another possessing the concept KNOT when perceiving these birds? Introspectively, the answer is no; what seems difficult to argue is what accounts for this difference and what kind of contribution these concepts make to the perceptual experience. In seeing- as experiences, we *possess* the concepts (in order to see a duck as a duck you need to have the concept of DUCK). But concept possession does not imply *conceptual contribution* to experience, for Prinz and other restrictivists. My objection is the following: why should we deny that in possessing those concepts, there is a contribution to the phenomenal character of experiences? What is the evidence for denying this implication? I think it cannot be a default position to take for granted without an argument.

Prinz's response to this objection has to appeal to his view on the nature of concepts. For him, as an empiricist, concepts are distillations of percepts, and this gives an answer to my question. Concepts as distillations of percepts are components of experience and contribute to the experience and its phenomenal character but, as they are perception-like, their contribution is also perceptive. Phenomenal character remains sensory in kind, then. This answer responds of course to my objection, but presupposes a view on concepts that begs the question of cognitive phenomenology because it accepts beforehand that any contribution to experience would be perception-like, given that alleged cases of conceptual contribution to experience can be dismissed by appeal to the perceptual nature of concepts that the empiricist view proposes. Therefore, this answer makes sense within his

overall theory but cannot be clearly endorsed without commitments to empiricism on concepts.

Without presupposing an empiricist view on concepts, there is another answer available for the restrictivist, which is to appeal to the distinction between causal and constitutive contribution of concepts to experience. This is the path that Carruthers and Veillet (2011) take to account for the seeing-as cases and similar phenomena of concepts influencing perceptual experience. According to them, a concept makes a constitutive contribution to experience if it also makes a contribution to the hard problem of consciousness and the explanatory gap. They then provide their version of how these problems should be construed. Otherwise, we have just a causal contribution. The appeal to this distinction seems a good way out for the restrictivist, but this particular implementation of the distinction has the problem that it is too *theory charged* and it depends on different ways of understanding the hard problem and the explanatory gap such that these different ways would lead to different results of when 'constitutive' can be applied. To adopt such a strategy is to shift the problem to another domain and not give an explanation of it.

In conclusion, in absence of better accounts of the distinction, I think we should remain skeptical of the claim that concepts never constitutively contribute to the phenomenal character of experience. And it is precisely this claim that concepts contribute constitutively to experience that is needed for defending the presence of a specific cognitive phenomenology in the perceptual domain and, of course, also in conscious thought.

5.2.1.2 *Attention in thought*

There is still another problem with sensory reductionism if we focus on the role that attention is supposed to play (remember Fodor's position in which the distribution of visual attention is responsible for the phenomenal contrast). Firstly, I think that Fodor's response for the perceptual case is not available in the cognitive one, because the perceptual case presupposes a visual field and a role for attention which is not present in the same way in the case of thought. This does not mean that attention is not involved in conscious thought, it just means that it is not involved *in the same way*. In the previous chapter I have considered Peacocke's view on the matter, according to which to attend to something in thought is not to make it the object of thought but to occupy our attention on it. The point is, however, that it is difficult to see how in the case of understanding attention can be distributed differently in each instance. While understanding what we are reading, does it mean that first we focus on one word and then maybe on another, or on the whole sentence? This for sure can happen, but the question is that it is doubtful that this attention distribution over the written words is what accounts for the phenom-

enal difference between understanding something you read and not understanding it – or at least it seems difficult to match this difference with the phenomenal difference we experience when we understand.

5.2.1.3 *The role of phenomenal character*

There is still another problem of the sensory reductionism that appears from a phenomenological point of view. A natural and obvious reply is to say that sensory reduction does not pick out the relevant phenomenal character of the experience of thinking in front of the phenomenality specific of other non-cognitive states like perception. This could just be begging the question against the reductionist, but the phenomenological point is rather that giving descriptions of the thinking experience in terms of sensory, emotional, somatic, etc., phenomenal character does not *correctly describe* what it is like to think, what is to have an experience of a cognitive episode.

This general phenomenological point can gain support from the following idea. What is the phenomenal element that marks the experience as one of thinking and not perceiving, for example? When we have a certain experience of thinking it seems that it can be distinguished from other kinds of experiences (perceptual, emotional) *partly* on the basis of the experience itself. This means that just by way of undergoing a certain mental episode, by experiencing it, we are in a position to at least *distinguish* it is from another kind of mental episode.

Contrary to this, reductionist proposals do not seem to be in a position to distinguish thinking experiences from sensory or emotional ones on the basis of experience. We will expand on this point in 6. For the moment I think it suffices to note that reductionist approaches of the sort examined here can be accused of not doing justice to the phenomenon of thinking itself and thus of not being able to distinguish between different mental episodes partly on the basis of experience. The point is that if the phenomenal character of perception and thought is of the same kind, namely, sensorial, then there is no way, on the basis of experience, to distinguish between a perceptual experience and a conscious thought. If we *see* an ice cream and if we *consider* whether this ice cream is too expensive (in absence of the visual perception of the ice-cream, for example), and in both cases we have the same image of an ice cream, the mere experiential character cannot differentiate between the two mental episodes.

The sensory reductionist has four possible replies here, summarized here:

1. A first possible reply is to argue that there still might be differences in both images and verbal speech that can account for the phenomenal difference between the two episodes.

- In response, we can say that the most we have are some sensory differences between a visual perception and the mere entertainment of a proposition, so we are left with nothing else that makes us aware of undergoing a visual experience (and not thinking about it) or considering whether the ice cream is expensive. The point here is that the only *kind* of phenomenal character involved in both episodes is the *sensory kind*, and this leaves the question of how the sensory kind is able to distinguish between these two experiences unanswered.

2. A second possible reply claims that sensory phenomenology is typified in a way that can do the job, so that the sensory elements of cognitive phenomenology would be somehow "special" or sensory* (sensory of the kind involved in thought).

    - In response, I think that even if this seems a promising way of going for the sensory reductionist, I have not found any specification of what the difference between sensory and sensory*[6] would amount to and in fact I doubt there is such a specification at all.

3. A third possible reply is to deny the assumption of my objection, that is, that there is a way to experientially distinguish between visual and cognitive experiences.

    - In response, think of how can this thesis be supported. It seems implausible to claim that the phenomenal character of experience is so "blind" as to be unable to provide this minimal information about the kind of mental state we are in, even if it is untrustworthy and subject to mistake.

4. A fourth reply is the following:[7] the sensory reductionist is committed to being unable to differentiate between the perceptual and the cognitive episode. This might be so *in the very same moment*, but if you take a longer period of time, as an unfolding episode, then you obtain different *inferential* roles for distinguishing both experiences.

    - In response, I would saying that this seems and *ad hoc* solution to the problem presented, for how is the period of time required to be established? In virtue of what do we know what period of time to take into account? Phenomenologically, it seems that we are able to differentiate between a thinking experience and a perceptual experience without waiting some time, and we can do this on the simple basis of experience, without even knowing which inferential roles are connected to each experience.

6 Prinz does not provide this either.

7 Given to me by Prinz, in conversation.

For the reasons presented, I do not think the sensory reductionist succeeds in responding to the objection of the role of phenomenal character in distinguishing kinds of experiences. However, this claim will be further clarified and defended in 6.2.

5.2.2 *An Examination of Inner Speech Reductionism*

An element of discomfort in the sensory reductionism position comes from the question of what *kind* of elements are said to be sensory. Normally, these views take sensory elements to be some sort of images and inner speech. But nothing else is added with respect to the relation between these elements and conscious thought and the nature of their respective phenomenologies. This is the task I deal with in here, where I explore inner speech reductionism, a prominent candidate for sensory reductionism.

Recall the main claim we are interested in examining:

Specific Cognitive Phenomenology (SCP)*:* conscious thought has a specific phenomenal character.

Now the question is to confront it with the following one:

Inner Speech Reductionism (ISR)**:** the phenomenology of conscious thought is to be accounted for with the phenomenology of inner speech.

We should note that these two theses as stated are not incompatible, for one might hold that conscious thought is identical to inner speech. If this were the case, then conscious thought could have a specific phenomenology, namely, that of the inner speech because the two phenomena are one and the same. In fact, this seems to be an idea some philosophers have in mind:

> By streams of thought, I mean first and foremost the fairly slow, roughly serial, and typically deliberate phenomena we try to describe as 'talking to oneself' or 'thinking in words' (Lormand, 1996, p. 245).

However, I will exclude this possibility, as I think it is a big assumption to start with, one which needs to be defended against the common view that conscious thought and inner speech are two different phenomena, even if they share some elements. In any case, their relation is to be studied and not presupposed beforehand.

Clearly, ISR is an instance of Type1Red. The following passage from Jackendoff illustrates this position:

> I conclude that phonology is necessary and sufficient for the presence of linguistic qualia, and meaning is neither necessary nor sufficient... if we pay attention to the phenomenology of 'conscious thought', we find it most

> often has the form of linguistic images—'inner speech' or a 'voice in the head,' a Joycean stream of consciousness... The form of the associated thought, a semantic/-conceptual structure that is capable of driving inference, is not at all present in experience (Jackendoff, 2007, p. 82).

Robinson (2005, p. 240) refers to the "subvocalization" process as follows:

> to affirm that for most normal cases, subvocal saying of 'p' is all the phenomenology there is that is distinctive of having the thought that p.

The aim of reducing the phenomenology of thought to that of inner speech, although not always explicit, is that of showing that inner speech is somehow a *sensory* phenomenon more similar to other sensory processes and thus conscious thought does not enjoy any specific phenomenal character. Robinson (2005) says:

> What is in dispute is whether such thoughts [thoughts that are not perceptual thoughts, based on perceptions] have a phenomenology that is non-sensory, non-imagistic, and distinctive to particular thoughts (Robinson, 2005, p. 535).

The reduction to sensory elements and not semantic ones is an important commitment of ISR. As it is visible, one crucial question here is what inner speech is and what relation it has to conscious thought. Many reductionists take for granted that inner speech is a phenomenon that does not require further examination in relation to our question. The aim of this section is precisely to clarify what inner speech is and what relation it has to conscious thought, because the debate between SCP and ISR may depend on precisely our conception of both the nature and the phenomenology of the elements involved. In the next section, I examine the relation of conscious thought and inner speech in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions in order to have more elements for the analysis at the level of phenomenology.

5.2.2.1 *Relation between conscious thought and inner speech*

With respect to the relation between inner speech and thought we can distinguish two main positions:[8]

(i) Inner speech is a *sufficient condition* for conscious thought.
(ii) Inner speech is a *necessary condition* for conscious thought.

8 This issue has to be distinguished from the more general question of the relation between language and thought, my concern being here the particular case of inner speech and thought.

I do not consider the view that inner speech is necessary and sufficient for conscious thought, because it is obviously false: for conscious thought to obtain it seems reasonable to claim that other necessary conditions must obtain – something must happen in the brain, etc. This is also valid for the sufficiency claim, so the idea with sufficiency is that, given whatever other necessary condition is required for conscious thought (brain states, etc.), insufficient by themselves, inner speech does suffice for conscious thought.[9]

Depending on one's view of this relation, it seems that one would be in a position to have evidence in favor of SCP or ISR. In this section I will argue that (i) can only be true under one reading and (ii) is false. I first make some clarifications in order to evaluate both claims and to finally draw some consequences out of them.

5.2.2.2 *Clarification I: propositional conscious thought*

For the moment, I have described conscious thought as cognitive occurrent mental episodes. Besides this, something else must be added before going on in this section. One may distinguish between *propositional thought* and non-propositional conscious thought. Instances of non-propositional thought would be expressions like 'ouch!', for example. The propositional kind is the most recognized form of thought, and normally the propositional character is already supposed when speaking about thought. I will use as a working definition that propositions are 'the primary bearers of truth-value, the objects of belief and other "propositional attitudes" (i.e., what is thought, believed, etc.), the referents of that-clauses, and the meanings of sentences'(McGrath, 2011). I will assume that, under minimal conditions, a proposition is a possible world truth-condition and so, according to this, visual-imagistic thought would count as propositional. Imagistic thought is pervasive in our daily lives: if I think about which is the best way to go to the university from my new flat, I may think in images. It is a question in itself whether these two types of thought are equivalent or not, but for our purposes here it suffices to focus on propositional thought.

5.2.2.3 *Clarification II: inner speech*

Inner speech is often described in common language as the phenomenon of "talking to oneself". The nature and phenomenology of inner speech is still very controversial and the phenomenon has not been studied in depth, in spite of its pervasive presence and importance in our conscious life: Heavey and Hurlburt (2008) show that inner speech takes an average of 26% of our conscious waking life, although

9 A precise formulation of this condition is Mackie's *inus condition*: (i)nsufficient but (n)on-redundant parts of a condition which is itself (u)nnecessary but (s)ufficient for the occurrence of the effect (Mackie, 1980, p. 62). This will be the use of sufficiency in this part.

this may vary greatly between subjects. Morin (2009) reports all sorts of cases in which inner speech is a relevant phenomenon. There is room to study, for example, similarities and differences between inner and outer speech, and inner speech probably shares fundamental properties with outer speech (see Vicente and Martinez Manrique (2010)). For the points I want to make I do not need to assume any particular view on this. It is important to note that inner speech as such includes linguistic aspects (the *speech* part) as well as imagery aspects (mental images), and the two will be acknowledged in this section.

It will be useful to note that inner speech is not the same as the Language of Thought (Fodor, 1975). This hypothesis claims that thought is carried out in a representational format that constitutes language, but that this language is different from *public language* (it is an innate universal language, "Mentalese", which has its own combinatorial syntax and compositional semantics). In contrast, inner speech is closely related to natural languages (see Vicente and Martinez Manrique (2010). In order to further specify inner speech, I will distinguish the following elements.

SENSORY VS. SEMANTIC ELEMENTS When presenting ISR I said that there was a distinction between the sensory and the semantic elements of inner speech. This needs to be elaborated. In the mechanics of inner speech psychologists normally distinguish between a production system and the perceptual/comprehension system, in a similar way as outer speech. For example, McGuire (1996) shows that the brain areas activated in inner speech and imagining speech differ with respect to *perception* areas, but are the same for speech *production*. This is just an example to show that psychologists normally distinguish between the two elements. There are also some studies that show that both elements are *separable*, so people born without the ability to make use of the speech apparatus and people born without the ability to hear may develop forms of inner speech (see Bishop (1985, 1988); Bishop and Robson (1989); Campbell (73-94)). From this characterization, I think we can distinguish (conceptually and at the level of mechanics) between what we may call 'sensory' elements and 'semantic' ones. The semantic element is the responsible for the meaning of the string of words, whereas 'sensory' refers to all the other non-semantic elements present in inner speech: syntactic, phonologic and auditory elements, etc. This distinction is based on the different psychological systems involved in inner speech: sensory elements are thus arguably produced by the production system of inner speech and semantic ones by the perceptual/comprehension system of inner speech. [10] The distinction between sensory and semantic can

10 One could doubt whether the auditory image element of inner speech is only part of the production system and not of the comprehension or perceptual system, but in

be applied both to linguistic and imaginistic kinds of inner speech: in the imaginistic case, a semantic image may be an image that can be said to carry propositional content, whereas sensory images may only refer to the sensory aspects of the images.

FRAGMENTATION VS. CONDENSATION. We can draw a distinction within *linguistic* inner speech into two relevant types: complete and fragmented. Psychologists, relying on the studies of Vigotsky (1962), speak of the *form* of inner speech as divided into *expanded inner speech* – internally conducted dialogue which retains the give-and-take structure of external dialogue, and is conducted in syntactically complete utterances – and *condensed inner speech* – dialogic utterances abbreviated into fragmentary, condensed series of verbal images or words and phrases. The particular view of inner speech can vary, but there seems to be a generalized agreement between philosophers and psychologists upon its *fragmentary* character. This fragmentary character is considered one of its *salient* features (Wiley, 2006, p. 322).[11]

But notice that psychologists seem to conflate two different things under the labels of 'fragmentation' and 'condensation'. As I see it, it is one thing to point to the fragmentary character and quite another to say that it is condensed. Although the two labels are used indistinctively in the literature, I think it is worth distinguishing between them on the following grounds. It makes sense to think of inner speech as condensed, where this means that inner speech can be expanded into syntactically complete utterances which may express a proposition – I take it that the rules of syntax rule out cases of not well formed sentences which do not express any proposition. In this case, the string of inner speech 'cat, mat', for example, is just the condensed form of 'the cat is on the mat' and therefore can carry a propositional thought.

Contrary to this, if we think of a string of inner speech as essentially fragmentary, then the series 'cat, mat' cannot carry any propositional thought: it is essentially as it is presented. It cannot be expanded into a complete sentence because it is just the experience of saying two different words to oneself which do not have any underlying connection relation.

I think this distinction will help us to evaluate whether inner speech is necessary and sufficient for conscious thought, especially in the case of sufficiency, as we will see, because the results will be different if we consider condensed or fragmentary inner speech.

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any case this does not tell against the existence of two separate systems at the levels of mechanics.

11 Psychologists usually distinguish between four features of inner speech: (i) silence, (ii), syntactical ellipses or short-cuts, (iii) semantic embeddedness, i.e., highly condensed word meanings and (iv) egocentricity or highly personal word meanings (Johnson, 1994, p. 177-179, quoted by Wiley (2006)).

RELATION OF THESE FEATURES As I see it, both condensed and fragmentary inner speech can be cases of sensory inner speech and semantically charged inner speech. If I say something like 'brrrg' in inner speech, this can be a fragment of inner speech without meaning, and if I say 'table' in inner speech this can be fragmentary and have meaning. Similarly, if I say 'cat, mat' in inner speech, this is a condensation of the sentence 'the cat is on the mat', for example, and 'cat, mat' has both sensory and semantic elements. As already said above, while the sensory/semantic distinction is applicable to both linguistinc and imagistic inner speech, the fragmented/condensed one just makes sense for linguistic inner speech.

With these distinctions at hand we are in a position to evaluate whether inner speech, in any of the senses described, can be a sufficient and a necessary condition for thought.

(I) INNER SPEECH AS A SUFFICIENT CONDITION FOR CONSCIOUS THOUGHT (IS $\rightarrow$CT) This thesis means that the existence of inner speech guarantees the existence of conscious thought.Depending on what constraints inner speech has, this sufficiency claim holds or not. Let's proceed step by step.

1. *Sensory inner speech*: (IS sen $\rightarrow$CT)
    - *False*: clearly, if repetitions of words without sense (like 'bla bla bla', for example) count as inner speech, then (i) directly fails, because 'bla bla bla' is not sufficient for thought. We do not say that when a parrot repeats the sounds we make it is thinking. The same applies to merely sensory images.
2. *Semantically charged inner speech:* (IS sem $\rightarrow$PCT)
    - *False* for linguistic inner speech: if one says in inner speech the word 'cat', we have something semantically charged, it has meaning, but it does not express a conscious thought.
    - *True* for imagistic inner speech: if one has a certain mental image that carries propositional content (in the minimal sense in which we understand propositions), then this may be sufficient for conscious thought, because the very image may be said to express a proposition.
3. *Condensed inner speech:* (IS cond $\rightarrow$PCT)
    - *True*: in absence of a clear counterexample, it seems that condensed inner speech is sufficient for propositional conscious thought. As explained above, condensation implies that the manifest words in inner speech somehow contain the whole proposition, that is, that they can be extended

or that "there is more" in the inner speech than what is expressed in the string of words.[12]

- An assumption for this claim to be true is that inner speech is always *conscious* inner speech, because if in fact there is something like unconscious inner speech, then the conditional would be false. I take this assumption to be reasonable in the absence of other reasons to think the contrary.

4. *Fragmentary inner speech:* (IS frag →PCT)

    - *False*: fragmented inner speech cannot be sufficient for conscious thought, because there is nothing more than fragments of speech. Consider, for example, someone saying to herself 'cat', 'mat'. If this is not a condensation of something that can be propositionally put as 'the cat is on the mat' but is essentially fragmented, then this is not sufficient for carrying conscious thought.

The only option for the *sufficiency* claim to be true is in the case of condensation for linguistic inner speech and semantically charged imagistic inner speech, both of which are equivalent to saying that conscious thought is present when the inner speech already carries propositional content (by way of expanding the condensed inner speech into propositions or by having images with content).

(II) INNER SPEECH AS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR PROPOSITIONAL CONSCIOUS THOUGHT (CT → IS) Let's now consider the necessary claim: it is stronger than the sufficiency claim in that it states that the non-existence of inner speech entails the non-existence of conscious thought. The examination of this conditional is especially important because one could run the following argument: if there can be propositional conscious thought in the absence of inner speech, then the proponent of SCP has made her case, for the phenomenology of inner speech is not there to account for the phenomenology of conscious thought. Although I try to show this in this section, I also think that the case cannot be made so quickly: the defender of ISR can always reply that in the absence of inner speech, there is no other

12 Notice that the claim I am making here *does not* imply that condensed inner speech is sufficient for having a specific or determinate content, which is a stronger claim that has been challenged by contextualists in philosophy of language. They have challenged the view that sentences by themselves carry propositional content as a matter of pure semantics and so contextual information is needed in order to fix the content. If these views succeed, it means that there is no determinate content brought about by the sentence itself and this implies that whether or not we experience fragments or full sentences the thoughts have more content than that carried by the sentences in inner speech.

phenomenal character in thought, there is simply no such experience of thinking.[13] Let's look at the question in detail.

Again, if we make use of the distinctions made above, we may be in a position to evaluate the necessary claim and, afterwards, this claim with respect to SCT and ISR. Proponents of the necessary view may include Jackendoff (2007; 2012) and Carruthers (1996).

What we need in order to falsify the condition is that the antecedent be true and the consequent be false. There seems to be experimental evidence in favor of this for linguistic inner speech: **Levine (1982)** presented a case in which a patient lost inner speech because of a stroke but preserved language skills based on developed mental imagery. Language skills include reading, writing, verbal short-term memory and calculation, verbal reasoning, abstraction and learning. They distinguish between two senses of inner speech: the *subjective* phenomenon of talking to oneself and the *objectively* measurable ability to appreciate the auditory-articulatory structure of speech irrespective of its meaning (the subject may be required to divide words into syllables, to detect homonyms, etc.). While reading and writing require inner speech in the sense of phonologic analysis and synthesis, calculation is considered to require inner speech in the sense of silent speaking. The period of verbal short-term memory – auditory or visual – involved in calculating is thought to be sustained by silent rehearsal of the sequence. 'Inner speech' seems to be here linguistic inner speech or auditory-articulatory inner speech, as they call it: it is a terminological matter whether we say that the patient has no linguistic inner speech or that he preserved inner speech based only on visual mental imagery.

The patient they studied by Levine et al lost inner speech in both senses of the term. Objectively, he was unable to analyze words on the basis of their auditory and articulatory structures. Although completely unable to speak, he could communicate by writing, he comprehended speech; his verbal short-term memory span was nearly normal, and his calculating ability was far above average. Subjectively, he did not speak silently.

How did they know there was no subjective inner speech? On the one hand, by reports: when asked whether he was able to speak to himself, the patient repeatedly answered that he used visual rather than auditory or articulatory imagery. Spoken and written words triggered visual images of their referents. If there was no image for the word, he was able to visualize the word itself, and if there were not words, he experienced jumbles. On the other hand, a technique to detect the presence of subvocal speech during calculation was electromyographical recording.[14]

13 She can also adopt a Type2 reductionism, which I explore below.

14 Electromyography (EMG) is a technique for evaluating and recording the electrical activity produced by skeletal muscles. EMG is performed using an instrument called an electromyograph, which detects the electrical potential generated by mus-

To sum up, the patient was capable of high-level performance on all these tasks thought to require inner speech. The authors consider that it is possible that these abilities were performed without inner speech, since the congenitally deaf must read, write and calculate in this way, but there was no evidence before this case of a normal adult who was able to perform these tasks having lost inner speech as a result of brain damage. If these skills fall under the label of 'propositional conscious thought' and they are present without any inner speech, this case would be a counterexample to (ii).

With respect to imagery inner speech, the results of Levine *et al* do not help us evaluating the necessary claim, given that the lack of inner speech in their experiments amount to the lack of linguistic inner speech. So the question we ask ourselves now is: is imagistic inner speech necessary for conscious thought? The answer to this question seems to be quite straightforward: while we can think in images and our conscious thought can be accompanied by such images, there being imagery inner does not appear to be necessary for the presence of conscious thought, as many people also experience linguistic inner speech when thinking without any visual imagery (Hurlburt and Heavey (2001); Heavey and Hurlburt (2008)). Even proponents of the view that inner speech is the vehicle of conscious thought and, thus, of its necessary occurrence in conscious thought do not want to claim that all conscious thought occurs in images (Jackendoff, 2012; Carruthers, 1996).

At this point, one may say that all I have shown is that, on the one hand, linguistic inner speech is not necessary for conscious thought to occur because in the experimental case of *Levine et* al imagistic inner speech does the job and, on the other hand, imagistic inner speech is not necessary for thought, given that in the absence of imagistic inner speech, we can still have linguistic inner speech. So it seems that we need something that rules out the necessary claim *for both* linguistic and imagistic inner speech and answers the general question: is inner speech (in whatever form) necessary for conscious thought? In this respect, an answer is suggested by Hurlburt and Akhter (2008) with the case of what they call 'unsymbolized thought', that is, conscious thought without linguistic inner speech and without any other visual imagery, something like pure thought which has a specific experience. This kind of thought is described as one of the five most common features of inner experience (the other four being inner speech, inner seeing, feelings and sensory awareness). I think these studies show the presence of a kind of thinking without any kind of inner speech, and so the necessary claim would be false. A detailed examination is provided below when exploring TYPE2RED.

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cle cells when these cells are electrically or neurologically activated. The signals can be analyzed to detect medical abnormalities, activation level, recruitment order or to analyze the biomechanics of human or animal movement.

To sum up, (i) imagistic inner speech does not seem to be necessary for conscious thought, (ii) the recognition of the case described by Levine (1982) also poses a problem for linguistic inner speech being a necessary condition for it, and finally, (iii) the appeal to unsymbolized thinking (though defended below) seems to motivate the falsity of the necessary claim.

Evaluation

The following table is a summary of the results:

	Sufficiency claim	Necessary claim
(1) Sensory IS:	F	F
(2) Semantic IS:	F (linguistic) / ***T*** (images)	
(3) Condensed IS:	***T***	
(4) Fragmented IS:	F	

The only option for the *sufficiency* claim to be true is, for linguistic inner speech, the case of condensation, and for imagistic inner speech, the semantically charged case. The two cases acknowledge the presence of propositions in the very occurrence of the speech or the images. And this amounts to saying that the proposition (the propositional thought) is already present in the inner speech. The *necessary* claim can be refuted with the experimental case described by Levine et al (1982) for the case of linguistic inner speech, it also seems false for the imagistic case and, in general, the case of unsymbolized thought motivates the unnecessary character.

Remember that the analysis between the relation of conscious thought and inner speech was a way to evaluate what is at stake here, namely, the debate between SCP and ISR. The relevant question at this point is: *do option (i) and (ii) provide any evidence in favor or against the SCP or ISR theses?*

1. On the one hand, the sufficiency claim is false in all the cases except for condensed inner speech, which may be true in absence of reasons against it, and for the semantic imagistic thought. I think the sufficiency claim, thus, speaks *against* ISR, because for the claim to be true it either has to introduce the condensed form of inner speech, which presupposes the semantic component of it, or the image carrying propositional content. But remember that ISR is a reduction to the *sensory* elements of inner speech, or to sensory inner speech. Therefore, the analysis of the sufficiency claim gives us evidence against ISR.[15]

15 A possible objection to this is that there could be a disposition for specific syntactic expansions within condensed inner speech that would be able to discriminate between two strings of inner speech with the same semantics. This would imply that the sufficiency claim does not provide evidence against ISR, because a dispositional mechanism at the level of syntax would be enough to account for the fact

2. On the other hand, in what position does the falsity of the necessary claim leaves us? With the variables introduced in this section, I think we should say that the this claim is *neutral* with respect to SCP and ISR, because if there is propositional conscious thought in the absence of inner speech, the defender of SCP has a way of arguing that there is a specific phenomenology, because the phenomenology of conscious thought cannot always be accounted for with that of inner speech. But at the same time, the falsity of the necessary claim is not enough to defend SCP and indeed it is a reason to hold ISR, because one could construe it as saying that conscious thought only has phenomenology insofar as there is inner speech. If there are cases of conscious thought in which there is no inner speech, then ISR does not need to assume that there is phenomenology at all – this is precisely what is at stake. The defender of ISR can then either adopt a TYPE2 reductionism (and try to argue that a disjunction of other types of phenomenologies suffices for the reduction to work) or explain how it is that we have an experience of thinking without any phenomenology.

5.2.2.4 *Objection and reply: the phenomenological unity of inner speech*

For the sufficiency side in the case of linguistic inner speech, the defender of ISR has, however, a way out: she could say that she accepts semantically charged inner speech but that the reduction of phenomenology is *just* to the sensory elements involved in inner speech, leaving the semantic part free of any phenomenology. Although this seems a plausible answer, there is an independent reason to think that the reduction to only the sensory aspect implies a distinction that is not present at the level of phenomenology.

A motivation for holding ISR is that of reducing the phenomenology of conscious thought to the *sensory* elements of inner speech. But is the phenomenology of inner speech *just sensory* in kind? This would amount to saying that what we experience are just the phonological elements, the syntax component of inner speech, the inner voice voided of the semantic component. If this is so, the defender of ISR has a way out of the results of the previous section.

A way to defend this is to rely on the mechanics of inner speech, distinguishing the production system and the perceptual/comprehension system of inner speech, in a similar way as outer speech, as we have seen above. The relevant question here is whether the mechanics and the separation in these two systems entail a *phenomenological* difference. Defenders of ISR seem to be committed to the metaphysi-

that condensed inner speech is sufficient for conscious thought without appealing to the semantic component. However, the presence or absence of this disposition is an empirical claim and so it would have to be established empirically.

cal separation between the two elements, and moreover, to the view that this difference also makes a phenomenological difference or separation: the bearer of phenomenology is the "inner voice" or the string of internal sounds, leaving the interpretation component free of phenomenology. But this does not seem what in fact occurs when we experience inner speech: inner speech is not presented in experience as a separation in these two elements, we do not experience a string of sounds and afterwards an interpretation of them. There are various reasons that support this. [16]

First, notice that the the interval of time for going from one system to the other is too short to be phenomenologically significant. Second, restricting phenomenology to the sensory aspect of inner speech would amount to equating cases in which one repeats phrases or words without any sense, purely sensory streams of inner speech, with standard cases of inner speech in conscious thought. Notice that the distinctions made above between sensory and semantic inner speech were just kinds of inner speech one could recognize, but I have not restricted the sense of inner speech to any of them.

In general, it seems a phenomenologically compelling reason to say that the sentence or the string of words in inner speech appears as *already* having one interpretation or other, and thus it is already cognitive or semantic in nature, leaving ISR without the main motivation for the reduction.

I have tried to resist the idea that even if the mechanics of inner speech recognize two systems involved, this does not suffice to hold a separation at the level of phenomenology, for the reasons just mentioned, and this precludes the reduction to the sensory elements of inner speech to succeed. Cases of imageless thought, for example, cannot be accommodated by an appeal to verbal inner speech. In contrast, defenders of SCP can better accommodate the phenomenology of inner speech without being committed to the *experiential* separation between sensory and semantic elements.

5.2.3 *Summary and final remarks*

I have explored one kind of reductionism, inner speech reductionism (ISR), versus the thesis of a specific cognitive phenomenal character for conscious thought (SCP) through the relation between inner speech and conscious thought – whether inner speech can be a necessary or a sufficient condition for conscious thought. I clarified that we are talking of propositional conscious thought, supposing a very minimal requirement for what a proposition is. Within the phenomenon of inner speech, I distinguished sensory and semantic elements, and the fragmentary and condensed character as relevant features. With these distinctions, I evaluated the sufficiency claim and conclude that

16 See also Dumitru (manuscript), for an argument on this line.

it is just true for the condensed inner speech. As for the necessity claim, I presented empirical evidence undermining it. These conclusions allowed me to evaluate the debate between SCP and ISR. On the one hand, if the necessary claim is false, as it seems, we are left with a neutral claim with respect to SCP and ISR, and some further analysis on reductionism is needed. On the other hand, the results of the sufficiency claim speak against ISR, because for the claim to be true it has to introduce the condensed form of inner speech, which presupposes its semantic component. But remember that ISR is a reduction to the *sensory* elements of inner speech, or to sensory inner speech. Finally I consider an objection to this and I give a reply based on the phenomenological unity of inner speech, which can also be seen as a direct objection against ISR.

Notice that the necessary claim left the door open for Type2Red, so we will need to examine this option in order to resist the reductionist strategy. SCP as a *general* claim, then, can only be successful if, on the one hand, we accept a non-restricted sense of phenomenal consciousness (in the two senses explored in 1.1) while recognizing a certain experience for conscious thought, and Type2Red also fails. This second option is precisely what is analyzed below. Before that, let me introduce a brief excursus on an alleged direct counterexample to sensory reductionism, the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon.

5.2.4 *A note on the Tip-Of-the-Tongue and the incompleteness of thought*

An example used in the literature when dealing with SCP and sensory reduction is the tip-of-the-tongue (TOT) phenomenon: the frustrating situation in which one is unable to say a word despite knowing what one wants to say, or the situation in which one is searching for the right words to express a train of thought. The description of this case would be one in which there is semantically charged phenomenology (because one somehow knows what one wants to say) in the absence of the word for expression in outer speech. We find, however, diverging interpretations of the phenomenon. On the one hand, Goldman (1993) takes the phenomenon to show that there is non-sensory cognitive phenomenology:

> 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.... Entertaining the conceptual unit has a phenomenology, just not a sensory phenomenology Goldman (1993, p.365).

On the other hand, Lormand (1996) commenting on Jackendoff, interprets it in the opposite way, and argues that all we find there is sensory in kind:

> Jackendoff uses the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon to 'demonstrate' that 'conceptual structure is excluded from [phenomenological] awareness' (1987, p. 290). He distinguishes the aspects of what the experience is like into a soundless 'form' and an 'affect' of effort, so that 'one feels as though one is desperately trying to fill a void' (1987, pp. 290 and 315). Neither of these aspects seems 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" [italics original] (Lormand, 1996, p.247).

This phenomenon would be a case in which there is conscious thought without it being expressed in language. This would provide the proponent of SCP with a counterexample for sensory reductionism. A possible objection[17] to this interpretation of the phenomenon is the following: the TOT would only be a counterexample if

(i) the thought is complete and its linguistic expression isn't, and

(ii) the thought has phenomenology.

Condition (ii) is accepted by both parties, as the discussion here is about the nature of this phenomenology and not about its existence. And (i) seems to be an assumption of the proponent of the TOT phenomenon as evidence for SCP that, the objection claims, we do not need to assume.

Let's address condition (i). Why should we assume that the thought is complete? The answer seems to be that we already know in some sense which word it is that is on the tip of the tongue, so that we can recognize the word when we finally remember it. The sense in which I know the word I am looking for is that I know the corresponding concept (or chain of concepts), and thus the thought is complete. However, this is reminiscent of Meno's Paradox: if I don't really already know what I'm looking for, how will I know when I've found it? It is not an acceptable answer to this paradox that I already know it, so the objection continues, why should we conclude that in this case? Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) gives numerous examples in which I am drawn to complete something in a certain way, without knowing in advance what it is:

> I walk along a shore towards a ship which has run aground, and the funnel or masts merge into the forest bordering on the sand dune, there will be a moment when these details suddenly become part of the ship, and indissolubly fused with it. As I approach, I did not perceive resemblances or proximities which finally came together

17 Pointed out to me by Komarine Romdenh-Romluc.

> to form a continuous picture of the upper part of the ship. I merely felt that the look of the object was on the point of altering (...) Suddenly the sight before me was recast in a manner satisfying to my vague expectations (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, 17/20).

In this example Merleau-Ponty is describing an experience of not yet having parsed the scene into a ship (the figure) that stands out against a forest (the background). This example from the field of perception aims to exemplify an experience *as of something about to happen*, or in other words, an experience of *expectation* that is finally *fulfilled*. Perhaps then, we can draw the parallel case for our cognitive experience and interpret the TOT phenomenon as an experience of this kind, in which the thought that seeks to be expressed is not complete until the expression comes to one's mind (or one is finally able to find the expression). Thus, the objection goes, TOT would not be a counterexample to ISR.

However, this objection has the following reply. Condition (i) aims to show that one plausible construal of TOT is one in which the thought is not complete, so that the assumption of the proponent of the TOT as evidence for SCP is undermined. I find this construal of the TOT as an incomplete thought a plausible explanation of the experience of TOT, but I don't see *why the incompleteness of thought would preclude the thought from having specific phenomenology*; I think that the completeness of thought is a claim the proponent of SCP does not need to assume. In this sense, the objection is ungrounded and the TOT would be a genuine counterexample to sensory reduction.

Even if one is convinced by these comments, we may regard the TOT phenomenon as a very marginal case and thus not sufficiently relevant for deciding the question. However, following my comment, maybe the incompleteness of thought is a feature also present in other cases, thus pointing to a wider phenomenon. Perhaps the TOT phenomenon is indicative of something more pervasive in our mental lives: this experience *as of something about to happen* or *expectation*, applied to the case of thought.[18] The experience of the incompleteness of thought might have an associated phenomenology which is not the phenomenology of inner speech and might indeed be specific.

5.3 TYPE2 REDUCTIONISM

The second reductionist strategy examined is TYPE2RED:

18 We might have this experience in domains other than thought, such as perceptual experience, as we have seen, but the relevant case would be here a purely cognitive one.

TYPE2RED The phenomenology of conscious thought is to be accounted by *a disjunction* of different non-cognitive types of phenomenal characters.

This strategy might seem more compelling, as it plays with more options, and thus seems to have more chances to succeed. Carruthers (2006) offers an example of a restrictive and TYPE2RED view:

> . . . thoughts aren't phenomenally conscious per se. 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, 2006, p. 6).

Lormand (1996); Tye and Wright (2011) are also proponents of this kind of reductionism. What is the relation between these two kinds of reductionism? Clearly, TYPE2RED as formulated above includes TYPE1RED, but leaves room for a particular failure of a candidate of reduction; in which case it can still be argued that other non-cognitive states can be the bearers of the phenomenal character of conscious thought. TYPE2RED can be seen as motivated by the restrictive scope of TYPE1RED, as it is a way of acknowledging that just one type of phenomenology may not suffice for the experience of thinking. It is also a more phenomenologically nuanced view, as it considers different sorts of phenomenal states that are present when thinking. I will present two attempts to defend TYPE2RED and I will argue that they fail for different reasons.

Lormand (1996) was the first to dispute Goldman's (1993) revival of the cognitive phenomenology debate in a reductionist way. He contends that propositional attitudes are only accompanied by associated states, and it is these states and not the propositional attitude itself that has the qualitative character:

> 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 (Lormand, 1996, p. 246-247).

Lormand proposes the Qualitative Quartet as the *legitimate bearers* of phenomenal character. The quartet is composed by the following kinds of mental state:

- (i) conscious perceptual representations, such as tastings and visual experiences
- (ii) conscious bodily sensations, such as pains, tickles and itches
- (iii) conscious imaginings, such as those of one's own actions or perceptions
- (iv) conscious streams (or trains) of thought, as in thinking "in words" or "in images".

This kind of TYPE2RED is exhausted by these four kinds of state. Another proposal along these lines has been recently put forward by **Tye and Wright (2011)**. It is similar to Lormand's in almost all respects, with the difference that they add (without any explicit reason) another kind of states: primary emotional experiences, such as feeling anger or fear, and the experience of effort:

> from a phenomenological perspective, thinking a thought is much 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 (Tye and Wright, 2011, p.329).

There are several ways of arguing against TYPE2RED. Two have already been presented when arguing against sensory reductionism in 5.2.1. In particular, the kind of contribution that concepts make to experience and the role of phenomenal character in distinguishing thought from perception, for example, are two problems that equally apply to TYPE2RED.

5.3.1 *Objection 1: cognitive element in the reduced states*

Tye and Wright (2011) propose that *"one or more phenomenal states"* will account for the phenomenal character of thought. And then they add that it is important that all these states are considered as inherently non cognitive or conceptual, so that in a twin earth-ing of the concepts – where the concepts are externally individuated and thus have different content – the phenomenology remains the same. I think that the assumption they are making is problematic. In line with what has been presented in 5.2.1.1, a possible response to their TYPE2RED is to claim that these states *are not entirely free of a cognitive element*, despite what they claim without more argumentation: "even in the case of human beings, emotional experiences often do not seem to involve

thought" (Tye and Wright, 2011, p. 329). We have seen the cases of seeing as involving concepts that constitutively contribute to perceptual experience, but now the point is that this might indeed be what happens for other cases of alleged non-cognitive phenomenology.

If some of them are inherently conceptual, is their reductionist strategy in trouble? Remember the importance of taking care of the use of 'conceptual' in the dialectics of our debate, mainly because of two things: first, we have seen the problems with equating conceptual with the cognitive and non-conceptual with the sensory (see 1.2.2), and second, if this line of response is successful, it would establish the presence of a cognitive or conceptual component in the fields of perception, imagination, etc., and the modification of the perceptual experience by the states of one's cognitive system but it would *not* directly imply anything about the phenomenal character of thinking. Cognitive penetration[19] would, at most, constitute indirect evidence for the phenomenology of conscious thought, in the sense that if the line of separation between perception and thought is not that sharp, there seems to be no inconsistency between having conceptual content and possessing phenomenal character. This last claim is what gives evidence for SCP, even if this evidence is *indirect*: one the one hand, it makes the boundaries between cognitive episodes and other kinds of states less rigid and thus gives more plausibility to the idea of having conceptual content and phenomenal character in one mental state, but on the other hand, this is compatible with thought not having any phenomenology or more familiar kinds of phenomenology.

5.3.1.1 *Objection 2: Pure abstract thought*

The phenomenal contrast strategy can be complemented by the presentation of singular cases in which, if there is experience or phenomenal character, the sensory or non-cognitive elements do not suffice to explain it. A particularly interesting case, due to its being in the limit, is the case of what can be called *pure abstract thought*. Is pure abstract thought possible? If it is possible to consciously entertain a pure abstract thought without any of the mentioned accompanying states being present, then this would be a counterexample for the reductionist and it would allow the proponent of a SCP to claim that also in other cases of thought there is also this kind of phenomenology. What would the reductionist say in those cases? She would probably deny that there is any phenomenology involved in such cases, were they possible. Some authors, like Robinson (2005) have taken the cases in which there is no possible sensory-imagistic accompaniment as evidence for the claim that there is no phenomenality to thought.

19 This phenomenon has been labelled 'cognitive phenomenology' in an *impure* sense (seeLevine (2011)) or as non-proprietary cognitive phenomenology (Nes, 2012,Bayne and Montague, 2011a, p.12)

This holds, however, only if they operate with the restricted by definition sense of phenomenality. But if phenomenal consciousness has a broader sense (as reductionists accept), then what would it mean to consciously entertain a pure abstract thought without phenomenal character?

If there are pure abstract thoughts, then these possibilities emerge:

1. There is no phenomenal character in these cases (neither specific nor non-specific). Within this possibility, two other options are available:
    a) Non-pure abstract thoughts do have specific phenomenology (jointly with other non-specific phenomenology).
    b) Non-pure abstract thoughts do not have specific phenomenal character, only non-specific.[20]
2. There is a specific phenomenal character in these cases. This would imply one of the two following claims:
    a) This is evidence for the fact that there is also a specific phenomenal character in non-pure abstract thought.
    b) There is no specific phenomenal character in non-pure abstract thoughts.

All these possibilities are *conceptual possibilities.* Among the possibilities open in 1, 1b seems to be more reasonable: if there is no specific phenomenal character in pure abstract thought, then I do not see why there should be this kind of phenomenal character in the non-pure abstract thoughts and other kind of thoughts. If this were so, the extreme case of pure abstract thought is not very helpful for our analysis. Among the possibilities open by 2, 2b is quite strange to defend, because it attributes specificity only to pure abstract thought and not to all the other cases, but then this alledged kind of cognitive phenomenology specific of pure abstract thought would just appear in this extreme case, what seems not very plausible. Therefore, it seems reasonable to remain with these two possibilities:

1. There is no specific phenomenal character in pure abstract thought and the same applies to all other kinds of thought.
2. There is a specific phenomenal character in pure abstract thought and this is evidence that it is also present in non-pure abstract thought.

So it seems that if can find evidence for this extreme case, we would have made the case for the proponent of SCP. The difficult task is

20 Among non-pure abstract thoughts there is also the possibility of not having phenomenology at all, and this would amount to the eliminativist position not considered in this dissertation or to the proposals of non-phenomenal consciousness examined above.

precisely to find evidence for these extreme cases, given that in most of our conscious thinking, the presence of images, inner speech and other accompaniments is so pervasive. However, we have some empirical evidence that points in this direction and that might be useful to examine next.

5.3.1.2 *Empirical evidence for the experience of unsymbolized thinking*

In the scarce empirical research directly investigating our topic, we find some experiments that aim to support the existence of *unsymbolized thinking*. In 2.3 we introduced the Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) method with sufficient detail as to be able to present the experimental cases here that would vindicate a specific experience of thinking. Hurlburt and Akhter (2008) defend that there is the experience of an explicit, differentiated thought that does not include the experience of words, images or any other symbols. They further argue that it is one of the five most common features of inner experience, together with inner speech, inner seeing, feelings, and sensory awareness. They do not want to show that it is omnipresent, but that it exists as experience. In their paper, they acknowledge that

> Despite its high frequency of occurrence across many individuals, and despite (or perhaps because of) its potentially substantial theoretical importance, many people, including many professional students of consciousness, believe that a thinking experience that does not involve symbols is impossible; in fact, such phenomena are rarely discussed (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008, p. 1365).

They attribute the lack of attention to, among other things, the *presupposition* within scientists and philosophers that all thinking must be in words. Their aim is to contribute empirically to highlighting and describing different kinds of inner experiences.

INDICATORS They show the presence of unsymbolized thinking mainly through the interview that they carry out with subjects after some days of sampling in which they annotate what was going on in their experiences when a random beep sounds in the daily environments of the subjects. From the sampling experience they focus on some extracts from the reports of the subjects, like these: [21]

1. I wonder how much cheaper that is than Cox Cable?
2. I wonder if Cox... how much cheaper this NetZero could be than Cox Cable.
3. I wonder, y'know, if this is actually cheaper.
4. I wonder if it's really that much cheaper?

21 See Hurlburt and Akhter (2008, p. 1365-1366) for a detailed explanation.

5. Thinking of... Cox Cable versus NetZero.

They acknowledge the difference in expressions of all these statements, even though they preserve the same meaning. It seems to be a mark of the unsymbolized thought that the reports vary one from each other more and subjects are less confident about them than in cases in which inner speech is involved, where subjects are more confident of the exact words of their thinking.

A second point that makes them think of this phenomenon is that the subject appears to be helpless, powerless in the face of her own observation of her experience, by conveying expressions like:

> 'I know this sounds weird, and I don't think it's really possible, but you asked me to tell you exactly what is in my experience and this is it. Sorry if it didn't conform to your expectations, but this is what I was thinking' (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008, p. 1366).

A third indicator is that although the interviewers give her the chance to provide less controversial descriptions of experience by asking her whether it was in words or in pictures or images, etc., she sticks to her description.

Fourth, the use of 'I wonder' to introduce the description of their thoughts is a mark of unsymbolized thought, but they recognize that this cannot be a rule, given that many wondering in fact involve images and inner speech and other cases of unsymbolized thought might not be introduced by 'I wonder' in the reports (and perhaps merely an 'I am thinking'). So this is a clue rather than a rule for the presence of this phenomenon.

In addition to these marks, the researchers identify other cases in which unsymbolized thought is not the main or the only feature of experience (as in the case presented) but is rather part of a more complex inner experience that may include other instances of unsymbolized thinking, inner speech, inner seeing, and other kinds of experiences. Perhaps these simultaneuous experiences would be discovered not to be simultaneous if we had access to the underlying processes of thinking, as suggested in 2.4, but the DES method does not judge this question and they remain at the level of experience, in which the mentioned subject experiences them simultaneously. This feature of the method is an important one, as the results on unsymbolized thinking do not imply anything else at the neuronal level or between the relation of this experience to underlying phenomena and its integration into theories of thought or theories of consciousness. This is consistent with my approach to the 'horizontal' feature of consciousness.

WHAT UNSYMBOLIZED THINKING IS AND WHAT IS NOT Once these indicators have been presented, they present in more detail

what exactly unsymbolized thinking is. The first remark they make is that it is a *complete* phenomenon on its own, so that it is not a part or something unfinished, vague, deficient, or implied in some other phenomenon. It stands at the same level as inner speech and other well known phenomena. Second, it is a way of *experiencing* that is directly apprehensible without need for inferences. Third, it is experienced as *thinking*, and not as a feeling, not as an intention, nor as an intimation or a bodily event. Fourth, the content of the thinking is *explicit:* subjects easily report what they are thinking and, fifth, this content is *differentiated*, that is, it is not vague or general. Sixth, and importantly, they claim that the content of the thought is directly in experience, as it is not the case that the mere "title" of the thought is experienced and the rest is not conscious, or that the unsymbolized thought is a precursor of the symbolic one. Seventh, this phenomenon presents itself *all at once* as a unit (without rhythm or cadence, no unfolding or sequentiality). Thus there is no separation between the subject and the predicate of the thought, even if it can be said that it has this structure (and this contrasts with thinking when there is inner speech). Eighth and finally, unsymbolized thought does not include the experience of words, images or any other symbols. Subjects that experience it as a main feature do not "say to themselves" some words, nor hear those words, nor see those words, or experience those words in some other modality.

It is notable that, unlike other phenomenological empirical studies of experience, unsymbolized thinking is not something the researchers aim to *show* before hand and ask the subjects for that, but it is something that *emerges* when they start with no target concept and carefully ask subjects to describe randomly selected everyday experiences. Unsymbolized thinking is thus the end of the research and not the starting point.

In the interpretation of their results, Hurlburt and Akhter distinguish unsymbolized thinking from other kinds of experiences and, interestingly, from experiences that we have pointed out as instantiating cognitive phenomenology. They claim it is not a merely *fleeting thought* (Robinson, 2005), as unsymbolized thinking can last as long as other inner experiences, even if they can also be fleeting. It is not the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon I just discussed above, nor the feeling of familiarity or rightness described by Mangan (2001) (although these last claims remain unargued for in their paper). They go further and also state that it is not merely the understanding experience that lies behind verbalization because, they argue, unsymbolized thought is a complete experience and not an adjunctive or interpretative process of a verbalization.

At this point I think they are not doing justice to the understanding experience phenomenon, by describing it as a mere interpretative move from verbalization. Even if the understanding experience

is described as based on some sensory input (a written word, hearing something, etc), the point of the phenomenal contrast argument is to precisely to point to some phenomenal change that cannot be accounted for with these sensory material. What this discrepancy shows is that the aim of Hurlburt and Akhter, on the one hand, and Strawson and Pitt and other proponents of the understanding experience on the other, is quite different at this stage. If we accept the existence of unsymbolized thought as a distinctive kind of experience, we have more evidence for the view of SCP; however, Hurlburt and Akhter are not explicitly committed to any view on the specific phenomenal character of thought or cognition and, importantly, they are not worried about the scope of this phenomenology across cognitive experiences, which is precisely something that is important for proponents of SCP.

The only philosopher they recognize as describing the same phenomena they characterize is Siewert and his description of non-iconic 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 (Siewert, 1998, p. 276).

SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE RESULTS There is of course resistance to accepting these results, and Carruthers (1996) considers Hurlburt's reports (1990, 1993) of unsymbolized thinking and objects to them. He accepts that people sometimes do think without images or words, but denies that such thoughts are conscious. The main point of his criticism is, relying on the reports of Nisbett and Wilson (1977) experiments, that subjects' reports are not in fact a direct observation of the phenomena but a *self-interpretation* about their thinking; therefore they are confused. Tye and Wright (2011, p. 335) also note this difficulty in suggesting that the alleged unsymbolized thoughts cases the subject may indeed not be thinking at all. Now it seems that the (old and) pervasive problems of interpretation of introspective reports have a substantial effect on the results on unsymbolized thinking.

In fact, Hurlburt and Akther acknowledge that this self-interpretation is possible and indeed has occurred when subjects gave reports about inner speech, which they confuse with some other phenomena (unsymbolized thought, sensory awareness or some other complex experience) and in fact is *more frequent* when subjects report inner speech and images than in unsymbolized thought cases, because of the distress some subjects initially experience when reporting unsymbolized thinking (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008, p. 1371). They further suggest that if this argument from Carruthers' holds, it holds across the board and it might be leveled against *all* introspective reports of inner

speech, visual imagery, and so on. But this does not seem a very good result for all experiments involving reports of first-person experience, which nevertheless are common in scientific studies of consciousness. Indeed, they add, if Carruthers' claim were true, it remains unexplained why subjects would hit upon unsymbolized thinking when searching for a plausible self-interpretation and believing (as a presupposition) that all thinking occurs in words, as we are in front of an asymmetry:

> It is thus easy to imagine a person giving an inner-speech explanation for an unsymbolized experience, but it is not at all easy to imagine a person giving an unsymbolized thinking explanation for a verbal (or absent) experience. (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008, p. 1371).

With respect to this, one of the aims of the method, as I presented it in 2.3.3, is that they are aware of this danger and they carefully study the differences between the *actual* experience and what subjects *think* or *say* about it. The way to do this is to have different descriptions of sampled experiences and careful interviews in which the investigator and the subject go deeper into the description of the experience. Moreover, a feature of the method they think can meet Carruthers' challenge is that subjects are asked to write on their experiences quickly after the sound of the beep and are asked about their *actual* experiences; afterwards, in the interview, triggered-by-the-beep thoughts and the like are left out. Their method is therefore not a brute appeal to introspective reports or armchair introspection they attribute to Carruthers, [22] but requires subsequent work on these reports and on various sampled experiences.

A further objection Tye and Wright (2011, p. 335) provide is that the subjects' inability to provide any consistent description of the content of such thoughts does not entail that they had no associated imagery. The first reason for this is that having the attention drawn to the noise of the beeper and to the task of recording one's experiences may have a masking effect, thus undermining the ability of the subject to access imagistic vehicles for their previous thought's contents. And the second reason is that it should not be surprising that this inability is present, given that it could stem from the non-linguistic nature of imagery. However, notice the two following things. With respect to

22 An example of armchair introspection would be this: 'So what one needs to do, firstly, is to introspect while (or shortly after) *using* some sentence of the natural language in the course of one's daily life; and secondly, while (or shortly after) one has been entertaining privately some complete thought, or sequence of such thoughts. In the first sort of case, what one discovers ... is that there is often *no* separable mental process accompanying the utterance of the sentence itself; or, at least, not one that is available to consciousness. In the second sort of case what one discovers, I believe, is that our private thoughts consist chiefly of deployments of natural language sentences in imagination – inner thinking is mostly done in inner speech' (Carruthers, 1996, p. 50).

the second reason, it is true that the non-linguistic nature of imagery can explain why subjects do not provide consistent descriptions of the contents of their thoughts, but the point is rather that the subjects show this inability once it is clear that there are no images nor inner speech present in their episode. Indeed, and with respect to the first reason, if there is a masking effect that precludes the subject from having access to the images, then we need a reason to think that this effect is at place in these cases and not in the cases of reporting imagistic thoughts, where the subjects clearly report the presence of images without problems.

Actually, Hurlburt and Akther do not claim that every occurrence of thinking occurs in the absence of imagery, and consistently claim that imagery is present in a lot of cases, *but* still they provide reasons to believe in the existence of this particular experience: the resistance of the subject to describing her experience as containing images or the lack of confidence in the spelling out of the thought in words in spite of, in other cases, being able to directly say there were images or simply report the words produced in inner speech.

5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have presented the restrictivist position in its different guises: eliminativism, phenomenal eliminativism and reductionism. For each of them I have argued that they do not succeed in fully undermining the SCP claim, even if they pose challenging problems to it. I have spent the rest of the section examining reductionism, within which I distinguished TYPE1RED and TYPE2RED.

As an instance of the former, I presented sensory reductionism and argued that this view has two main problems: the account of seeing-as cases in which there is a conceptual constitutive contribution to the phenomenal character of experience, a remark on the role of attention in thought, and the impossibility of this view to account for the role of phenomenal character in distinguishing kinds of experiences for broad categories such as perception and thought. This point will be developed in the next chapter 6. Still within sensory reductionism, I analyzed the particular strategy of inner speech reductionism, through a careful examination of the elements involved in the relation between conscious thought and inner speech. As a strategy of TYE1RED, sensory reductionism fails, and this why I continued examining TYPE2RED strategies.

There I argued that similar problems arise with respect to the alleged inexistence of non-sensory elements to which these positions are committed and I provided the conceptual dialectics for making the case plausible of pure abstract thought, a kind of thought without inner speech and images. I argued that this conceptual possibility would give evidence for SCP, given that both reductionists and anti-

reductionists accept that there is an experience of thinking. Finally, I have presented some empirical evidence of unsymbolized thought that I take to empirically confirm my philosophical thesis of SCP. Unsymbolized thinking is what I have called pure abstract thought, [23]and examining their empirical cases, it seems to be a pervasive phenomenon of our conscious life. Such empirical evidence can of course be objected to, and I have surveyed some of the major critiques of the results, having already discussed the main lines of the method they use in 2.3.3.

23 Hurlburt and Akhter do not call it pure abstract thought because they think this commonly refers to a 'state cultivated by serious practitioners of some contemplative traditions', (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008, p. 1368) and this allegedly implies some enlightenment of these subjects over the other ones. I do not find this a convincing reason not to use the label 'pure abstract thought' and I think this implication is not contained within this name or is even implied contextually, more generally.

6

THE EPISTEMIC ARGUMENT

One source of motivation for the idea of a specific cognitive phenomenal character is the alleged role that phenomenal character plays in relation to the knowledge we have of our cognitive episodes. A main idea of the epistemic arguments is that phenomenal states can be known in a special manner (Goldman, 1993; Pitt, 2004), or that there is a special and distinctive kind of knowledge that is appropriate for phenomenal states (Siewert, 2011). Some authors claim that phenomenal character somehow grounds the capacity for subsequent self-knowledge (Smith, 2011; Thomasson, 2005,2008).

In a previous part of this thesis I have implicitly used a claim involved in some epistemic arguments when I claimed that subjects, by virtue of experiencing thoughts, are at least in a position to distinguish whether they are in a perceptual state or in a thought state, for example. The kind of distinguishability implied in this claim can be read as a certain kind of knowledge.

In this chapter I aim to defend this minimal version of the epistemic argument, which I think is all we need to argue for the specific phenomenal character of conscious thought, and consequently I will claim that this minimal account is in a better position than more demanding views.

Goldman (1993) is a proponent of a version of the epistemic argument, and he argues that awareness of one's own mental states must involve an appeal to properties that are both intrinsic (non-relational) and categorical (not merely non-dispositional), and the only properties that might meet these conditions are phenomenal properties. This argument relies partly on something being instrinsic, and such a notion is controversial, at least when it is used as opposed to relational. As Weatherson and Marshall (2012) note, this seems to be a mistake, since many properties seem to be both relational and intrinsic. For instance, the property of *having longer legs than arms* consists in a certain relation being satisfied and nevertheless it is intrinsic of the subject who has it. Maybe it can be argued that the property is not intrinsic if whether or not something is an arm or a leg is extrinsic. But then, there seems to be other counterexamples available: the property of *having a proper part* is surely intrinsic, but it also seems to be a relational property.[1]

1 Weatherson and Marshall also respond to a possible objection to this last example: "As Humberstone 1996 notes, some might respond by suggesting that a relational property is one such that if an object has it, then it bears some relation to a non-part of it. But this won't do either. Not being within a mile of a rhododendron is clearly relational, but does not consist in bearing a relation to any non-part, as we can see

Maybe we could reformulate Goldman's argument with a more nuanced notion of intrinsicness, but it is not clear that the move of appealing to intrinsic properties is needed in the first place to defend a phenomenological account of the awareness of one's mental states. What is the reason to accept that awareness or knowledge of one's mental state must involve intrinsic properties? Why couldn't we be aware of our occurrent mental states through a relational property like *having this kind of phenomenal character as a part of the mental state,* for instance? While the appeal to categorical properties seems warranted (it is *occurrent* awareness of the mental state in question), the appeal to intrinsic properties does not seem to be well-founded, and even less when its characterization is cashed out as opposed to relational properties.

Another version of the epistemological argument is found in Soldati and Dorsch (2005), who argue for the existence of qualia for propositional attitudes, what they call "conceptual qualia". The gist of the argument is this: (i) we can tell apart our thoughts introspectively; (ii) what we introspect of our mental states are their phenomenal characters – we do not need to observe ourselves or to talk to other people in order to know what we are thinking. From these two premises they conclude (C) that introspectible differences between the propositional states have to be manifest in their respective phenomenal characters, and hence that these states possess this character which is at least as specific as their intentional contents. Premise (i) is further specified like this:

> We can tell, say, whether our current thoughts are about the fog in Ivrea or about some features of the Himalaya; and we can tell whether they involve the endorsement of the respective states of affairs as really obtaining, or as to be brought about, or whether we instead consider the relevant propositions neutrally, that is, without any evaluation or commitment (Soldati and Dorsch, 2005).

This quote suggests that the first premise implies introspective knowledge of both *content* and *attitude*, given that they claim we can distinguish between a thought about p (the fog in Ivrea) and a thought about q (some features in the Himalaya) and also between different propositional attitudes, like considering a certain proposition neutrally without evaluation or commitment, or stating some states of affairs as obtaining. Thus, Soldati and Dorsch present a view of introspective knowledge as capable of distinguishing between thoughts with different content and also different kinds of attitudes towards a certain content.

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by the fact that a non-rhododendron all alone in a world can satisfy it" (Weatherson and Marshall, 2012).

What remains slightly dubious in their argument is the conclusion they draw that the states possess a phenomenal character that is at least as *specific* as their intentional content. What 'specific' means here is not developed further, and it is something important in order to give an account of the relation between phenomenal character and content. In their reasoning, it is implied that such phenomenal character must be as specific as necessary in order to warrant the distinguishability between thoughts with different contents and different cognitive attitudes. But a more detailed picture of the relation between phenomenal character and content and attitude is not given.[2] However, for their aim in the paper, it is sufficient if they can show the presence of conceptual *qualia* tied to propositional attitudes.

A view along these lines but with stronger commitments is developed by Pitt (2004), who defends that there is a proprietary (specific), distinctive and individuative phenomenology for conscious thought. Pitt presents the following argument:

Immediate knowledge of content argument.

1. Normally one is able to consciously, introspectively and non-inferientially ("immediately") to do three distinct things: (a) to *distinguish one's ocurrent conscious thoughts from one's other's ocurrent conscious mental states* (b) to *distinguish one's ocurrent conscious thought each from the others* (c) to *identify each of one's ocurrent thought as the thought it is.*

2. One would not be able to do these three things unless each (type of) ocurrent conscious thought had a phenomenology that is: (1) proprietary (2) distinct and (3) individuative -constitutive of its representational content.

3. Conclusion: Each type of conscious thought – each state of consciously thinking that p, for all thinkable contents p –has a proprietary, distinctive, individuative phenomenology.

These premises need some explanation and clarification. The argument has the form of a *transcendental* argument: there is a fact, this fact could not obtain unless certain other things obtain, so we conclude that these other things obtain.

Premise 1) is a *fact* that can be summarized as follows: it is possible immediately to *identify* one's occurrent conscious thoughts: one can know by acquaintance *which* thought a particular occurrent conscious thought is. The form of knowledge appealed to is knowledge by *acquaintance*, which contrasts to other forms of knowledge that involve inferences, descriptions, etc., (more details will follow). The 'normally'

2 I give my account in 8 and 9.

involved in the premise is meant to preclude situations of confusion, inattention, impaired functioning, etc. A *proprietary* (or specific) phenomenal character would allow us to distinguish a type phenomenology for thought among other kinds of states such as perceptions, imaginations or emotions. The *distinctiveness* claim means that this specific phenomenology is not shared by all mental states within the same genus, e.i., *thought*, but that it allows us to distinguish the thought that *p* from the thought that *q*. The claim of the *individuative* character of phenomenology says that phenomenal character is what allows the subject of experience to determine *all* properties of a thought relevant for picking out the thought as the thought it. This third thesis makes the view much stronger: in addition to distinguishing thoughts kinds from non-thoughts kinds, type-thoughts x from type-thoughts y, the phenomenal character of thought is meant to be *constitutive* of its content or to *determine* the content of the thought. Notice that the individuative claim pressupposes the other two claims, but not the other way around: the proprietariness claim could be endorsed alone; the distinctiveness claim too,[3] and the proprietariness and distinctiviness claims could also hold without the individuative one. The third claim, thus, makes the view stronger.

Premise (2) states a *necessary condition* for the obtaining of the fact stated in 1), and could be summarized as follows: it would not be possible to immediately identify one's occurrent conscious thought unless each type of conscious thought had a proprietary, distinctive, and individuative phenomenology.

From these two premises, the existence of a proprietary, distinctive, and individuative phenomenology follows.

Pitt presents abilitites (a) and (b) analogous to what Dretske (1969) calls "non-epistemic seeing" or "simple seeing" (1979), whereas (c) would be analogous to "epistemic seeing". In his view, an object *O* is simply seen by a subject *S* if the subject *S* differentiates the object from its immediate environment *purely* on the basis of how O looks to S (how O is visually experienced by S), where "looking some way" neither presupposes nor implies that the S has any beliefs about it. In contrast with this notion, the epistemic seeing Dretske describes involves beliefs: to see that *O* is *F* it to believe that it is *F* because of the way it looks. Both kinds of seeing are *immediate,* that is, they do not involve inferences. A motivation to draw this distinction is that one might be able to simply see something (discriminate it from the environment) without visually identifying what it is. Pitt calls non-epistemic seeing "acquaintance" and epistemic seeing "knowledge by acquaitance".

3 Note that phenomenology may not be proprietary but distinctive, for the distinctiveness could come from the accompanying states of thought, and the other way around: it could be proprietary but not distinctive (if it was not sufficient to distinguish among thought types).

Following this distinction, Pitt applies this machinery to conscious thought. *Introspective acquaintance* will then be the abilities described in (a) and (b), and may be understood as a form of simple acquaitance (anal ogous to simple seeing in Dretske's terms). And *knowledge by acquaintance* will be the knowledge based on it (analogous to epistemic seeing in Dretske's terms), that is further labeled "grasping that". This grasping a thought is what ability (c) expresses, and Pitt says it is different from simply thinking *p* (which is analogous to simply seeing *o*) and simple introspection. On this view, knowledge by acquaintance or the ability to identify each of one's ocurrent thought as the thought it is is a matter of having a *belief* that the thought *t* has the content *that p*.

6.1 DISCUSSION OF THE ARGUMENT

Pitt's argument has been objected to on several fronts. Particularly he has been accused of assuming an *observational* or *perceptual* model of introspection (Tye and Wright, 2011), according to which introspection would consist in a form of "inner eye", in analogy with the "outer eye" we use in perceptual experience of the outer world. Remember James' words:

> The word introspection need hardly be defined – it means, of course, the *looking* into our own minds and reporting what we there discover (James, 1890/2007, p. 85, my emphasis).

This metaphor quickly leads to a perceptual or observational model, which, according to Tye and Wright (2011, p. 339), Pitt is mistakenly assuming[4], given his understanding of introspection as a matter of turning one's attention "inward" and experiencing inner mental particulars. As an alternative, they sketch a reliabilist picture of introspection according to which the occurrent thought causes a belief about it that provides evidence for the subject regarding the mental state she is in. In this view, there is direct access to the thought that *p* itself, which is evidence for the belief that one is thinking that *p* without being an *evidential reason* for it (that is, evidence that does not provide propositional justification for those beliefs). An alleged virtue of this account over Pitt's is, for them, is that it is not based on the perceptual model, for the introspective access to our thoughts differs from the perceptual access to our environment: the visual scene before our eyes (appropriately) causes our visual experiences and we have access to the scene precisely by this experience, but according to them, we do not have access to our occurrent thoughts by having experiences

4 See also Shoemaker (1996, pp. 201-239) for a detailed criticism of the perceptual model of introspection.

that are (appropriately) caused by the thoughts. The introspection access to our thoughts is direct.

I want to point out that Tye and Wright might be too quick in classifying Pitt's understanding of introspection as a perceptual or observational model. On the one hand, Pitt adopts the following analogy with perception:

> I do not mean to suggest here that simple introspection is simple *perception* of mental particulars, nor that the experience of an occurrent conscious mental particular *M* is a state different from *M. (...)* Simple perception is attentive experience of external objects; simple introspection is attentive experience of internal objects. But to say this is not to say that conscious mental particulars are the *objects of* introspection in the way that physical particulars are the objects of perception. A perceived external particular (one may suppose) is distinct from an experience of it. An introspected conscious mental particular, in contrast, is *part of* the introspective experience of it: to say that one simply introspects a conscious mental particular is to say that one has a conscious experience of which the mental particular is itself a differentiated constituent *(Pitt, 2004).*

So, even if introspection is understood by Pitt as attentive experience to internal particulars, this does not directly commit him to a perceptual model of introspection. The objects of introspection are not analogous to the objects of perception, for they are differentiated parts of a certain conscious experience. Remember from 3.2.2, that one can distinguish between a certain thought being an object of attention (similarly to perceptual experience of objects) and our attention *being occupied* in thought, where accepting the latter does not commit oneself to the former and thus to the perceptual analogy. Thus, "turning one's attention inwards" to experience's mental particulars does not entail an adoption of the perceptual model, contrary to what Tye and Wright seem to think.

Similarly, Pitt can also accept the direct access to our thoughts, that Tye and Wright describe as one consequence of their alternative account. The fact that we do not have access to our occurrent thoughts by having experiences that are (appropriately) caused by the thoughts can also be accommodated in Pitt's understanding of introspection, given that he does not accept either that the conscious thought causes a further experience by which we gain knowledge of our thought: the introspected mental particular is already part of the conscious experience and not a further experience caused by the thought.

As a result of this, the reasons Tye and Wright offer for classifying Pitt's introspective model as a perceptual model might not be sufficient to show what they want to. So I think Pitt's argument can be

adopted without being committed to a perceptual model of introspection.

What I find really problematic in Pitt's argument is to accept the *whole* fact that is stated in the first premise, and specifically, the individuative claim. With Soldati and Dorsch and Pitt, I think that the introspective abilities can support the proprietariness claim, as we will see. This view seems to be supported by the empirical evidence we find in the experiments with the DES method, in which subjects seem to be very confident about whether they are seeing something or just wondering about it, and also can distinguish between different thought's contents.

A first problem with premise (1) is that Pitt might be relying on powerful introspective capacities that are very doubtful. As we have seen in 2.1, our introspective abilities are less powerful than we might have thought. Premise (1) seems not to take into account such criticisms of introspective evidence, both from philosophy and from psychological studies. Notice that, according to Pitt, our introspective capacities are such that they warrant knowledge of thoughts from non-thoughts, of thought's different contents and of thought's identification as the thought it is. This last claim implies knowledge about the *determination* of content, and this seems to want too much from introspection.

The only I need in order to defend a specific phenomenal character for thought or cognition is the proprietariness claim, that is based on the fact that we are able to distinguish introspectively between thoughts as different kinds of states than perceptions, imaginations, etc. This was the minimal requirement I set up and used when arguing against sensory reductionism in 5.2.1.

In relation to this, Pitt's version of the epistemic argument assumes a form of *internalism* about the determination of the contents of thought. Notice that what allows him to defend the first premise to the point of individuation of thought's content is that introspective capacities allow us to individuate the thought as the thought it is *on the basis* of its phenomenal properties (premise (2)). And phenomenal properties are internal and susceptible to introspection.[5] In this way, internalism about thought's content is a view he is assuming in the epistemic argument.

This individuative claim has also been referred to as the *transparency* of content thesis: two subjects can tell a priori, on the basis of introspection, whether two thoughts or thought constituents have the same content. This thesis is defended by authors who believe that it has to be presupposed if content plays any role in assessments of rationality or in explanation for action, for instance, but it has been

5 In this part I am assuming that phenomenal properties are internal to the subject, as Pitt and many other authors do.

denied by many externalists about mental content who hold that thought contents are individuated externally (Putnam, 1975, Burge, 1979). This last idea is the basis for a non-individualistic view on the individuation of thought's contents, that is, the view that individuating many mental states is necessarily dependent on relations that the subject bears to the physical or social environment. Burge describes the general insight of these thought experiments as follows:

> Their common strategy is to hold constant the history of a person's bodily motion, surface stimulations, and internal chemistry. Then, by varying the environment with which the person interacts while still holding constant the molecular effects on the person's body, one can show that some of the person's thought vary. (...) The upshot is that which thoughts one has – indeed, which thoughts one can have – is dependent on relations one bears to one's environment (Burge, 1988, p. 650).

Familiar externalist arguments were first put forward by Putnam in the *Twin Earth* thought experiment. Perfect Twin Earth is an imaginary planet which is molecule-for-molecule identical to Earth, including having exact duplicates of the Earth's inhabitants, except for a systematic change in certain parts of the natural environment, namely, for every place on Earth that contains H_2O, the duplicate place on Twin Earth contains XYZ, a substance with a different microstructure from water but with similar observable properties. We then imagine a person on Twin Earth, Twin Oscar, who is a Twin of Oscar in the Earth and who is a competent user of the term 'water'. The question then is what determines the linguistic meaning of the natural kind term 'water'. The original case of a Twin Earth was designed by (Putnam, 1975) for the case of the linguistic reference of some terms in a natural language and was then extended to mental content (Burge, 1979). Since Oscar and Twin Oscar have exactly the same intrinsic properties, but they refer to different substances when they use their 'water'-words, the argument goes, their intrinsic properties cannot suffice to determine what they refer to. If the meaning of a word suffices to determine its reference, then meaning cannot be determined by intrinsic properties either. As Putnam famously puts it, "'meanings' just ain't in the head!"(Putnam, 1975, p. 227). The experiment was thus designed as an argument against internalist theories of linguistic meaning.

In the version for mental content, Twin Oscar not only does not refer to water when he uses the term 'water', but he does not have beliefs about water either. The beliefs in Oscar and Twin Oscar have the same role in their mental economies, because they are, ex hypothesis, internally identical. But in Twin earth, Twin Oscar's beliefs are not about water. Since they are internally identical but Oscar's be-

lief's are about water while Twin Oscar's aren't, the argument goes, mental content cannot be determined only by intrinsic properties.

The *Brain in a Vat* is also a thought experiment presented by Putnam (1981), and inspired by the Evil Genius hypothesis of Descartes. A brain in a vat is a brain hooked up to a sophisticated computer program that can perfectly simulate experiences of the outside world. Putnam's argument is thought of as objecting to the general skepticism regarding the existence and knowledge of the external world. The original argument purports to show that we can know that we are not a brain in a vat. The argument has sometimes been used as a thought experiment that could show that a brain in a vat could not have many of the thoughts we have, given its disconnection of the physical and social environment.

All these arguments and related ones show that a purely internalist view of content determination is in trouble and that the relations to the social and physical environment have to be taken into account to some degree in the determination of thought's content. Notice that the fact expressed in (c) is the capacity to *identify* one's occurrent thoughts. The problem might lie in that Pitt talks about *subjective identification* as equivalent to *content determination*, which in fact may occur independently of our introspective capacities. Introspective capacities can of course identify what (subjectively) seems the content of the thought I am thinking now, but this does not secure content determination of the thought.

As a response to externalist arguments, different theories differ as to whether external relations wholly constitute the content or just partially, as in some narrow content theories. If a view accepts the existence of narrow content, that is, a kind of content that does not depend on the subject's external environment, then the IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT ARGUMENT goes through for the proprietary and for the distinctiveness claims, for the subject is able to internally distinguish between thoughts and other kinds of mental states, between the thought that p and the thought that q. In these views, the claim that must be rejected is just the individuative one, for which we need some external factors.

To sum up, Pitt's purely internalist commitments allow him to put forward a strong epistemic argument, which may not be available for people having different commitments on content determination regarding the internalism/externalism question. Both the individuative and the distinctiveness claims are affected by the externalist objections, even if the distinctive claim can be held by a view that accepts the existence of narrow content.

However, Pitt considers such externalist worries when assessing possible objections to (1), by saying that a possible objection motivated by externalist intuitions and arguments is that immediate

knowledge of *p* cannot be in fact be immediate, since the identification of the thought always requires some *external observation* and *inference.* That self-knowledge requires knowledge of external observations and inferences is a *consequence* of externalism that not all defenders of this view would endorse. Burge, for example, defends a compatibilist view between self-knowledge and externalism according to which you can know your own thoughts without being capable to know the facts about the *conditions* for individuating these events, that is precisely what the externalist or anti-individualist claim says. Argued this way, the externalist about thought's content is not necessarily committed to denying our capacity to know our own thoughts and can opt for a compatibilist view in this respect.[6] The distinction between externalism and this consequence for knowledge is what allows Pitt to say that it is not clear that externalist views are committed to an inferientialist and observational view on self-knowledge.

But notice that this way of formulating and responding the externalist objection is not the one I was pointing to in the first place. What I am arguing is not that the externalist is committed to an inferential or observational view on self-knowledge (although this has been argued by some) but that Pitt's acceptance of (c) implies the postulation of an individuative phenomenology capable of determining the content. It is important to highlight here the fact that, even if externalism is compatible with self-knowledge, Pitt's argument is in trouble with externalism for the very metaphysical consequence that he draws from the epistemic capacity to identify one's thought. As I have said before, one way of putting my worry might be to say that the *subjective* identification of the thought's content (which might be also hold by the externalist who is compatibilist) is not sufficient to establish the individuative claim of content determination. And this point is independent of whether the externalist has to accept the consequence of her view that says that self-knowledge must be inferential or observational.

Summary

In this first part of this chapter I have presented some versions of the epistemic argument and I have examined in detail Pitt's own version. In the discussion of it, I analyzed Tye and Wright's point that Pitt is presupposing a perceptual model of introspection and argued that their considerations might not be sufficient to establish this. I then presented my own problems with Pitt's epistemic argument, mainly based on the the fact expressed in (c) and the individuative claim he draws from it, which commits him to a fully internalist view. Proponents of both a broad (externally determined) and narrow content

6 For defenses of compatibilist views between externalism and self-knowledge, see Warfield (1992), Brueckner (1992) and for incompatibilist views, see McKinsey (1991), Boghossian (1989), and Brown (1999).

(internally determined) can accept premise (1) for narrow content but not for broad content (as (C) does not hold for broad content). The internalist assumption in the argument is not an objection in itself, but something I would like not to be committed to in my own version of the epistemic argument for cognitive phenomenology, which I present in what follows.

6.2 THE WEAK EPISTEMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

If we abandon the transparency claim and the fully internalist view presupposed in the argument, the epistemological argument can be transformed into a *weaker* argument that does not commit us to the individuative claim. Thus, we are left with the proprietariness, which I prefer to refer to as the specificity claim (SPC). The weaker version of the epistemic argument would thus be reformulated as follows:

WEAK EPISTEMIC ARGUMENT

(A) Normally one is able to consciously, introspectively and non-inferientially ("immediately") distinguish one's occurrent conscious thoughts from one's other's kinds of occurrent conscious mental states.

(B) One would not be able to do this unless conscious thought had a specific phenomenal character.

CONCLUSION: conscious thought has a specific phenomenal character.

The main point in premise (A) is that we are capable of *distinguishing* between different kinds of mental states. An important point in this argument is that the type of knowledge implied is the *ability to distinguish* between conscious thoughts and other kinds of mental states on the basis of introspection and occurrent experience, and nothing else besides this is at play.

What this ability to distinguish between kinds of mental states implies is that by being in a certain cognitive mental episode, the subject *is also* in a position to exclude other kinds of states as being the one she is in. For instance, in virtue of being in a certain cognitive state, the subject knows that this mental state is *not* of a *visual kind*. This constrains the possibilities of confusion and error in identifying one's own mental states as belonging to a certain kind.

However, it should be noted that premise (A) does not establish any *infallibility* claim regarding the introspective knowledge we gain when undergoing a certain cognitive episode. Infallibility is the view that we cannot in principle be wrong in knowing our mental states.

The first premise of the argument is not committed to such a claim, precisely because we can be wrong in believing that we are entertaining a certain proposition when in fact we are imagining it, for example, and this can be explained by the fact that we may have further beliefs about our conscious mental states that tell us something different, on the basis of other things we know, etc.

Premise (A) is supported by the experiments of the DES method I presented in 2.3.3 and 5.3.1.2, when they, for example, report a case of thinking and insist that the episode they are undergoing is not an emotional one. I will cite a relatively long quote, but I think it is useful to illustrate the point and at the same time it can give a sense of the kind of interviews of the DES method. This is a fragment from the interview between a DES subject (Sam) and the researchers (Us). It is an interview that took place twenty-four hours after taking the notes, which was the moment of the experience.

> **Sam**: I put on the beeper right after our sampling meeting yesterday, and I was driving home. At the moment of the beep, I was thinking that I needed to go to the dry cleaner to pick up my suit.
>
> **Us**: What was this thinking like?
>
> **Sam**: I knew you were going to ask that! And I don't know what to say to you! That's just why I should quit! This beep occurred less than an hour after we talked about yesterday's samples, and I tried to pay particular attention to the features of my experience, 'cause I knew you'd ask. But I couldn't.
>
> **Us**: You said you were thinking that you should go to the cleaners. Was this a thought? Or would it have been just as accurate to say that you had a feeling that you should go to the cleaners?
>
> **Sam**: *No, it wasn't a feeling. It was a thought.*
>
> **Us**: You're sure?
>
> **Sam**: Well, it was a mental thing – it was in my mind that I should go to the cleaners. It definitely was mental – definitely not a feeling.
>
> **Us**: Ok. What can you tell me about the features of this mental thing?
>
> **Sam**: (exasperatedly) Nothing. I tell you I tried to look, but there were none there. I was just thinking I should go to the cleaners.
>
> **Us**: I gather that the word "cleaners" was not there?
>
> **Sam**: Correct.
>
> **Us**: Was an image of the cleaners there?
>
> **Sam**: No.

> **Us**: How then did you know that this was a thought about the cleaners?
>
> **Sam**: I tell you, I'm not very good at this!
>
> **Us**: The purpose of this study is simply to report what you actually experienced. If your experience was in words, then I'd like you to report words. If it was in images, then I'd like you to report images. If your experience had any other features, I'd like you to report them. But it is perfectly Ok with me for you to say that you were thinking but you couldn't observe any words or images.
>
> (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008, p. 159-160, my emphasis)

In this brief fragment we can see that the subject, Sam, clearly states that what he is experiencing is not a feeling but a thought, even if he has problems describing features of it (remember that ineffability and the problem of description was one of the problems of naïve introspectionist methods, as discussed in 2.1). Note that the way he acknowledges that it is not a feeling is by saying that it is "mental". Of course one could object that in this respect the subject is mistaken and that feelings are mental too, but in any case this does not change his capacity to distinguish between the two, even if based on the wrong reasons. Moreover, this fragment does not imply either that if a mental episode is not distinguished introspectively as emotional, then it must be cognitive: in fact, it could be a perception, an imagination, etc. The point is simply that one is able to do distinguish between different kinds of mental states on the basis of immediate experience.

I think this fragment gives evidence for the immediate experience claim, even if the interview is from twenty-four hours after that time, because the method is such that it requires the subject to take notes, and the claim that it was a thought was probably in his notes.

6.2.1 *Possible objections*

A possible rejection of the argument consists in denying premise (A) and thus the capacity to distinguish between cognitive episodes and other kinds of mental episodes *immediately*. Instead, we would know this difference by some kind of *inference* when we undergo such episodes.

At first sight, this seems difficult to deny. As Kim's quote illustrates

> If there are no distinctive phenomenal qualities associated with types of intentional mental states – beliefs, desires, intentions, and the rest–we face the following interesting question. *How do you find out that you* believe, *rather than, say,* doubt *or merely* hope, *that it will rain tomorrow?* Such knowledge, at least in most instances, seems direct

> and immediate in the sense that it is not based on evidence or observation and that the only possible answer to the question, "How do you know?" seems to be "I just do" (Kim, 1996, p. 159).

If it is plausible to maintain that knowledge of one's sensations and perceptual experiences involves some kind of "acquaintance" with its phenomenal properties, the suggestion of the epistemic argument is that we can extend this account to self-knowledge to conscious thought. Knowledge of one's cognitive mental states would be then possible on the basis of the phenomenal properties thought states states possess.

On the one hand, the inferential process that might be present can be either conscious or unconscious. Both possibilities, however, strike me as very hard to maintain. In order to internally distinguish between thinking *that p* and visually perceiving *that p,* one does not normally have to consciously infer anything, even if, of course, one may infer many things after undergoing a certain cognitive experience. To undergo such conscious process of inference for this distinction would be too costly for our cognitive system, which might have to react differently with respect to these two kinds of mental episodes. Merely thinking that a tiger is approaching you may not produce any bodily movement to escape, whereas visually seeing that a tiger is approaching you would cause you to run in the opposite direction, at least in normal circumstances. If you were not able to introspectively and immediately distinguish between undergoing a thinking experience or a visual experience of the tiger, that would imply serious consequences for your life.

On the other hand, the other possibility is to say that the inferential process occurs unconsciously: there is some inference at the unconscious level that allows you to distinguish between mental episodes and, in this view, there is no need to claim that this occurs immediately. But notice that to place such knowledge at the unconscious level requires to posit an unconscious inferential mechanism that has epistemic capacities, and thus the burden of the proof is on this view, which needs to show that there is such mechanism and that it has the same capacity and results that what I take our introspective capacities to (minimally) deliver. For this reason, I do not think this is a good way of denying (A).

With respect to premise (B), we already discussed some possible objections and replied to them in 5.2.1.3, when arguing against the sensory reductionist. Remember that this second premise says that one would not be able to distinguish between one's occurrent thoughts from one's other occurrent mental states unless conscious thought had a specific phenomenal character. Just to recap briefly: one could claim that sensory differences suffice to introspectively discriminate

between the two kinds of episodes, so that the sensory elements of cognitive phenomenology would be somehow "special" or sensory* (sensory of the kind involved in thought). I replied that this response remains a mystery if it is not further specified, and sensory reductionists do not seem to have provided such a specification. More generally, we can doubt that such a specification exists.

Another possible objection to premise (B) is that the fact in (A) can be explained not by phenomenal character but by the presence of different inferential roles associated with each mental episode. If we are seeing a certain object, this may produce certain other mental states and actions that a thought with the same content perhaps does not produce. The objection can be developed in three different ways, as I see it.

First, one could hold that the inferential role associated with the cognitive episode is what allows us to distinguish between different kinds of mental states. The problem with this, though, functional roles are not introspectively and *immediately* available to the subject in the sense required by (A), and therefore it is not clear at all how this alternative explanation accounts for premise the fact states in the first premise. If we loosen this condition and allow for a period of time in order for the subject to be able to discriminate between kinds of mental episodes, as Prinz suggested (see 5.2.1.3), then the problem is how this period of time should be established and in virtue of what, without being a mere *ad hoc* response.

A second version of the objection might be that the functional role associated with the cognitive episode is in fact conscious and activated when undergoing this kind of mental episode, and this is what allows us to introspectively differentiate between kinds of mental states. However, consider whether this alternative is really plausible: the complete functional role of a certain kind of mental state cannot be conscious and immediately activated altogether in order to allow the subject to do (A). What is for a functional role to be consciously experienced and occurrent when thinking a thought, for example? Perhaps one could say that it is not necessary that the whole causal connections that the functional role specifies is required but just a *part* of it. As a response, notice that a first perplexity arises with this alternative explanation: what are the relevant connections of this functional role that are to be immediately available to the subject in order to be able to do (A)? There seem not to be straightforward answers to these questions.

Moreover, if it is just a part of the functional role associated that gets to be consciously present, then two different kinds of mental states could easily be confused in immediate experience precisely because the part of the functional role that is allegedly present in experience is shared by, say, a cognitive and a perceptual episode. For instance, if I *judge that it is raining*, then the part of the functional role

that might be also consciously experienced may be my intention to take an umbrella with me, or the movement of my body to move inside the house, etc. If, let's say, this is the part of the functional role that is immediately available and conscious, then I could confuse this cognitive episode of judging with my visual perception of *seeing that it is raining*, which may cause the same two states (the intention and the movement of my body).

To sum up, I doubt that it is plausible to say that the whole functional role of a certain mental state is immediately present to the subject and a plausible story should have to be told on this respect. And even if, for the sake of the argument, we grant that part of the functional role is present, then it seems that a part of the functional role may be shared between a cognitive episode and a visual perception, and so we would be systematically prone to error at least within these two kinds of mental states, which are the ones of my example.

Finally, a third version of this objection could be that I introspectively and immediately distinguish between cognitive episodes *in virtue* of their functional role, even if I do not introspectively and immediately know this functional role. To make this plausible, one has to suppose that there is a mechanism at the sub-personal level that makes the difference in kinds of mental states immediately available to me in experience, even if the functional role *per se* remains unconscious. Although this could be a plausible empirical explanation, it cannot be accepted without further empirical support regarding which mechanism would be involved in this process and how would it work. At the end it seems to me less plausible to postulate such mechanism than to accept the presence of a cognitive phenomenal character.

In the light of the WEAK EPISTEMIC ARGUMENT argument, remember two elements that were left open in previous sections. On the one hand, at the end of the phenomenal contrast argument, we were left with the claim that we needed something else besides that argument to show that what explained the phenomenal contrast was a certain *kind* of phenomenology. I claimed before that the phenomenal contrast argument motivated the SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY view but was not sufficient to establish that there is a certain *kind* of phenomenology responsible for the phenomenal contrast in cases of seeing-as or understanding, for example, on pain of begging the question against her opponent. Now we are in a position to add to the picture the premise that supports the weak epistemic argument: the kind of phenomenal character is acquired on the basis of introspective knowledge, by way of merely having the experience that one has, as I have specified in premise (a) and its explanation.

Notice that my version of the epistemic argument is construed for conscious thought but not for other kinds of experiences like per-

ceptual ones. Now, one could raise the worry that in the case of the cognitive phenomenology present in perceptual experiences, we do not have the support from the epistemic argument that I have offered for conscious thought, and that this causes trouble for my general picture, causing an asymmetry between the perceptual and the cognitive case in my defense of the phenomenal contrast argument. It is true that the weak epistemic argument is construed for conscious thought, but a similar one can be defended for *aspects* of the content of perceptual experiences, claiming that it is in virtue of the phenomenology of these perceptual experiences that we can immediately and introspectively distinguish between different perceptual experiences, and so conclude that these experiences have a specific cognitive phenomenology (which is the one that concepts contribute to in some forms of perceptual experience).

On the other hand, remember also that one objection to sensory reductionism was its incapacity to attribute a role to phenomenal character that allowed us to distinguish between a thought and a perception on the basis of immediate experience. Now we have more elements to understand what is involved in such claim.

6.3 IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE OF COGNITIVE ATTITUDE ARGUMENT

Until now the epistemic argument has revolved around cognitive episodes in general. The *kind* of mental states specified in the previous section involved *cognitive* states in general, as opposed to visual, auditory and other perceptual states, as well as emotional ones. But someone could say that this claim generates a further question: are we able to introspectively discriminate within *kinds* of conscious thoughts or cognitive mental states such as *entertaining*, *considering*, *doubting*, *hoping*, *intending*, etc.? Is there a further specification within cognitive states that can be supported by our introspective knowledge?

In the version of the argument from Soldati and Dorsch (2005) we have seen that the epistemic argument is supported by a premise that stated the capacity to distinguish between cognitive attitudes like entertaining and stating some states of affairs. In Pitt's argument, however, the knowledge involved is explicitly of the content and the only thing he assumes is that these contents are *entertained.* His way of understanding the entertainment is a "merely having in mind" (Pitt, 2004, p. 3?) which is not characterized as a propositional attitude. He further adds that he is not committed to there being specific phenomenologies for different propositional attitudes. He argues this by making the *entertainment a content* analogous with *having a pain* with respect to *believing a content* or *disliking the pain*. I regard this analogy as revealing that entertainment is a merely "having in mind" that

does not commit one to endorsing or denying the content, as a kind of neutral state. Nevertheless I do not think that this neutrality precludes merely entertaining from being called 'attitude' as well.[7]

My proposal is to construe a similar version of the WEAK EPISTEMIC ARGUMENT but applied to attitude side:

IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE OF COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

1. A subject S at a given time t can immediately distinguish whether she is entertaining the thought that p, wondering whether p, doubting that p, or hoping that p, etc., on the basis of introspective knowledge.

2. One would not be able to do (1) unless each (type of) cognitive attitude had a phenomenal character that is specific.

3. Conclusion: each type of cognitive attitude – entertaining, wondering, doubting, hoping, etc. – has a specific phenomenal character.

Here again the idea of premise (1) is not that the subject is able to determine and fully specify the attitude she is taking towards a content, but that she is able to discriminate between two different attitudes on the basis of immediate experience, and this can be considered a kind of knowledge. The idea can be illustrated with McGinn's quote (although he does not claim this to be immediate):

> ... don't we know by introspection that I am doubting something as opposed to believing it or desiring it or fearing it? I don't know just the content by introspection; I also know the mode in which I am representing it (McGinn, 1997, p. 536).

Some preliminary remarks will be helpful. These states have traditionally been called *propositional attitudes,* for being different manners in which a thought can be thought of in a general way. But as I presented in 1.2.3, I prefer to speak of 'cognitive attitudes' as those intentional episodes that belong to the domain of cognition. Moreover, leaving aside the propositional character in the expression is also intended to show that I will not assume that propositions are the only relevant kinds of contents of cognitive states, as we should leave room for the existence of cognitive attitudes directed at particular objects, such as, for instance, *desiring X* or *wishing X*, which may not ultimately be reducible to a relation of the subject with a proposition. [8]

7 More on this in 9.

8 For a detailed argument in this direction, see Grzankowski (2012).

Again here, premise (1) does not imply any infallibility claim regarding our knowledge of attitudes, and the space for error is preserved through the possible beliefs that might be otherwise generated and that contradict the one generated by immediate experience. It seems plausible to say that we can confuse one kind of cognitive attitude with another one, like merely entertaining a proposition or doubting it. Or it might introspectively seem to me that I am wondering whether *p* is true but in fact, after reflecting on it for a while I see that I was hoping that *p*.

A first question that might arise is how this more specific claim (1) can be supported over and above the evidence I gave for introspective knowledge of different kinds of mental states such as cognitions or visual experiences that supported premise (A) of the weak epistemic argument. I think that both the possibility of immediate knowledge of a cognitive *kind* of state and of different more specific cognitive *attitudes* hold, on the basis of naïve introspection, but, as I argued before, this cannot be the end of the story. Do the studies of the DES method support premise (1)? At a first glance, the DES subjects just seem to give evidence for the general claim (cognitive in kind or unsymbolized thinking) but not for the particular one (entertaining, doubting, and so on). As we saw in 5.3.1.2, the investigators conclude that there is the experience of unsymbolized thinking *in general*, without going in a more fine-grained way into kinds of unsymbolized thinking for which we could claim that there is a specific phenomenal character too.

But if look more closely at the DES studies, we notice that this general claim is supported by more specific reports of the subjects like "she was *wondering* whether....". They argue that this indicates the general presence of unsymbolized thinking, but at the same time recognize that there are experiences called "wonderings" that are not unsymbolized but involve inner speech and images (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008, p. 3). So not all wonderings are cases of unsymbolized thought, but some wonderings are or, at least, are ways of describing or signaling the presence of unsymbolized thought. Thus, while they recognize the existence of wonderings, they are nevertheless not committed to there being a specific experience of wondering over and above the generic label of unsymbolized thinking.

Do, then, the DES experiments and results contradict premise (1)? I do not think so, for the following reason. The presence of unsymbolized thinking is recognized in the case just cited through the particular experience of wondering, but this is not the only description subjects give that they interpret as the description of unsymbolized thinking, as they also use 'thinking' or 'knowing', etc. They argue that these are different descriptions of the same phenomenon, unsymbolized thinking, but then the question is: does this imply that

there aren't specific experiences of thinking like doubting, hoping, entertaining, wondering, etc.?

Their experiments do not show this, so strictly speaking, we do not have empirical evidence to support (1). But at the same time, their results do not contradict the idea that we can experience and distinguish different cognitive attitudes solely on the basis of experience. Perhaps further experiments, designed for this purpose, would help us elucidating this issue. What remains as an important point, though, is that the empirical evidence of the DES method does not deny it and their experiments nevertheless seem to suggest that we might be able to introspectively distinguish between cognitive attitudes on the basis of experience, given the ways in which subjects report and describe the unsymbolized thought.

My own take on the issue is that, in a case of a subject wondering whether *p,* it would be odd to say that she introspectively knows that she is thinking that *p* but she *does not know* that she is *wondering* about *p.* In other words: it seems that the general case of thinking can be established introspectively by way of knowing the particular cognitive attitudes (entertaining, wondering, doubting, intending, etc). In general, as also happens in perception, we do not enjoy "a perceptual experience" in general but a *visual* experience, an *auditory* experience, a *tactile* experience and so on. One could even wonder whether there is at all *the* experience of thinking in general, as something over and above the specific cognitive attitudes of entertaining, wondering, doubting, hoping, desiring, etc.

This last reflection is precisely what allows the two arguments presented in this section not to be contradictory. By this I mean that there could be some perplexity in the fact that when we put together the WEAK EPISTEMIC ARGUMENT and the IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE OF COGNITIVE ATTITUDE we are applying contradictory premises, because on the one hand I accept that we know the *kind* of experience we are undergoing on the basis of immediate experience (cognitive or thought in general) and on the other hand I defend that we know *specific* types of cognitive experiences on the basis of immediate knowledge. I do not take these two premises to be contradictory because the general knowledge is acquired through undergoing the specific attitudes, and in this sense there is no "general cognitive phenomenal character" but rather particular types of attitudes that are experienced and they all belong to the category of 'thought' or 'cognitive'. The argument for content already presupposes that a certain attitude is taken towards that content, namely, the neutral entertaining. The difference between the first and the second argument is that the first establishes a specific phenomenal character for conscious thought with respect to other non-cognitive states and the second argument *complements* this conclusion with a further specification of the phenomenal charac-

ters associated with different cognitive attitudes such as wondering, entertaining, hoping, etc.

I still have to defend premise (2) of the epistemic argument for cognitive attitudes against some possible objections. My aim in the remainder of the section will be to argue against such objections.

For alternative possible explanations of (1) that do not require the acceptance of phenomenal character, I endorse the same kind of answers that I provided above for the WEAK EPISTEMIC ARGUMENT, so here I will focus on another line of objections.

Remember that premise (2) states that one would not be able to do (1) unless each (type of) cognitive attitude had a phenomenal character that is specific. One first reaction might be to say that one could do (1) by recognizing a phenomenal character which is not *specific* but typical of other kinds of states, such as emotions, and which happens to be associated with cognitive attitudes. If this were so, one could account for the knowledge we have of cognitive attitudes, in the sense of being able to distinguish them introspectively, by way of these associated, non-cognitive kinds of phenomenal character. This reductionist position goes beyond the criticism of this particular epistemic argument, as it can be a general position to be adopted with respect to the phenomenology of cognitive attitudes. Prinz, 2007, 2011b or Robinson, 2005, 2011, for example, argue that what accounts for attitudinal phenomenology is some forms of *emotions* and *epistemic feelings* such as *curiosity*, *novelty*, *confusion*. The phenomenology associated with *desire* should be explicable in terms of nervous anticipation and the phenomenology associated with *doubting* with that of feelings of uncertainty.

There are several reasons for resisting this move, both with respect to the epistemic argument and as a general position.

With respect to the former, one could ask the reductionist if such interpretation of premise (2) can really support the introspective knowledge of attitudes that premise (1) expresses. To accomplish this, the reductionist would have to posit certain kinds of, say, emotional phenomenologies associated to different cognitive attitudes, and keep such phenomenal characters fixed. For each cognitive attitude, a certain emotional feeling or a cluster of associated feelings. This would be the only way in which by experiencing a certain cognitive attitude (through its reduced phenomenal character) the subject would be able to distinguish between different cognitive attitudes. If such phenomenal character is not fixed but randomly dispersed among cognitive attitudes, then by introspection we would not be able to distinguish between different kinds.

As a response to this, I doubt that the emotional phenomenal character of different attitudes can remain fixed and is always the same for different cognitive attitudes. What would be the basis for defend-

ing this? It seems perfectly sound to be wondering whether p with an anxious feeling because the result of this wondering is of great importance for the subject, or just to be wondering whether p calmly without any anxiety involved. If there is something it is like to wonder that p, it does not seem to depend on the associated feelings of anxiety or calm that might be associated with the cognitive attitude.

Moreover, another reason to question this reductionist movement is to note that it is doubtful that we have certain fixed feelings associated with certain cognitive attitudes. One could argue that the feeling associated with judging is the feeling of conviction[9], for example, but there will be other cognitive attitudes for which it will be a mystery which are the associated feelings. Can we find a specific feeling for every attitude: entertaining a thought, doubting, trying, understanding, deciding, accepting, calculating, reasoning, wondering, intuiting? In particular, what would be the reductionist proposal for the cognitive attitude of entertaining a thought? There seems to be no candidate beside saying that it is the feeling of entertaining, which obviously does not seem to be very helpful for reductively accounting for the what-it-is-likeness.

I have tried to argue that the adoption of a reductionist position for premise (2) would not be tenable if the alleged phenomenal character associated with each attitude is not fixed, because randomly associated CP would not enable the subject to distinguish between several attitudes. But if it is fixed, then we have doubts that we find emotional feelings for every cognitive attitude and thus this view cannot be generalized.

So far I have resisted the reductionist response to the argument. But as I have said before, the reductionist position is also a *general* view about the phenomenal character of cognitive attitudes and it could constitute an independent objection to the conclusion of the argument presented. In contrast with what was needed as a response to the epistemic argument for attitudes, in order to reject a specific attitudinal phenomenal character view, the reductionist does not necessarily have to hold that the reduced phenomenal character is tied to a certain cognitive attitude but can instead maintain that it is randomly associated with it. The only thing the reductionist needs is that some emotional feeling is *present* when the conscious cognitive attitude is present. In this direction, some authors also appeal to some *epistemic feelings* such as the feeling of novelty, confusion, familiarity, wonder, rightness, etc., as a way to resist the specificity claim (Prinz, 2011b, p. 190-191). Epistemic feelings are normally characterized as feelings associated with some cognitive processes: the feeling of rightness can

9 See Brown (2007) for a proposal along these lines, even if his usage of feeling here refers to a quality that can be unconscious. This has to be understood within the general framework he is operating with, which is the Higher-Order Thought theory of consciousness (Rosenthal, 2005).

bear on specific beliefs or on the validity of inferences; the feeling of doubt may motivate inquiry into already accepted propositions; or the feeling of knowing, that normally bears on propositions without being able to specify what these are (like the TOT phenomenon). What can the non-reductionist say with respect to this?

As a response, the non-reductionist can claim that it is not clear that emotions do not have a cognitive component after all. Similarly to what I said in 5.3.1, the bold appeal to emotions does not suffice to endorse a reductionist account, as it might very well be that emotions are, after all, cognitively penetrated or contain cognitive elements which can be said to be experienced. To be convinced might be an emotional state whose phenomenal character cannot be accounted for by appealing to just the feeling component without making reference to the experienced cognitive content that is present in it.

A clear example of this line of reasoning can be seen with respect to epistemic feelings: it is not clear either that the all epistemic feelings that could be relevant for our case have non-conceptual nature. For some epistemic feelings, the subject does not need to possess concepts or be able to apply them in order for her to have the experience (Roberts, 2009; Tye, 2005). The feeling of certainty, for instance, does not require the self-ascription of the concept of CERTAINTY (Proust, 2007). But for some other epistemic feelings, some authors suggest that they are *conceptual experiences* that could no have arisen in the first place without possession of the concept (Arango-Munoz, 2013, p. 6-8). Consider the *feeling of knowing*, which could be a good candidate for the reduction of the cognitive attitude of judging, for example. The feeling of knowing is an experience the subject undergoes when is asked a certain question and the subject feels that she has the appropriate information to answer the question rightly. In order to undergo such experience, it is said the the subject must possess the concept KNOWLEDGE which is socially acquired in a process of relations with others. Epistemic feelings that seem to be conceptual experiences are the feeling of error, the feeling of rightness, the feeling of forgetting or the feeling of understanding. If this is so, the reductionist approach to cognitive attitudes would have to show that precisely the epistemic feelings associated with the paradigmatic cognitive attitudes are free of the conceptual component, and as I have suggested, this seems difficult at least for some epistemic feelings.

I think these reasons point to some problems for the reductionist regarding the phenomenology of cognitive attitudes.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this section I examined some versions of the epistemic argument for the conclusion that conscious thought has a specific phenomenal character. In particular, I analyzed Pitt's version in detail: firstly, I dis-

cussed Tye and Wright's point that he is presupposing a perceptual model of introspection and argued that their considerations might not be sufficient to establish this. Secondly, I presented my own problems with Pitt's epistemic argument, mainly based on the the fact expressed in (c) and the individuative claim he draws from it, that commits him to a fully internalist view. Proponents of the broad/narrow content, I have argued, can accept premise (1) for narrow content but not for broad content (as (c) does not hold for broad content). The internalist assumption in the argument is not an objection in itself, but something I would like not to be committed to in my own version of the epistemic argument for cognitive phenomenology.

Regarding my proposal, as a first step I presented a weak version of the argument that does not presuppose full internalism about thought's content and that purports to establish that there is a specific phenomenal character associated with conscious thought, that is, the specificity claim. The first premise of the argument is defended appealing to the results of the DES subjects, which show that subjects are able to immediately and introspectively discriminate between kinds of mental states such as thoughts and visual perceptions, for example. Further possible objections are answered too.

As a second step, I proposed another version of the epistemic argument with respect to cognitive attitudes, for the conclusion that different cognitive attitudes have different phenomenal character. The structure of the argument is the same as the one applied to content, and I defended it against some possible objections. The version of the epistemic argument that I have presented supports the following picture: we have a specific cognitive phenomenal character that, at least, allows us to differentiate cognitive mental episodes from other mental states like perceptions, and this specific phenomenal character is in turn different for each kind of cognitive attitude. Entertainings, for example, have a "cognitive-entertaining kind" of phenomenal character, hopes have a "cognitive-hoping kind" of phenomenal character, and so on. The two arguments are thus not contradictory; they complement each other and establish two levels of specificity.

The picture of the specification of cognitive phenomenology that has resulted from the first two parts of this thesis will be further developed in the third part, THE SPECIFICATION OF COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY. Before doing that, I will consider another argument against the view defended, the ontological argument.

7

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST CP

7.1 PRELIMINARIES

As we saw in the introduction, the issue concerning the nature of cognitive phenomenology is related with, among other things, the question of the reach of phenomenal consciousness (Bayne, 2009). The reach of phenomenal consciousness can be explained in terms of which kinds of mental episodes are phenomenally conscious and which are not. On the one hand, proponents of a specific cognitive phenomenology, non-reductionists, defend the claim that phenomenal consciousness includes cognition or thought by itself, so they are expansionists. On the other hand, proponents of non-cognitive phenomenologies, reductionists, are thus restrictivists, although positions vary depending on how restrictivists they are. A restrictivist position of a reductionist sort constitutes the view favored by Tye and Wright (2011), which constitutes the background of the argument I shall criticize.

A way of demarcating the reach of consciousness is to argue that some mental episodes are not or cannot be phenomenally conscious. The argument examined in this chapter is such an example and it falls within the kind of arguments that first state some sort of asymmetry between cognition and perception and then draw some conclusions regarding the phenomenology of cognition.[1]

In particular, the asymmetry here is with respect to the ontology of mental episodes and their temporal structure. The basic idea of the argument, as put forward by Tye and Wright (2011), which relies on some observations by Soteriou (2007) and Geach (1957, 1969), is to deny that cognitive episodes by themselves can be bearers of phenomenology on the basis of the ontological category they belong to and, consequently, that they cannot be the bearers of a *specific* phenomenology. Thoughts, the argument goes, do not enter into the stream of consciousness, except insofar as they are clothed sensorily or emotionally. The argument is supported by claims about what we can introspect, as we will see.

Besides the importance in itself of the claim that a thought *per se* cannot possess phenomenal character, it is worth noticing that it seems to be indirectly endorsed in other discussions. This is the case, for instance, of the debate about the phenomenal concept strategy adopted against some anti-physicalist arguments (Chalmers, 1996; Jackson, 1982; Levine, 2001). When Tye (2009) discusses the quota-

1 For another example of this, see also 8.1.

tional account of phenomenal concepts (Balog, 2009; Block, 2007c; Papineau, 2002), he defends the claim that it makes no sense to say that there is something in the thought about pain "that hurts" (Tye, 2009, p. 47). Díaz-León (unpublished) argues that this claim is not sufficiently justified in this context and that one possible argument to support it would be the one analyzed in this paper, although Tye does not explicitly make this point. This shows the importance of the somehow assumed conclusion of the argument examined here (that thought *per se* cannot have phenomenal character) for other philosophical discussions.

My aim in this section is to focus on the argument Tye and Wright (2011) put forward, examine its premises as reconstructed below and the motivation behind them, and then argue that they are not warranted.[2] Particularly, I will argue that the first premise can be challenged and that, even if we accept it, the second premise does not stand up to scrutiny. My analysis thereby casts doubt on the project of denying that thought episodes *per se* can be bearers of phenomenal character on the basis of their ontology and furthermore on the general view of a fundamental asymmetry between the perceptual and the cognitive domain when it comes to their ontology and temporal character. If my analysis is sound, Tye and Wright's conclusion cannot be simply presupposed in other philosophical discussions.

The argument can be extracted from Tye and Wright (2011) is the following:

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST CP

(I) Anything that figures in the stream of consciousness must unfold over time; it must be processive.

(II) Thoughts are states, and as such they do not unfold over time.

(CONCLUSION) Thoughts are not and cannot be elements in the stream of consciousness.

According to this view, it is only accompanying aspects of thoughts—inner speech, sub-vocalizations, etc.—which unfold over time, so it is only in virtue of these accompaniments that thought can be in the stream of consciousness. It is a further assumption of the argument that for something to have phenomenal character it must be in the stream of consciousness; and this claim allows Tye and Wright to deny the existence of a specific cognitive phenomenology, once they have concluded that thoughts do not and cannot enter into the stream of consciousness. The other direction of the conditional (if something is

2 A general line of opposition to Tye and Wright's argument is anticipated but not developed in Bayne and Montague (2011a, p. 26-27). This section contributes to such a development and relates the argument to other important issues on cognitive phenomenology and the temporal structure of mental episodes.

in the stream, then it has phenomenal character) is not directly involved in their argument but it is something they also endorse, as their view is that what is in the stream of consciousness are phenomenal episodes: perceptual experiences, conscious bodily sensations, imagistic experiences of a non-linguistic sort, conscious linguistic imagery (thinking in words) and emotions —their quintet of phenomenal states (Tye and Wright, 2011, p. 329).

Processive character

The first premise, (i), expresses a condition for being part of the stream of consciousness, which is to 'unfold over time' or to be processive. The second premise, (ii), just denies that thought meets the condition expressed by the first premise. What do the two claims really amount to?

Regarding (i), the reliance of Tye and Wright on Geach points to a first option to understand what 'processive' means and so to have the elements required for understanding their view. A tentative proposal would be to appeal to continuity. For Geach (1969), a stream of thought [3] would require two things: a) a gradual transition from one act of thinking a thought to another; and b) a succession within any act of thinking a thought. According to him, the failure of thought to meet these conditions is what tells us that thought is discontinuous. Thought cannot meet the conditions because: i) there is no gradual transition between the thought that all lions are dangerous and the thought that all tigers are dangerous; and, on the assumption that thoughts are individuated by its propositional content, ii) even if a thought has a complex content, the elements of that content do not occur separately or successively: to think the thought that tigers are dangerous does not involve first thinking about tigers and then about their being dangerous.

In this context, Geach is arguing against James's notion of the stream of thought or the stream of consciousness.[4] James characterizes this stream as constitutively continuous, without breaks or separations:

> The transition between the thought of one object and the thought of another is no more a break in the thought than a joint in a bamboo is a break in the wood. It is a part of the consciousness as much as the joint is a part of the bamboo (James, 1890/2007, p. 155).

3 For Geach, 'Stream of thought' is an expression plausibly equivalent to the proposition 'Thought is in the stream of consciousness'.

4 For James, there are two senses of 'thought': one synonymous with 'consciousness' and a more restrictive one as a specific cognitive episode. The one Geach is objecting to is the restrictive sense.

Both James and Geach, therefore, assume that the stream of consciousness implies the idea of continuity. What tells them apart is that James thinks thought can be continuous whereas Geach denies this:

> I want to call your attention to the discontinuous character of thought—the complete inappropriateness of James's expression 'the stream of thought (Geach, 1969, p.34).

Now we can ask: is the idea of continuity of any help to us if we want to know what the condition that distinguishes processive episodes from other mental episodes is?

First, I think we can make sense of the idea of a continuous yet non-processive mental state, such as a belief or indeed a conscious thought, for example. I can continuously believe or consciously think that 2+2=4 without anything processive being involved.[5] If the continuity in the stream can be accomplished both by mental states and by processes, the underlying requirement has to be found elsewhere.

Second, both James and Geach also seem to assume that gradual transition is incompatible with discontinuity; that is, that if something has the property of gradually changing from one state to another, for instance, then it is continuous. Consider, however, the sand on the beach: it can gradually disappear but nevertheless it is composed of grains and so it is discontinuous. If this assumption is not what is at work in Geach's reasoning, then maybe he is assuming a more demanding condition for something to be continuous, namely, that one thing gradually transforms into or becomes another. This would allow him to say that the grains of sand that make up the beach do not gradually disappear because each one of them does not become another thing, and so to resist the case as one of continuity. If this is so and continuity in a refined sense is to be understood in terms of gradually transforming or becoming another one, then I think we are closer to the sense required for the argument to be intelligible, as we will see.

Once continuity without this refined sense has been ruled out as a candidate for explaining the processive character, I think the following clarification will be helpful. The classification upon which the meaning of 'processive' depends can be found in Vendler (1957). Vendler differentiates between mental episodes that different verb predicates pick out: states, achievements, activities and accomplishments. On the one hand, activities and accomplishments are processive, unfolding mental episodes, for which it makes sense to ask 'what are you doing?'. For activities such as walking, every part is a

5 O'Shaughnessy puts it thus for the case of knowledge: 'The continuation of the knowledge that 9 and 5 make 14 does not as much as necessitate the occurrence of anything... it is not for an extended event of knowing to have occurred. Rather a state of knowing endured for that time' [O'Shaughnessy, 2000, p. 44]. I prefer to use the case of belief to avoid discussions concerning whether knowledge is a mental state or not.

case of performing the activity, as they progress in time in a homogeneous way. In contrast, for accomplishments, such as drawing a circle, the properties of the endpoint are determined by the description of the occurrence (an accomplishment proceeds toward a terminus which is logically necessary for the accomplishment to be what it is). On the other hand, states and achievements are non-processive, non-unfolding. States, such as holding a belief, obtain for a period of time. Achievements, such as noticing something or recognizing someone, are instantaneous changes of states of which it makes no sense to say that they are something you are doing.

The key distinction in this classification consists of the ways in which an object can persist over time, namely, perdurance and endurance. An object is said to perdure if it has temporal parts, that is, if it exists over time in virtue of having distinct parts at each moment of existence. Whereas something endures if it is wholly present at each moment it exists. Processive, unfolding episodes would then be those that perdure; on the other hand, non-processive, non-unfolding episodes would be those that endure. This has been shown to be a problematic distinction on its own (see Sider, 2001; McKinnon, 2002) and Tye and Wright (2011, p. 342) do not further explain how it is supposed to apply to thought as opposed to other mental episodes or why. Even so, we can accept the distinction for the sake of argument.

To sum up, once we have ruled out the non-refined sense of continuity as what distinguishes the processive from the non-processive, we have now seen that the distinction seems to amount to having, or not having, temporal parts; and that being processive is a quality of activities and accomplishments.[6] Unfolding or processive episodes, therefore, are those that have temporal parts and this seems to be a requirement for something to be in the stream of consciousness and thus to be the bearer of the relevant phenomenal character.

The problem with thought

The second premise of the argument claims that thought does not meet the processive requirement necessary to be part of the stream. An initial claim is that thoughts endure and do not perdure, which means that 'once one begins to think that claret is delightful, one has already achieved the thinking of it' (Tye and Wright, 2011, p. 15). The thought is not grasped by first grasping the noun 'claret', then the copula 'is' and finally 'delightful' in a processive manner. Thinking the thought does not unfold over time in the way the string of sounds

6 The difference between an achievement and an accomplishment is that the former is an instantaneous change in a state, and the second has an internal structure with temporal parts, but with a terminus.

in a piece of music unfolds. Tye and Wright thus claim that 'the whole thought arrives at once' (ibid.).

An argument that leads to the same conclusion can also be found for the case of judgment (Geach, 1957); on the assumption that acts of judging are individuated by their propositional content, that content can have a structure (some parts or elements), but the parts are not temporal parts of the mental act they individuate. The conclusion Soteriou (2007, p. 545) extracts from this is that:

> The content of an aspect of the mind that is used to individuate that aspect of mind is neutral on the question of whether the aspect of the mind so individuated is an achievement, state, activity, or accomplishment—even if that content concerns, say, an accomplishment or an activity etc.

'To judge that p', then, picks out an achievement, literally associated with an event without duration (instantaneous), according to Soteriou's reconstruction of Geach's argument (Soteriou, 2009, p. 240). The idea behind this claim would be that judging is an accomplishment on the basis of the impossibility of stopping the process halfway through an act of judging; which in contrast is possible with accomplishments such as drawing a circle. Whereas in the case of drawing a circle, if you stop the process halfway you have a case of partially drawing a circle; in the case of judging, if you stop the process halfway through you do not have a case of partially judging. Sometimes 'to judge' also refers to a state of belief ('S judges that p'),[7] but we have seen above that states do not unfold over time but rather endure, so the same reasoning as with states of thought in general could be applied to states of belief.

To sum up, for Tye and Wright, thought is a state that endures because it does not have temporal parts, and grasping a thought and judging are achievements. What really unfolds are the accompaniments or phenomenal goings-on of thought, namely, the quintet of phenomenological states:

> Items that unfold in the right sort of way to be elements of the stream of consciousness are items belonging to the categories of our earlier quintet (Tye and Wright, 2011, p. 342, footnote 19).[8]

Notice, though, that thoughts can have some duration: we can have a thought for a period of time, just as we can feel a pain in our leg for

7 This is the sense in which the act of judging can be said to have an habitual meaning, as in the sentences "Peter walks" or "Peter reads a novel", even though it remains an achievement because it can be made true by just one case of the corresponding event (see García-Carpintero (2013, p. 3-4)).

8 It seems easy to imagine the case of inner speech, but what would it be for mental images to unfold over time?

some time. This explains, according to Tye and Wright, the *appearance* of thought as processive. For Soteriou (2007), in his reconstruction of Geach's argument, judgment is an achievement and is literally associated with an instantaneous event. Thus, the general view extracted from examining premise (ii) is that neither judgment (achievement), nor grasping a thought (achievement) nor belief or thought (state) unfold over time as perduring episodes do and so they do not satisfy the condition required to be in the stream of consciousness and to be the bearers of the relevant phenomenal character.

7.2 FIRST OBJECTION: NON-PROCESSIVE ELEMENTS OF THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

What we have learned from the previous section is that a processive episode is an episode with temporal parts and, following Soteriou's suggestion and leaving aside enduring episodes for a moment, we might be tempted to think that non-processive episodes are *instantaneous* events. As a minor point, I would like make some cautionary remarks against the very concept of instantaneous events: the point of their argument is that thought is not processive in the required way, but we have no reason to believe that it is something instantaneous. We could remain skeptical regarding the existence of instantaneous events at all. On the one hand, at a certain physical or neurological level of description, everything must be a matter of processes and not of instantaneous events. On the other hand, we could be skeptical with respect to the possibility of *experiencing* such a thing as an instantaneous event. Mere phenomenological reflection seems to support this. At most, we can certainly experience changes in states, but what would it mean to experience something instantaneous? One might think that the so-called 'instantaneous events' are always embedded in a context of experiences so that they do not 'appear from nowhere', so to speak, and therefore they are not isolated in the stream of consciousness but have a kind of 'minimal structure'. A helpful idea here may be Husserl's (1893-1917 / 1990) notion of the structure of retention–protention we find in the experience of the present moment (called the 'specious present'), as that structure of the instant which points or refers to the past instant and also points to the following instant. He uses the example of hearing a melody, for in each present moment you somehow have the retention of the near past moment and the pointing to the very next instant in the melody. In conclusion, if we discard the idea of instantaneous events, maybe achievements can be better characterized as the *result of a process*.[9]

9 It seems that my construal of an achievement as the result of a process blurs the distinction between accomplishments as perduring episodes and achievements as enduring ones, precisely because the latter seems to include this processive aspect. I

The main objection against the first premise, however, is that it is not clear why we should accept the condition of 'unfolding over time' in a processive manner as a condition for something to be in the stream of consciousness. There is an obvious case that causes problems for the condition that Tye and Wright propose as necessary to be part of the stream of consciousness: in the perceptual domain, we can make sense of the idea of a mental episode having phenomenal character and yet not being processive. To perceive a sudden sound in the environment is presumably something that arrives 'all at once' in the same way as a thought is said to arrive and nevertheless the experience of this sound is usually considered as having phenomenal character. Should we understand, with Tye and Wright, that this experience has no temporal parts and thus exclude it from the stream of consciousness and from having phenomenal character? This is certainly what their view implies, but their acceptance of perceptual experiences in the quintet of phenomenal episodes does not seem to preclude perceptual achievements from being in the stream of consciousness. If so, we need a further reason to justify the idea that perceptual achievements are included in the stream of consciousness but cognitive achievements are not.

Another possible reply they could appeal to is that the experience of a sudden sound has in fact temporal parts, and so we have reason to include in the stream of consciousness. But then the disanalogy with cognitive achievements seems unwarranted, as the experience of the sudden sound but not the judgment or the grasping a thought would have temporal parts.

Perhaps their idea is, as a further reason against what I say, that perceptual achievements belong to high-level perception, as in seeing-as cases or recognizing an object as the object it is, and that this level is excluded from the stream of consciousness (see, for example, Prinz 2011, for a defense of this position). Even if this reasoning succeeds, the example I put forward is certainly not a case of high-level perception, but a first-level auditory experience with the particularity of arriving "at once".

Moreover, in perception, we also have visual states that can be said to endure, as they are wholly present at each moment that they exist. The visual experience of red, in perceiving a red apple, produces a visual state that does not seem to have temporal parts as the experience of a melody, for example, because it does not have distinct parts at each moment of existence. Yet, visual experiences are paradigmatic cases of phenomenal consciousness, as Tye and Wright also accept. At this point, to deny that this visual state is not phenomenally conscious requires further argumentation than the one they provide.

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think the distinction can be preserved if achievements are construed as not including the preceding process, clearly in contrast with accomplishments.

Following what I have presented, I think that hearing a sudden sound may be analogous to the case of grasping a thought (as they are achievements) and the visual state analogous to the state of belief or thought, which they claim to be non-processive. Why, then, can these perceptual episodes be in the stream of consciousness, but not the cognitive ones?

The view presented thus faces a dilemma: defenders of it would either be forced to accept that non-processive episodes such as the perceived sudden sound or a visual state do not enjoy phenomenal character (and therefore there are elements of the perceptual domain which do not enter the stream, contrary to their proposed quintet); or to claim that they are not perceptual *experiences*—with phenomenal character. I do not see any reason to support either horn of the dilemma.

The upshot of this discussion is that we have reasons to doubt the legitimacy of the condition they impose for something to be in the stream of consciousness, as non-processive perceptual episodes should count as having phenomenology, on pain of not considering them experiences. If the condition does not do the required work, then something else must be said in order to preclude thought from being in the stream, in contrast to conscious perceptual episodes.

However, a crucial part of Tye and Wright's is based on claims about what we can introspect that challenge the objection I just presented. I spend the next section examining them.

7.2.1 *What we can introspect*

With respect to the objection just described, they may find a way out by appealing to what introspection reveals:

> Perhaps it will be replied that even though thoughts do not have a processive phenomenology, still they have a phenomenology of their own that is non-processive. But even if this is coherent (...) the fact is that when we introspect, we find no such phenomenology: the phenomenology available to us unfolds in the way explained above (Tye and Wright, 2011, p. 343).

Notice that their argument is supported by the claim that introspection does not provide evidence for the non-processive character of the phenomenology of thought. This claim has to be understood in the wider context of Tye and Wright's rejection of the phenomenology of thought thesis as endorsed by Pitt (2004), that is, the view that conscious thought has a proprietary, distinctive and individuative phenomenology. But leaving aside Pitt's view, they also oppose the weaker view that just defends the proprietariness or specificity of the phenomenal character of conscious thought, the claim that I am

defending here. Besides stating that introspection does not support the specific cognitive phenomenology claim, they add that defenders of such a view must be *mislocating* the relevant phenomenal character to the thought itself and that instead it should be kept in the (non-cognitive) experience of thinking the thought.

Curiously enough, the evidence they base the judgment of the non-existence of non-processive phenomenology on is also introspective evidence, and it is of a kind that can be called armchair or naïve introspection, namely, without any appeal to empirically guided methodology. Brute appeals to introspective reports are not useful in the cognitive phenomenology debate, as I have argued, even though appeals to introspective evidence have been extensively used: for instance, Goldman (1993) and Horgan and Tienson (2002) defending a specific cognitive phenomenology, and Carruthers (1996), Lormand (1996) and Prinz (2011b) opposing this view. Tye and Wright's appeal to what we can introspect is, to my mind, another instance of a claim based on armchair introspective evidence that needs independent argumentation.

An attempt to move forward debates in which introspection seems to reveal the existence of a specific cognitive phenomenology to some authors and its nonexistence to others is the empirical method put forward by the psychologists Hurlburt and Heavey (2006). As we have seen in 2.3.3, their method precisely seeks to avoid the failures of traditional introspective methods and proceeds under the assumption that it is possible to provide accurate descriptions of inner experience that will help advance cognitive science. One of the results they have, as we already know, is the presence of unsymbolized thinking, an experience without images or words (Hurlburt and Akhter, 2008). Tye and Wright refer to this paper and criticize the results for two main reasons: the first is that, in the cases of alleged unsymbolized thinking, the subject may in fact not be thinking and she may be attributing thoughts to herself that she was not having. And the second is that the inability to provide any consistent description of the content of such thoughts does not entail that they had no associated imagery (Tye and Wright, 2011, p. 335). I have provided answers to these two problems in 5.3.1.2, so I will not repeat them here.

Therefore, the evidence Tye and Wright provide for the non-existence of non-processive phenomenology that is based on armchair introspection cannot establish what they try to. First, because they are using the same naive method as the opponents against whom they raise the introspective concern. Second, because their criticism of the DES method, an empirical introspective method that could avoid the traditional problems of introspection, does not succeed, for the reasons presented in 2.3.3. If this is so, I see no further way of defending their introspection-based claims about the phenomenology of conscious thought.

7.2.2 *Is understanding a process? A note on Wittgenstein*

I have argued that the processive character is not a justified condition for something to enter the stream of consciousness. Now I just want to introduce a brief excursus of a possible source of the main idea of the ontological argument, namely, that the stream of consciousness is tied just to sensory processes and, thus, that cognitive episodes such as understanding are not processes.

In a rather obscure passage, Wittgenstein says:

> In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process. (The increase and decrease of a sensation of pain, the hearing of a melody, of a sentence: mental processes) (Wittgenstein, 1953, 154).

Wittgenstein seems to reject the idea that understanding is a mental process on the basis of the argument that it is not a *sensory* process or experience. At first sight, it is not clear what Wittgenstein is denying. Is he denying that understanding is *mental*, or that understanding is a *process*? The first option is not very promising as an interpretation, as the cases to which he compares understanding are *mental.* So it seems that the problem is with understanding *being a process*. And the idea is probably that processes are only mental episodes which are *sensory* in kind: sensation of pain, hearing of a melody or a sentence. This interpretation could have motivated reductionist views on the reach of phenomenal consciousness.

Strawson (1994/2010, p. 7-8) addresses Wittgenstein's remark and claims that the understanding-experience he describes is compatible with it and with Ryle's claiming that there need be "nothing going on" when one understands something (Ryle, 1949). To make both views compatible, Strawson says that understanding is not something one does *intentionally*, but rather something that just happens, something that is involuntary and automatic. That it is something automatic would explain, according to him, why understanding is not a process (in accordance with Wittgenstein) and why there need be "nothing going on" when one understands something (in accordance with Ryle). His view, then, is compatible with Wittgenstein and Ryle: understanding is not a process; it is not intentional, it is just automatic. Notice that the sense in which Strawson is using 'process' is different from the one we were discussing before, where process meant having temporal parts.

Although Wittgenstein and Strawson agree with the non-processive character of understanding, the basis for their denial seems distinct. As we have seen, Wittgenstein seems to deny the processive character on the basis of its being *non-sensory*, as his presupposition is that all

processes are sensory in kind. And Strawson's reason to deny the processive character is that it does not involve anything intentional (caused by intentions), but rather it is an *automatic* experience.[10] I think their views are not incompatible after all: Strawson puts forward a non-sensory experience which is not a process (because is it automatic) and Wittgenstein says that understanding is not a process (because it is non-sensory).

With respect to Wittgenstein's view, we should note that although he could have motivated the idea of reductionism, his remark does not address the possibility of there being non-sensory experiences (as Soldati and Dorsch, 2005 note) but just of there being non-sensory *processes*, so that for him the possibility of a non-sensory experience remains open.

With this excursus I wanted to show a possible source of skepticism underlying the ontological argument. Witggentein's remarks regarding understanding point to the view that understanding is not a process, given that a requirement to be a process is to be sensory in kind. Even if this could be one of Tye and Wright's motivations, they could not endorse it in the ontological argument, on pain of begging the question. I agree with Wittgenstein and Strawson that understanding is best characterized as an automatic experience, even if I think it is confusing to oppose the automatic character to a process. Thus, it is more appropriate for our purpose to follow the use of process as temporal parts.

The upshot of this excursus is that Wittgenstein might have inspired reductionist positions regarding cognitive phenomenology, but his remark still leaves the door open for there being non-sensory experiences. The underlying idea of the ontological argument, that cognitive experiences are not processes, might have its source here, but their proponents cannot adopt Wittgenstein account of what a process is, on pain of begging the question.

7.3 SECOND OBJECTION: PROCESSIVE COGNITIVE EPISODES

Let's now go back to the ontological argument. We have seen that the first premise is problematic. My second objection is that, even if for the sake of the argument we accept processive character as a requirement for something to be in the stream of consciousness, it is not clear that at least some cognitive episodes fail to meet this requirement. We could question the idea that cognitive episodes are restricted to judgments and states of belief and thought as the only kinds we recognize. It seems to me that we do have examples of thinking that are candidates for being processive in the sense required: mental episodes of voluntary conscious *deliberation*, for example, are neither judgments,

10 He does not deny that, at a certain level of description, everything is a matter of processes, but this is not the point here.

nor achievements nor states, so they do not seem to fall within the scope of the argument. In order to individuate the whole episode of deliberation, one needs to refer to different parts at different moments (temporal parts). The whole conjunction of the propositional contents entertained does not suffice to individuate the mental episode as one of deliberation, so we need to posit certain transitions between mental states, thus making the case for processive thought. The idea of positing transitions is analogous to the case of rationalizing overt bodily action: to rationalize overt bodily actions, we do not only attribute mental states but relations, changes and transitions between them (see Soteriou, 2009, p. 235). If this is right, mental episodes of deliberation could be considered either as activities or as accomplishments (if the deliberations have endpoints) and so be of the right category to be in the stream of consciousness and be the bearer of phenomenology.

In order to doubt the case of deliberation as processive, one could appeal here to O'Shaugnessy's ontology of the stream of consciousness, according to which the constituents of the stream of consciousness are not analyzable in terms of mental states and events that are simply changes to and in states. The view that O'Shaughnessy (2000) holds for experiential mental episodes is that they are processive in a way that their constituents cannot be singled out other than by appealing to process-parts, that is, they do not have state-parts as constituents, like in other non-experiential processes like physical movement. If the process of moving is constituted by state-parts we have: a time-interval, position-values and continuity of temporally adjacent position-values. If the process of moving is constituted by process-parts, we have a time-interval, a moving process going on at each instant of that interval, and a continuity of spatiotemporally adjacent process-parts. Both analysis are correct for physical processes, he claims.[11] But when it comes to experiential episodes, he argues that experiential processes differ fundamentally from non-experiential processes (like physical movement) in that if we were to "freeze" those processes, the experiential – but not the non-experiential – would disappear as such. What is unique in the experiential process in general is that you cannot provide a state-part if you freeze the flux of experience: in a process of listening, for example, you cannot provide constituting states that lie at the heart of such occurrence. If this is so, it could be argued that processes of conscious deliberation are not in fact *experiential processes*, given that they are composed of further states and changes to those states or in those states.

11 He claims that 'constituting a process like moving out of states like being at a position in space at a particular time, is not *in competition with* constituting such a process out of parts the same kind as itself' (O'Shaughnessy, 2000, p. 45).

However, notice that, even if the characterization of a conscious deliberation that I have offered in analogy to bodily action might have suggested that conscious deliberation are conjunctions of states and changes between them, this might not be the right characterization of conscious deliberation. Conscious deliberation is a cognitive process that is experienced itself as a process, in a way such that if the mental life was to freeze at a certain point, the mental episode as such would cease to exist In fact, O'Shaugnessy's view for experiential episodes seems to also be confirmed by conscious deliberations: like in listening, in conscious deliberation you cannot provide a constituting state that lies at the heart of such an episode. This may be so because of its primary appearance in consciousness as a process, and not as a further abstract conjunction of different acts of thought with certain transitions. And if one was to argue that you certainly can provide such different acts of thought with changes in them as a plausible characterization, then the same is valid for the case of listening, in which you could provide a conjunction of hearing acts and changes in them. This latter possible redescription, however, does not imply, according to O'Shaugnessy, that there is a state of hearing and not a processive experience.

Summing up, then, the case of conscious deliberation seems to find a plausible characterization as processive in character and so to provide a counterexample to Tye and Wright's second premise, given that it is established that not all cases of conscious thought are states.

7.3.1 *Possible rejoinder*

Soteriou (2007) seems to have another response to this second objection I have presented, namely, the appeal to conscious processes of deliberation as an example of processive cognitive episodes. Even if there are thinking experiences which unfold over time, like my example of deliberation, mental states we think of as cognitive, rather than the sensory ones, are usually mental states that are individuated at a level of abstraction at which we do not need to make reference to their phenomenal character. This relies on a particular view regarding the relation that obtains between a state and an event or process. According to Soteriou, an occurrent state obtains for a period of time only if certain kinds of events occur during that period of time. If we want to specify the nature of the state, we have to make reference to the event. Equally, when it comes to specifying the nature of the occurrence, we need to make reference to the kind of state that obtains in virtue of its occurrence.[12] In the perceptual case, we specify the phenomenal properties of the event in a relational way, appealing

12 'In individuating a phenomenally conscious mental state as such, we say that a mental state is of the kind F iff it obtains in virtue of the occurrence of a mental event of type G, but when it comes to individuating the kind of event in question

to the state that obtains—that is why once we identify the representational properties of the state, it seems that there are no properties left for introspection to discover. For Soteriou, the phenomenal properties of perceptual episodes are not identical to the representational ones (*pace* representationalism) but there is a necessary connection between them. In the cognitive case, we would have: the mental event of thinking is an unfolding event with phenomenal properties that results in the acquisition of a belief, a mental state. In order to individuate the state as that of belief, we do not need to make reference to the phenomenal character of the mental event. He makes the case for the relation between judging and the phenomenal process of so doing:

> A subject's mental act of judging that p may involve the occurrence of a phenomenally conscious mental act, for example the subject's saying something in inner speech, but when this mental event is picked out as one of judging, the phenomenal character of the mental event drops out of the picture, for we want to allow that a mental act of the same kind—'judging that p'—could occur even if it did not have the same phenomenal character (Soteriou, 2007, p. 561).

This quote shows that Soteriou thinks of inner speech as an example of the phenomenal properties involved in thought. Even if not excplicitly committed to it, this suggests that sensory phenomenal properties might be the only ones present when we think. However, this path is not available to Tye and Wright, on pain of begging the question against specific cognitive phenomenology. Examples of the phenomenal contrast argument show us that focusing on inner speech might not be a neutral option with respect to the extension of phenomenal character and may lead to an unjustifiable restriction of phenomenality to sensory elements. Thus, there has to be some independent motivation for restricting 'phenomenal character' to sensory states in the way left open by Soteriou, if this move is to be of any use to Tye and Wright's view.

If we do not follow this restriction on phenomenal character and focus on Soteriou's point, his rejoinder still applies: even if the mental episode of deliberation is processive, its phenomenal character does not individuate it. But now notice that the question has moved from the *existence* of cognitive phenomenal character to the question of it being required for the *individuation* of the mental state in question. Phenomenal contrast arguments and epistemic arguments in the version I favor motivate the idea of a specific cognitive phenomenology without assuming that it individuates the episode. That is, one could

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we say that a mental event is of kind G iff a mental state of kind F obtains in virtue of its occurrence' (Soteriou, 2007, p. 557)

maintain that thought (in the form of deliberation) enters the stream of consciousness without assuming that its phenomenal character is what makes the thought the thought it is (or the deliberation the deliberation it is). For these reasons, Soteriou's view on the relation between events and states and their individuation is not helpful in order to refute my second objection, namely, that there might be cognitive episodes that are processive in character.

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter critiques an attack on cognitive phenomenology that is based on the idea that thought cannot exist in the stream of consciousness. I have presented the argument and the motivation behind its premises in order to make sense of the overall picture Tye and Wright (2011) endorse. Some important points of clarification are as follows: 'processive' is to be considered as having temporal parts (and not as continuous, as both James and Geach assume); and thoughts and beliefs are to be seen as states that endure while judgments are achievements that 'arrive all at once', which I interpret as being the result of a process rather than an instantaneous event.

First, I have argued that to restrict the entrance into the stream of consciousness to processive mental episodes (in the sense of episodes having temporal parts) is not warranted, because acceptance of such a restriction would lead to a dilemma in the case of perception: either conscious perceptual achievements do not have phenomenology or they are not considered experiences (with phenomenal character). I further examined and criticized their appeal to what we can introspect in order to dismiss the claim that there might be non-processive kinds of phenomenologies.

Second, I have considered that, even if for the sake of the argument we accept premise (i), there are forms of conscious thought that can satisfy the processive restriction as having temporal parts: the mental episode of deliberation, for example. In order to individuate the episode of deliberation one has to refer to something more than to the conjunction of the propositional contents entertained during the deliberation, and it seems that there is no state that lies at the heart of the process if we were to freeze the mental life, as its individuation also requires temporal parts. I then considered a possible objection from Soteriou (2007) to this proposal and claimed that it is not useful for Tye and Wright's position, and that even if phenomenal character does not individuate the episode of deliberation, that episode may still have phenomenal character.[13]

By showing that Tye and Wright's argument is unsound, because its premises are false, I believe this chapter casts doubt on the whole project of denying a specific cognitive phenomenology on the basis of

13 I will turn to the individuation question in the following two chapters.

the ontological category and temporal structure of cognitive episodes, and on the related project of establishing a fundamental asymmetry between the perceptual and the cognitive domain. If my analysis is correct, Tye and Wright's conclusion is thus a claim that cannot simply be presupposed in other philosophical discussions.

Part III

THE SPECIFICATION OF COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

PRELIMINARIES

The previous part of the thesis has been devoted to the analysis of some arguments in favor and against the *existence* of a specific cognitive phenomenology. I presented the phenomenal contrast argument and argued against some reductionist positions, and I presented my version of the epistemic arguments and defended it against some problems. Furthermore, I have provided reasons to resist the restrictivist strategies in their different forms. In doing so I hope to have made the case for SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY. Now I would like to provide a more substantive view of what I take cognitive phenomenology to be, by way of specifying its nature and the relation between cognitive phenomenal character and intentionality.

There are some reasons that motivate the need for specification, and they are especially pressing for the non-reductionist. Consider the general analogy with the *perceptual* domain. In perceptual experience, we find *intermodal* phenomenal differences, those concerning different modalities – vision, audition, taste, etc. – and *intramodal* phenomenal differences – what it is like to see a red apple differs from what it is like to see a green one, for instance. The kind of questions that we need to answer to are: is there this kind of structural richness within the phenomenology of thinking episodes? Is there a similar kind of structure within cognitive phenomenology? How could we specify its nature? And more specifically, what is the component that bears this phenomenal character? Is it the propositional *attitude* or the intentional *content*? Can we, after all, separate these two components so sharply? Once we have an answer to these questions, the pressing one is: what is the *relation* between these components and cognitive phenomenology? Is cognitive phenomenology just accidentally tied to cognitive states, or necessarily so? Is it a constitutive element of them?

In this third part, I will provide a proposal for the specification of cognitive phenomenology, which is divided into two chapters: first I propose a view on the relation between cognitive phenomenal character and cognitive content and, second, on the relation between cognitive phenomenal character and cognitive attitude. Before doing this, I will present an objection that some authors raise against the very project of specification in the first place.

8

COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY AND COGNITIVE CONTENT

8.1 THE ASSYMETRY OBJECTION

Some authors deny any progress in the specification of cognitive phenomenology on the basis of a fundamental *asymmetry* with the perceptual domain. I have already discussed a case like this in the previous chapter, when I criticized Tye and Wright's argument for the asymmetry of cognition and perception regarding their temporal structure. Now the alleged problem is that in the case of conscious thought we do not find any uniform phenomenal feature common to all thinking experiences (Georgalis, 2006), nor any relevant commonalities and differences in phenomenal character (Martin, forthcoming). This source of skepticism seems to be inspired in some interpretations of the work of Wittgenstein 1953, 1976),[1] who questioned the idea that there is a single feeling, sensation or phenomenal feature common to all instances of attitudes like intend, hope, etc. In a passage where he discusses what we mean by 'understanding' and 'meaning' , he also refers to 'intending' as a way to shed light on the other notions and says:

> One might say, "Intending to play chess' is a state of mind which experience has shown generally to precede playing chess." But this will not do at all. Do you have a peculiar feeling and say, "This is the queer feeling I have before playing chess. I wonder whether I'm [going] to play?"– This queer feeling which precedes playing chess one would never call "intending to play chess (Wittgenstein, 1976, p. 24-25).

The skepticism here is raised against the attitudinal component of cognitive states, which will be treated in detail below. Although this and similar remarks of Wittgenstein can be said to influence subsequent views, I think it is more an influence than a view held by Wittgenstein himself, as he was trying to respond to the question of what could determine what is the meaning of the word 'intend', for example, and other propositional attitudes, and his answer was that it cannot certainly be the feeling of the experience of intending. This question, however, is different from the thesis of cognitive phenomenology that I have defended in this dissertation. That there is a specific phenomenal character of conscious thought does not have any direct implication for the question of whether the meaning of

1 A similiar worry is raised by Churchland and Churchland (1981).

some intentional verbs such as 'intend' is to be determined alone by their phenomenal character. It would just be so for views that defend that the content of cognitive states is determined, totally or partially, by phenomenal character (I will return to this below).

Let's now present the versions of the problem that Martin and Georgalis put forward, in order to see the picture of this fundamental difference between cognition and perception related to similarities and differences in phenomenal character. I begin by examining them and then argue that this kind of problem can be turned into a challenge for the proponent of cognitive phenomenology. Finally I offer a proposal that can overcome this challenge and provides a specification of CP.

Martin (forthcoming) directly addresses this problem:

> It is not absurd to suppose that in any given episode of thinking, there is something it is like for one then so to be thinking. After all, our episodes of deliberating about problems, or allowing our thoughts to drift through day dreams can occupy the stream of consciousness (Martin, forthcoming, p. 11).

But he then says that we do not expect to find *anything interesting in common* between different episodes of thinking which involve the same thoughts:

> So, to pick out an episode of thinking as one of thinking the thought that the average rainfall in August is less than ½ inch, is not to *indicate any salient feature* of what the thinking is like in which it is the same or different from any other phenomenal episode (Martin, forthcoming, p.12, my emphasis).

For him, the contrast between the perceptual case and thought is expressed by the fact that our description of perceptual what-it-is-likeness for the subject to experience them offers classifications of them in *experiential kinds* which point to similarities and differences among various cases.[2] According to him, then, there seems to be nothing relevant in common among thinking experiences when it comes to their phenomenology.

Georgalis (2006) also has an objection based on a similar idea. The author discusses the main thesis of cognitive phenomenology, arguing that we do not find a uniform feature common to all thinking experiences. But it is important to note that he thinks of cognitive phenomenology as a particular case of the thesis of phenomenal intentionality. Some authors have argued that phenomenal intentionality is the

2 By 'experiential kinds' Martin does not seem to pressuppose an analogy with natural kinds or other technical terms. In any case, I will use it as synonymous to *type* of mental state.

phenomenon of the intrinsic directedness of certain conscious mental events that is inseparable from these events' phenomenal character.[3] Georgalis' attack on cognitive phenomenology is presented as dependent upon the phenomenal intentionality thesis, but these two thesis are logically independent: it is possible to hold that all intentionality is grounded in phenomenology and yet reject that claim that there is cognitive phenomenology. This would mean that phenomenal intentionality would not be grounded in cognitive phenomenology, but in some other kind of phenomenology (say, perceptual phenomenology). In the other direction, it is certainly possible to hold that cognitive phenomenology exists but that intentionality is not grounded in phenomenology. So it seems that there is logical independence in both directions. However, Georgalis' point can be put independently of the phenomenal intentionality general thesis and still holds, given that conscious thought is an intentional state.

He distinguishes two uses of 'what-it-is-like': a *restricted* one – aplicable to sensory experiences[4]– and a *non-restricted* one or extended –applicable to propositional attitudes and their contents. He argues that that there is a crucial difference between sensory and non-sensory cases: in the first, but not in the second, the sentence 'what it is like' refers to a *uniform feature of identical type* ("type-identical uniform feature") common to certain experiences:

> When I am stimulated by various diverse items, such as, certain apples, ripe tomatoes, stop signs, and fire trucks; my different experiences have a type-identifiable uniform feature that we call 'experiencing red': What it is like to experience red is the having of one of those or similar (in this respect) experiences. In propositional attitudes, however, we don't find this aspect. Importantly, there is a certain aspect uniformly picked out in these diverse sensory experiences by appeal to the wil [what it is like] to have them that warrants the claim that there is something that it [is] like to experience red. Similar remarks apply as well to the other sensory modalities (Georgalis, 2006, p. 69-70).

This type-identifiable uniform feature is, he says, *experiencing red*. He continues by assuming that, for the sake of the argument, there is a what-it-is-likeness to undergo a certain intentional state such as thinking. His contention is, however, that this what it is like can not

3 On this conception, phenomenology is usually conceived as narrow, that is, as supervening on the internal states of subjects, and hence phenomenal intentionality is a form of narrow intentionality. Defenders of this idea usually maintain that there is another kind of intentionality, namely, externalistic intentionality, which depends on factors external to the subject. For an overview of the issues on phenomenal intentionality, see (Kriegel, 2013b)

4 Although we should have in mind that the original what-it-is-like expression in Nagel (1974) does not preclude the question of cognitive phenomenology beforehand.

pick out *uniformly identifiable features* on different occasions. To type identify such features is *essential*, for him, to secure phenomenal intentionality – and as a particular case in his interpretation, then, cognitive phenomenology.

An important clarification he makes is that he does not deny that, one the one hand, such intentional states are types like beliefs, desirings, and on the other hand, that they are states with the content *p*, *q*, etc. Such type identities are found in intentional states, but not *in virtue* of such phenomenal character, because it can not provide a type identification of a uniform feature among thinking experiences (we can also see this in the phrase 'there is a certain aspect uniformly picked out in these diverse sensory experiences *by appeal to the wil* [what it is like] to have them that warrants the claim that there is something that it is like to experience red', from the quote above).

The underlying idea of Martin and Georgalis' remarks may be read as the difficulty to find *kinds* of cognitive phenomenology. Different instances fall under a certain kind when they share something in common, they have some s*imilarities* among them and some *differences* between one kind and another with respect to their phenomenal character. It is important to note a difference in their way of presenting the assymetry: one question is whether we find relevant similarities and differences in CP among conscious thought that would allow us to have experiential kinds (Martin), and the other issue is whether we find a uniformly identifiable phenomenal feature in conscious thought in virtue of which we can classify types of conscious thought (Georgalis). Thus, in what follows I will speak of two versions of the problem, the first weaker than the second one because it does not imply that it is precisely the CP that picks out different types of conscious thought.

I think it is useful to take the general worry as a *challenge* for my view. The challenge I read in the concerns just presented is the one mentioned at the beginning of the chapter regarding the specification of cognitive phenomenology. Can we find relevant similarities and differences in the phenomenology of conscious thought? Do they allow us to classify them in kinds? Does this cognitive phenomenology determine kinds of conscious thoughts? The remainder of this part is devoted to presenting a proposal that can overcome this general worry of specification and is informative about the structure and nature of cognitive phenomenology. The following two chapters address the question of whether there is something that makes the phenomenology of a certain thought similar to another, what it is, and whether there are phenomenal differences within cognitive experiences which allow us to classify them in different kinds.

In the philosophical literature we find some attempts to provide the specification needed. In their examination, I will focus on how this

specification is carried out through the relation between phenomenal character and intentionality. In this chapter, I present David Pitt's and Galen Strawson's views on this matter. In doing so, I will explore Husserl's approach in the *LU* to the specification of CP, comparing it with Pitt's account. I will raise some objections to each proposal, and I will finally present my own proposal as an account for the specification of cognitive phenomenology that seeks to avoid these problems and presents a novel view on the issue. My account for the content side will offer an answer to the first version of the objection and my account for the attitude side will complement this with an answer to the second version of the objection, as we will see in Chapter 9.

8.2 VIEWS ON THE SPECIFICATION

8.2.1 *Relational and Constitutive Views: David Pitt*

As we have seen, a committed defender of a specific cognitive phenomenology is David Pitt. In Pitt (2004), he defends a proprietary, distinctive and individuative phenomenology for thought. In the section on epistemic arguments, I noted some problems with the individuative claim and I presented my own version of the epistemic argument, which is not committed to the distinctive and the individuative claims. This section follows on from that criticism and examines in more detail what does the individuative claim amounts to and what it implies for the relation between phenomenal character and intentional content.

According to Pitt (2004), the specification view regarding cognitive phenomenology is the following:

Individuative/constitutive: CP allows the subject to determine all properties of the thought relevant for picking out the thought as the thought it is.

The question of individuation or constitution appears in Pitt (2004, footnote 11), where he says that he will address the question of how phenomenology *determines* content in future work.[5] According to Pitt's 2004 view, the only proprietary or specific phenomenology of an occurrent conscious thought is the *representational* content. For him, the representational content are the properties of the thought in virtue of which it represents (expresses) the proposition it does, and the propositional content is the proposition that the representational content represents. His view, thus, allows that thoughts with different repre-

5 In this further work, he states: "the last of the three theses claims that thoughts with the same phenomenology have the same intentional content; but it doesn't say why this is so"(Pitt, 2009, p. 118)

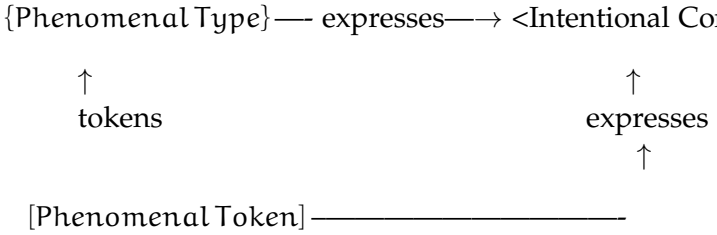
sentational contents (for simplicity reasons understood as sentences) might express the same proposition (the other way around would not be possible: the same representational contents cannot express different propositions)[6]. *Different* or *the same representational contents* will determine, then, *different* or *the same* phenomenologies.

He makes it explicit that this representational content plays the role Husserl and Searle specify for their respective notions of *matter* (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970) or *noema* (Husserl, 1913) and *aspectual shape* (Searle, 1990). Here, Husserl's insights seem to motivate or inspire Pitt's defense of the individuative claim, although nothing more precise is said with respect to this relation (more on this below).

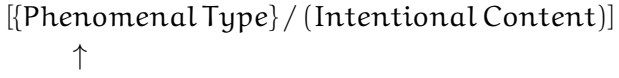
In a second paper devoted to this question, Pitt directly faces the specification project by trying to specify what the individuative claim means. He examines the question of thought-content determination in the light of phenomenology and tries to say how this is supposed to work. He thinks phenomenology *determines* the content of thought, and this can be understood in two different ways, summarized here:

- *Relational view*[7]: a thought is the thought that *p* because it tokens a phenomenal type that *expresses* the intentional content that *p*, where the phenomenal type and the intentional content are different entities.

On this view, a token thought that *p* is a token of a mental representation type whose content is the proposition that *p*: the thought expresses the proposition that *p* in virtue of being a token of a representation type that expresses that proposition.



- *Constitutive view:* the phenomenology of a particular thought is a token of a type that *is* its intentional content. A thought is the thought that *p* because it tokens a phenomenal type that is the intentional content that *p*.



6 This last claim would be challenged by views that defend that the same representational content can express different propositions depending on parameters of the context relevant for determining the propositional content.

7 In the 2004 paper, this view is called *representationalist*.

tokens
↑
[Phenomenal/Intentional Content]

This constitutive view is a form of *type-psychologism*. It is a form of *psychologism* because it proposes that thought contents are *mental* objects, in particular, *cognitive phenomenal objects*. And *type* psychologism because these contents or abstract objects are not *tokens* in the particular mind of those who think them, but *types*. And these types are independent of the mind. So thought contents, according to Pitt, are psychological types. An important feature of this model is that the relations between particulars – physical contingent relations – do not necessarily hold between types (logical relations). This claim is what avoids the well-known objections that Frege and Husserl, for instance, raised against psychologism, understood as some kind of token psychologism. So the picture is that intentional contents are cognitive-phenomenal types and for a state to have the content *p* is for it to token a particular cognitive-phenomenal type.

According to Pitt, the constitutive view is better than the relational one mainly for three reasons. First, it is a more economical account of the relation between an intentional state and its content than the relational view, because the relation view involves two expression relations, one between representation type and propositional content and one between representation (token) and its propositional content. Second, because it yields a more unified account of the nature of the mental than relational views and third, because it provides a natural explanation of self-knowledge of content.[8]

The constitutive view is a form of *internalism*[9], because it maintains that the intentional content of a thought is determined by the phenomenal properties, which are internal properties (at least this is what is assumed).

According to this model, a phenomenal intentional token tokens a phenomenal intentional type, so the relation between cognitive phenomenology (CP) and intentional content is that of *identity*, by recognizing that CP constitutes intentional content. The same CP implies the same intentional content, because intentional content is fully constituted by CP.

What about the converse relation, though? Does the same intentional content determine the same CP? Even if Pitt does not explicitly say so, his theory implies that the answer is yes, because the identity of intentional content and CP does not allow for differences in intentional content that are not differences in CP. [10]

8 For details on these reasons, see Pitt (2009, p.136).

9 The relational view is also a form of internalism, but as he does not develop it, I will leave it aside.

10 This *identity* model is also endorsed by Kriegel (forthcoming) as his preferred view on what 'cognitive-phenomenal realism' is: there is a property F and there is a prop-

Notice that Pitt's view would give an answer to the asymmetry objection in the following way: we do find relevant similarities and differences between episodes of conscious thought when it comes to their CP, and these similarities and differences are precisely those belonging to the content. In his view, we could speak of experiential kinds (phenomenal types) and, moreover, it is the CP that determines conscious thoughts's contents and so it is this CP that pick up different kinds of conscious thoughts.

8.2.1.1 *Assessing Pitt's constitutive model*

Pitt's proposal for the specification of CP can be seen as an answer to the objection Martin and Georgalis raise. It can provide salient features of cognitive phenomenology that allow us to speak of phenomenal types, precisely by identifying them as intentional content. In fact, for Pitt, it is in virtue of its cognitive phenomenal character that a conscious thought is the thought it is (remember that this was Georgalis version of the objection). So Pitt's constitutive model can be a theory that responds to the challenge we posed at the beginning of the chapter.

However, I find the constitutive view difficult to accept for the following reasons: (1) it depends on the truth of internalism, (2) it doesn't allow for a great deal of variety one could attribute to cognitive phenomenology, (3) it has dubious explanatory power as a theory of mental content determination. (1) may be interpreted as a limitation to the theory, whereas (2) and (3) constitute objections to it.

(1) INTERNALIST COMMITTMENTS As I have already discussed, Pitt's proposal is committed to internalism regarding mental content and phenomenology individuation. His view is internalist regarding phenomenology, as internal physical duplicates would share phenomenology. Moreover, if this phenomenology fixes the content, then content will also be fixed by the internal states of the subject. It is this consequence of the view that I find too strong, as the success of his theory *depends* on acceptance of this fully internalist stance about the content of concepts. Other theories that do not accept internalistic approaches to conceptual content are not in a position to accept Pitt's proposal for CP specification.

Also within internalist theories of conceptual content, his theory is in tension with those defending some kind of Conceptual Role

erty G, such that (i) F is a cognitive property, (ii) G is a phenomenal property, and (iii) F = G. Cognitive-phenomenal realism would be thus the thesis that there is such a property. I do not examine further Kriegel's view on the specification because he does not elaborate on this and he claims that he accepts the identity model "because it is the simplest and most natural, and because it meshes most straightforwardly with a property-exemplification metaphysics of states" (Kriegel, forthcoming, p. 29-30).

Semantics (CRS) or holistic views regarding conceptual content determination that do not accept the constitution claim by the phenomenal. Some CRS views can be internalist with respect to phenomenology but nonetheless claim that the content is not determined by phenomenology but rather by the relations with other concepts. The problem, in other words, might be that his theory of CP specification depends on acceptance of a fully internalist theory of mental content with CP as the constitutive element for this determination. Constitution by phenomenology and internalist stance are two separate issues and thus can be objected independently, but as Pitt defends them together, his commitments are more risky, so to speak.

(2) RIGIDITY Secondly, I find the *rigidity* Pitt claims for the relation between intentional content and CP problematic. As we have seen, for him, same CP implies the same intentional content and vice versa, and I find this consequence too strong. It does not seem to be the case that when two different persons think the same thought, they necessarily have the same CP. Introspectively, at least, and from a first-person perspective, I do not even seem to have the same CP when entertaining the same thought at different times. This is just a piece of first-person evidence and does not constitute a powerful reason against Pitt's proposal, but just casts some doubt on the lack of variability between people and individuals across time with respect to CP.

The lack of rigidity in CP seems to be consistent with the varied introspective reports given by different parts on the debate. Indeed, the introspective disagreement in the debate suggests that perhaps the variability in CP is what makes CP so elusive and difficult to specify. If CP is not rigidly tied to content but more variable (and varies according to another aspect of conscious thought), then this may create more skepticism regarding the project of specification, in an inference from variability to difficulty of specification, and from here to non-relevance of CP. Thus, a view on cognitive phenomenology that allows for a higher degree of variability would be in a better position than a rigidity view in explaining the asymmetry worry and the skepticism around the specification of CP.

(3) DUBIOUS EXPLANATORY POWER FOR THEORIES OF MENTAL CONTENT Thirdly, there is the related problem of whether Pitt's view is explanatory for theories of mental content. The constitution view claims that every change in intentional content is a change in phenomenal type, and specifically, in the sense that it produces *new phenomenal types* for every new intentional content. To say that phenomenal character is what determines the content seems to render utterly mysterious the question of content determination, as it produces a perplexing answer to those that seek an *explanation* of why it

is one content and not another one in the thought *p*. The explanatory power of a theory like this is dubious, or ultimately it seems to move the question of content determination to another domain that it is even more difficult to grasp: the phenomenal domain.

Moreover, consider the issue of how many kinds of phenomenal types there are. According to this view, there are so many phenomenal types as possible thoughts or intentional contents, implying a proliferation of phenomenal types. We do not seem to have independent grounds on which believe that this proliferation takes place other than believing in the theory itself.

GENERAL REMARKS As a general point, I think that to recognize a role of experience in intentionality and to reject some accounts that do not take phenomenology into account (for example Dretske, 1995; Millikan, 1984), which I take is Pitt's main general framework, does not require the view to have such strong requirements for experience, that is, to demand a role for CP that can solve the problem of content determination. In my view, there are other possibilities for granting experience an important role in conscious thought (and more generally in theories of intentionality) that do not have the consequences Pitt is prepared to endorse. This is further explored in the next section, when I compare Pitt's theory with Husserl's, to whom he attributes the models he develops.

8.2.2 *Pitt vs Husserl on the specification of CP*

As Pitt himself makes explicit in a footnote, he relies on Husserl for his presentation of both the relational and the constitutive view. In particular, he associates the two models described to two different theories he attributes to Husserl:

> Some readers will be put in mind here of Husserl, whose general view of intentional content as phenomenal seems to be very close to mine. The second way of construing the relation between phenomenology and content was (arguably) held by Husserl in the *Logical Investigations* (intentional contents as species), whereas the first way was (arguably) held by him in Ideas (intentional content as noematic Sinn) (Pitt, 2009, p. 119, footnote 3).

As this quote indicates, Pitt associates the *relational* theory to Husserl's *Ideas* and the *constitutive* one to Husserl's *LU*. He himself takes on the task of developing a theory for the constitutive view, and says nothing more with respect to the relational view. Even if it is not Pitt's goal to compare his theory with Husserl's or even to inherit Husserl's insights, I think some words concerning this interpretation would be useful in order to further specify further what I find problematic in

his whole approach and make the point that the Husserlian insight can be developed in other ways than Pitt's constitutive model.

The main problem I want to point out is that Pitt seems to attribute to Husserl a more substantial view than the one I think Husserl presents, so one first problem with this association is that it may be more confusing than illuminating. The reason for this is that Pitt is trying to give a view of the relation between intentional content and cognitive phenomenology, a distinction that in the first place Husserl would have difficulty accepting. So I think Husserl's view (and the phenomenological tradition in general) is more silent on the question that occupies us now than what Pitt seems to think. This can be seen if we take a quick look at Husserl's approach to the question of cognitive experiences.

In the first edition of the *LU*[11], Husserl investigates certain phenomena he calls *Erlebnisse* (experiences). Phenomenology as a philosophical method, tries to describe them and not causally explain them, as do other types of explication pursue. What does Husserl refer to when he talks about experiences? He refers to the modern psychologists (like Wundt) to introduce the term, and psychologists claim that experiences are include all these changing events:

> In this sense, experiences or contents of consciousness are perceptions, representations of fantasy and image, the acts of conceptual thinking, suppositions and doubts, joys and pains, hopes and fears, desires and wills, etc., as they occur in our consciousness. (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970, V, § 2).

Within the experiences that are events in consciousness, Husserl distinguishes the category of 'acts' ('*Akte*') as '*intentional experiences*'. Conscious thoughts are among the category of acts, because they have intentional objects, that is, they are about something, they are directed towards something, which is the object of the thought. The phenomenological premise that is present in the analysis and constitutes its point of departure is that thoughts are considered from the point of view of their experiential character, i.e., from the experiential domain. Phenomenology seeks to analyze the structures involved in *experiencing* the thought, in how a certain intentional content or thought is given in experience. And from there on, what is involved in this experience of consciously thinking (for an example of this approach, see Smith, 2011). If thoughts are thus examined from the point of view of experience and first-person approaches, it seems obvious that they enjoy phenomenal character or what-it-is-likeness (even if the expression was not coined by classical phenomenologists). Conscious thoughts thus are intentional states with phenomenology.

11 I focus on the LU and not on Ideas, as it is the view favored by Pitt and because it does not present as many problems of interpretation as the theory of intentionality Husserl developed in Ideas through the notion of *noesis* and *noema*.

Moreover, the question of a proprietary phenomenology of thought also seems to be clear for phenomenologists, as we noted in the introduction. Remember that, according to Husserl, an intentional experience is constituted by the *Quality* and the *Matter*. The Quality is the type of act – a thought, an imagination, a perception, a desire, etc.,– , whereas the Matter is the aspect under which the object presents itself. Both aspects constitute an intentional experience or act, according to Husserl. Both are moments (dependent parts) of the act as a whole. When it comes to psychic phenomena or to experiences, the following holds: if the whole is experienced, so are the parts (principle of ontological homogeneity) (Bell, 1994). That the Matter of the act is experienced means that the way the object is given to us is experienced, and the way the object is given to us is the meaning. According to Husserl's theory of *species* and *particulars* (see Husserl (1900-1901/1970, II)) – analogous to the type/token distinctions. Matter is the particular where the meaning as a species instantiates itself. Thus, the meaning of the act belongs to the experienced content. If experienced contents are qualitative contents, and if the meaning is of a conceptual nature, a conceptual qualitative content corresponds to them (Soldati, 2005). Analogously, that the Quality is experienced means that there are experiential differences between different Qualities: whether a certain act or intentional mental state is of a certain kind (an imagination, a perception, a thought, a judgement, etc.) it is recognized because they are experienced differently; they are different types of experiences which instantiate themselves in token experiences.

This theory seems to be the inspiration for Pitt's (2009) presentation of the constitutive view, where we have a phenomenal/intentional token of a phenomenal/intentional type in a relation of tokening or instantiating, or in Husserl's words, between particulars and species. Besides the objections that this kind of theory could raise, which he addresses in the remaining of Pitt (2009), what seems relevant for our present purposes is that Husserl's theory in the *LU* seems *neutral* with respect to the question of intentional content determination. The kind of act (Quality) and the object as it is presented in experience (Matter) constitutes the intentional experience, which functions as a kind of primitive in the whole theory of intentionality. Whereas the question of the specificity or proprietariness of thought seems easy to derive from this theory, the question of the content specification is not so straightforward. That the Matter is experienced *does not necessarily* imply that the cognitive phenomenal character *constitutes* or is *identical* to the intentional content. Thus, that the differences in Quality and Matter make differences in experience (and we can read here: phenomenal character) can be interpreted as a *supervenience* thesis: no difference in Quality/Matter without a difference in experience. Notice that this supervenience claim has a *determination* reverse

claim: sameness of phenomenal character implies sameness of cognitive content. Moreover, the presentation of Husserl's theory allows for an assymetric supervenience relation, given that saying that Matter and Quality are experienced (and so there are experiential differences in them) also allows for the interpretation that experiential (phenomenal) differences *supervene* on cognitive content: no difference in phenomenal character without a difference in Matter/Quality. Thus, and for the reverse relation, the same Matter/Quality *determine* the same phenomenal character.

Given this interpretation of Husserl's theory, there are two thing to say with respect to Pitt's view. There is a sense of individuation, namely, the one he is using in the epistemic argument in Pitt (2004), according to which to individuate the content *just* means to pick up the thought as the thought it is. But there is another sense of individuation, the one he develops in Pitt (2009) as a way of cashing out the individuative claim, according to which to individuate the content means to *constitute* this content in the identity relation specified above. What I want to show is that just the first sense, and not the second one, is the one that can be derived from Husserl's theory. The supervenience claims in Husserl's theory allows for the first sense of individuation, given that the same phenomenal character determines the same cognitive content (Matter) and thus you can pick up the thought as the thought it is by just pointing to its phenomenal character. But this claim does not imply the second and stronger notion of individuation as constitution, as both phenomenal character and cognitive content can be said to have a different nature and therefore the first would not constitute the second (as some emergentist positions would claim).

Another point of divergence between Pitt and Husserl is the commitmments regarding internalism and externalism in thought's content determination. As we have seen, Pitt's theory assumes an internalist stance that might not be so easily attributed to Husserl. The distinction between internalist and externalist views and the prolific debates surrounding the issue for content determination have been regarded with skepticism by phenomenologists, who either did not participate on the debate or followed Husserl's skepticism on the division between "inside" and "outside" as phenomenologically suspect notions when it comes to understanding intentionality (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970). As Zahavi puts it:

> In my view, the phenomenological analysis of intentionality (be it Husserl's, Heidegger's or Merleau-Ponty's) all entail such a fundamental rethinking of the very relation between subjectivity and world that it no longer makes much sense to designate them as either internalist or externalist (Zahavi, 2004).

Even if this is so, if we stress the question of whether Husserl's theory of intentionality in the *LU* is internalist or externalist, we find some authors defending that his theory recognizes a kind of meaning determined by context and externally individuated, as is the case with demonstratives and indexicals (Alweiss, 2009).[12]

8.2.2.1 *Conclusions*

In the previous chapter I defended an epistemic argument to support the specificity claim. In this chapter I have added more skepticism on the specification of CP that Pitt proposes. I have highlighted a limitation of his account as an internalist view on content and I have presented two objections: it is explanatorily dubious as a theory of mental content determination and it is rigid in variability within CP. I have suggested that general accounts of intentionality where phenomenology plays a central role, like Husserl's, do not necessarily have to endorse the constitutive view Pitt proposes, because one can interpret Husserl's theory as a supervenience view between cognitive content and phenomenology without accepting identity and constitution by phenomenal character.

In the next section I present another proposal for CP specification, a recent one by Strawson, which differs from Pitt's in that it is not fully internalist with respect to intentional mental content and accounts for a more variability of CP in relation to intentional content. Here again, though, I will raise some problems before finally presenting my own account of CP specification.

8.2.3 *Galen Strawson on the specification of CP*

A recent approach to the specification question has been proposed by Strawson (2011). After having argued for the existence of CP since, at least, Strawson (1994/2010), in his recent paper he proposes a suggestive step forward in the question of the nature of CP that I present and assess in what follows.

The new development he offers is a possible account of the relation between cognitive content and cognitive phenomenology. Strawson's notion of *content* is broader than that of intentional or representational content as normally used in the literature. In a closer connection to the notion in the phenomenological tradition, Strawson uses 'content' as

12 Husserl's theory of intentionality changed in Husserl (1913) in one main respect: the distinction between the intentional content and the intentional object, which remains out of the experience in the *LU*, now belongs to the "noema" or "objective pole" of intentionality, without leaving nothing outside. For defenses of this theory as having externalist components, see Smith (2008), Crowell (2008), or Zahavi (2008).

> absolutely everything that is experienced in the having of the experience, everything that is experientially registered in any way (Strawson, 2011, p. 291).

He calls this kind of content 'phenomenological content'.[13] For Strawson, phenomenological *vs* non phenomenological content does not match perfectly with the distinction internal/external content. His proposal is that internal content is the concretely occurring phenomenological content –what it is like considered as such (being in pain) – while external content is every other sort of mental content (it can include mental states and phenomenological states; thinking that one is in pain could be an example). In his words:

> The difference between the way in which internal content is internal content and the way in which it can be external content is no more mysterious than the difference between being in pain and thinking about being in pain (the latter difference is just a case of the former) (Strawson, 2011, p. 292-293).

Within this general characterization, he distinguishes between *cognitive content* and *cognitive experiential content*. The first is the content involved in a cognitive state, which is a state that represents the reality in some way, accurately or not. The cognitive content is, for instance, *that* 2+2+=4. 'Cognitive content', as I understand it, is the same as 'intentional content' or 'representational content' of cognition in the more standard use of the term. The second kind of content, the cognitive experiential content, is a matter of entertaining a certain cognitive content, and it is what presents the what-it-is-likeness (synonymous with phenomenal character and experiential character). Strawson points out that there is confusion surrounding this distinction because cognitive experiential content can be cognitive content as well, when it becomes the object of reflection, for example. From now on I will keep using 'cognitive content' in the way I have been using it, which matches Strawson's use, and I will present his view using his 'cognitive experiential character', but the reader may change it with what I have been calling cognitive phenomenal character or CP, as nothing substantial hinges on this.

An important assumption at this point (that is also shared by Pitt, as we have seen) is that cognitive experiential can be determined fully internally:

> The character of this internal content can be fully characterized without any reference to the object the thought or perception is of or about, because it is (ex hypothesi) identical to the character of the corresponding experiences of my Twins (Strawson, 2011, p. 293-294).

13 This is also the use in Montague (2011, p. 133). For a similar notion of content see McCulloch (2003) and Smith (2011).

Strawson's Twins refer to the "characters" imagined by thought experiments used in the discussions on the determination of intentional content. In particular he refers to what he calls 'the Perfect Earth Twin', 'the Brain in a Vat Twin' and 'the Instant Twin'. All three characters belong to the three different thought experiments used in the literature of determination of linguistic and mental content, two of which have been presented in 6.1.[14] His introduction of these characters serves the point of illustrating what he takes experiential character to be. Perfect Twin, Instant Twin and Brain in a Vat Twin all share, by hypothesis, the same qualitative or phenomenal character. This phenomenal character is thus understood as the purely internal what-it-is-likeness, which does not depend on anything of the environment, on the causal history or on the connections to the external world.

In order to present Strawson's proposal for the relation between CP and cognitive content, the example he uses will be helpful. He presents the example of himself (G) and his sister (S) thinking about the River Cherwell flowing under the Humpback Bridge. Both for him and for his sister, we would have the corresponding Twins of the thought experiments. I will call the person of the example G and his sister S.

The characterization of the overall content (cognitive content + cognitive experiential content or CP) has to account for two facts:

1. G shares some kind of content with his sister S, given their same causal relations to the environment.

2. G shares some kind of content with his Twins, by hypothesis, given their same qualitative character.

The first fact relies on previous acceptance of the view that some sort of content externalism for certain conceps is true, so that the general framework of this proposal accepts a Fodorian view according to

14 The third one, the Instant Twin, is the product of a thought experiment designed by (Davidson, 1987) that tries to pump intuitions about the role of causal history in content determination. The experiment runs as follows: suppose Davidson goes hiking in the swamp and is struck and killed by a lightning bolt. At the same time, nearby in the swamp another lightning bolt spontaneously rearranges a bunch of molecules such that, entirely by coincidence, they take on exactly the same form that Davidson's body had at the moment of his untimely death. This being, whom Davidson terms 'Swampman', has, of course, a brain which is structurally identical to that which Davidson had, and will thus, presumably, behave exactly as Davidson would have. Davidson holds that there would nevertheless be a difference, though no one would notice it. Swampman will appear to recognize Davidson's friends, but it is impossible for him to actually recognize them, as he has never seen them before. As Davidson puts it, "it can't recognize anything, because it never cognized anything in the first place." These considerations lead Davidson to deny that the Swampman's utterances can be construed as referring to anything in particular. The Swampman has no causal history. Until the Swampman has begun interacting with and using language among the objects of the real world, we can have no grounds to attributing any meanings or thoughts to him at all, Davidson argues.

which the content of concepts is to be determined externally, mostly by causal relations with the environment. He calls such externally individuated concepts *'actual-world-bound concepts'*. For Strawson, the concepts that G shares with S because they are externally individuated cannot be used in the characterization of the cognitive experiential content, since one has also to account for 2. This is one motivation to introduce the notion of *concept-aspect* or *concept**:

> So these concepts (the ones I share with my sister) can't be used in the characterization of my cognitive experiential content, since that characterization has to be able to represent the fact that I'm the same as my Twins in respect of cognitive-experiential content. But we're surely going to need something very like these concepts to characterize my cognitive experiential content. At the very least, we're going to need the notion of a *concept**, or the notion of a *concept-aspect*: a notion closely related to our familiar notion of a concept in certain respects, but also sufficiently different from it from us to be able to use it in characterizing the fact that I'm identical to my Twins in respect of my cognitive-experiential content (Strawson, 2011, p. 306).

To clarify this notion, Strawson introduces the story of *Intergalactic Facebook*. There are 100 twin earths, and in each one everybody communicates not with actual friends but with their doubles in other planets. Everything works perfectly in the sense of communication, etc. *Intergalactic Facebook English* (IF English) is defined by the fact of the apparently successful communication. It seems that we can use the terms of IF English to specify concept* or concept-aspects that are suitable for use in the specification of the cognitive-experiential content G shares with his Twins (IFE concepts). This IF-English is a language suitable for the specification of qualitative characters that is as rich as English and isn't limited to sensorily descriptive terms.[15]

Now we are in a position to present Strawson's proposal for the relation between cognitive content (2+2=4) and cognitive experiential content (my consciously experiencing that 2+2=4). Two important questions, which Strawson explicitly addresses, need an answer:

1. Does the same cognitive experiential content determine the same cognitive content?

2. Does the same cognitive content determine the same cognitive experiential content?

15 'One might say that what IFE concepts capture is a special, abstract, stepped-back kind of cognitive content (particular-world-independent cognitive content)—so that IF-English is suitable for the expression of what Horgan and Tienson call 'narrow truth-conditions' (see e.g. Horgan and Tienson 2002)' (Strawson, 2011, p. 307, footnote 43).

Against this general background, Strawson's answer to 1) is negative: the same experiential cognitive content does not determine the same cognitive content, because by hypotheses, G and his Perfect Twin Earth, his Instant Twin and his Brain in a Vat Twin have the same qualitative character – a qualitative character of the same type. But the Twin in Twin Earth and G are thinking about a *different* river (because in Twin Earth there is no H2O but XYZ). And G's Instant Twin is not thinking about any bridge at all. He doesn't mention the Brain in a Vat Twin, but presumably the cognitive content of his thought would be different than G's. If the situation imagined is sound, Strawson's has motivated the case for the claim that the same experiential cognitive content (the same CP) *does not determine* the same cognitive content.

Notice the difference in approach with respect to Pitt's, where intentional content is determined by CP and so the same CP also implies the same intentional content, given the identity thesis. Strawson's account puts forward a proposal where the variability in intentional content does not depend on CP, which is postulated the same across Twins. This difference between their proposals is due to their different acceptance of the externalist or partial externalist view: Strawson accepts, and requires for his view, some sort of causal connection to the world in the determination of the thought content. The fact that G and S share some concepts is explained by the fact that they deploy world-anchored concepts (THAT RIVER, THAT BRIDGE, BRIDGE X). Pitt does not posit it as a requirement and embraces an internalist view on content.

The answer to the second question, namely, whether the same cognitive content determines the same experiential cognitive content, is less obvious and more difficult, Strawson says. But in the end it is also negative. It is here when G's sister, S, is relevant and where he has to introduce the third element to account for the characterization of CP. If we compare G's conscious thought and S's conscious thought about the same river and bridge, Strawson wants to account for the fact that, even if both have the same or similar cognitive content, they could not be in the same kind of qualitative state. That is, G's Twins and S's Twins might be in differents kinds of qualitative states, even if G and S share the same cognitive content. What is responsible for this difference in cognitive experiential content is the sense in which concepts are *different* across people due to the different way they behave in different mental economies. This is a central aspect to the conceptual role semantics (CRS) view, according to which we all have different river concepts or concepts*. Strawson's idea is not to committed to the CRS account, but just to appeal to CRS as a

> helpful way of expressing how your and my cognitive-experiential content can be different when we both think that the river is deep and wide (Strawson, 2011, p. 310).

So the final picture Strawson presents is the following. We have a general view of concepts as mental particulars and they are Fodorian concepts, that is, their cognitive content is at least partially externally determined by causal relations (more on this below). This is the *actual-world-bound aspect*. Over this, we should recognize two more aspects: the *CRS aspect* and the *actual-world-free aspect*, which needs to be pointed out for assessing the relations between cognitive content and cognitive experiential content. The CRS aspect accounts for the differences in cognitive-experiental content between people sharing the same cognitive content externally determined, and the actual-world-free aspect expresses the identity of qualitative characters across Twins, which is the same because they share the same CRS aspect too, given that they are internally the same.

With these elements we are in a position to evaluate the two questions of their relation.

- 1. Does the same experiential cognitive content determine the same cognitive content?

We have already seen that the same CP is accounted for with the actual-world-free aspect, which does not determine the same cognitive content, because of the acceptance of a partially externalist view on content determination. G and S and their respective Twins have different cognitive content because of their different relations to the world.

- 2. Does the same cognitive content determine the same experiential cognitive content?

With respect to this other direction, the same cognitive content *does not determine* the same CP either because, even if some concepts are Fodorian, the CP between different people may vary depending on the conceptual role that a certain concept plays in their mental economies (the CRS aspect) and the same cognitive content (between G and S, for example) can correlate with different CP (G's Twins of one sort and S's Twins of another). If there is no relation of determination, then no relation of supervenience can be established either in Strawson's view, because differences in cognitive content do not necessarily make differences in experiential cognitive content, given that we have the Twins with identical CP whatever is their relation to the external world.

The final upshot is thus that cognitive content and CP vary independently of each other and require the postulation of concept aspects or concepts* (actual-world-bound aspect, CRS and actual-world-free aspect) in order to account for the relations of both kinds of content and for the possibilities of variation in both kinds.

Notice that Strawson's view would give an answer to the asymmetry objection in the following way: there are relevant similarities

and differences in CP among conscious thought episodes and different people, in virtue of the concept-aspects described, but the same CP does not necessarily determine the same cognitive content, and so CP does not constitute a uniform feature in virtue of which we can classify types of conscious thought.

8.2.3.1 *Assessing Strawson's view*

Now we have the elements to assess Strawson's proposal for the specification of CP.

COMMITMENTS TO CONCEPTUAL CONTENT DETERMINATION Following the points stressed before regarding Pitt's account, we should say that Strawson's specification of CP does not depend on a previous acceptance of an internalist/externalist stance, in the sense that his position on externalism/internalism does not alter what determines a certain CP. CP is determined by the actual-world-free aspect (which accounts for the similarities) and the CRS aspect (which accounts for the differences).

However, this does not mean that the other direction of the relation, namely, whether CP determines cognitive content, is not affected by Strawson's view on conceptual content determination. Strawson, like Pitt, thinks that CP is *essential* to the nature of thought and not just accidentally tied to it. The epistemic arguments and the phenomenal contrast arguments we examined in the previous chapter are normally *modally weak,* in the sense that they do not claim a deep connection between phenomenology and thought (Pitt being an exception to this). So further arguments are required in order to establish some kind of essential connection between thought and phenomenology.

Strawson provides one such argument for the conclusion that phenomenology partially *grounds* the intentional content of thought. The idea is that cognitive phenomenology partially grounds the intentional content of thought because it is the only element that can grant an univocal attribution of content to thought. The question of what grounds the intentional content of a thought amounts to the question of what is the ground that explains why we can think of particular objects and properties as such. The main problem of current theories that aim at solving this question is that they are unable to provide an account that can attribute determinate contents to thoughts. This is what since Quine (1960) and Kripke (1982) has been called as the *indeterminacy of thought's content*. In a nutshell, the worry is that any theory that has been provided (which relies on functional and causal relations) fails to pick up a single state as the thought's content; there are just too many candidates that satisfy the conditions for being the thought's content. Should we then say that, since functional and physical relations cannot provide determinacy to thought, thoughts cannot really have determinate content? This question can also be

found in Kripke's book (1982), when he asks what might *determine* the meaning of the concept PLUS rather than QUUS, but he rejects the idea according to which the qualitative character associated with that concept may do the job.[16]

Strawson's proposal is then that phenomenal character can be this ground. He contends that cognitive phenomenology is needed in order to solve the 'stopping problem', that is, the problem of 'where to stop' in the various elements of the causal chain which may determine what a certain subject's thought or perception is about. His example proceeds as follows: we have a subject, Lucy, who is perceiving or thinking about Mandy the moose. If we assume that Lucy has the appropriate causal connections to Mandy, how is the content of Lucy's thought and experience determined? How does Lucy's experience or thought manage to be about Mandy the moose, rather than the set of Mandy-caused photons impacting on her retinas, or certain other sets of causes on the causal chain leading to the experience? As Strawson puts it, the problem is how the thought manages to stop precisely at Mandy and not at some other location on the causal chain.

He argues that the answer must appeal to cognitive phenomenology: there is a conception (internally specifiable) of what particular thing her experience is about and this conception is part of the cognitive-phenomenological content of her experience, it is precisely an *essential* part of what is needed in order to pick up the intentional content. The other part is presumably the causal relation.

The argument sketched here presents a view according to which CP *partially* determines intentional content. The 'partially' is important, as it is what allows Strawson to deny that the same CP determines the same cognitive content, as we have seen: the causal externalist element is what precludes the view from accepting that cognitive content varies with CP. [17]

Strawson's argument for CP as the candidate for solving the indeterminacy problem can be objected to independently, and I think it ultimately depends on the success of the negative argumentation against other possibilities. However, it is not as strong as Pitt's position in defending that the only element responsible for content determination is the phenomenology, what perhaps makes the view less controversial.

In Strawson (2011) the picture he seems to defend is that content determination is done by the Fodorian aspect, and the internal determination by CP is not mentioned, and the other two aspects contribute

16 This is not the place to go into the details of this problem and the variety of solutions extensively discussed in the literature. For a presentation of the problem see Fodor (1990) and for a proposal of solution within functional and teleosemantic theories of content, see Millikan (1993), Martinez (forthcoming) and Artiga (unpublished).

17 In terms of the narrow/wide content terminology, I think Strawson would say that the same CP could determine the same narrow content but not the same wide content, for which we need the causal connection to the world.

to differences and similarities within CP. But if we add the argument from Strawson (2008) just presented, we know that CP is partially responsible for the determination of cognitive content, jointly with the Fodorian aspect. Strawson's general picture is then the following: the Fodorian aspect and the CP jointly determine the cognitive content, and this is precisely why the same CP cannot alone determine the same cognitive content (question 1); and the actual-world-free aspect and the CRS aspect jointly determine CP (the first accounts for similarities in CP and the second accounts for differences in CP), and this is why the same cognitive content cannot determine the same CP (question 2).

NOTION OF CONCEPT-ASPECT The mysterious element in Strawson's approach comes with the appeal to concept-aspects or concepts*. Remember that these concept-aspects (CRS aspect, actual-world-free aspect and the actual-world-bound aspect) are needed to account for the relation between cognitive content and CP. But what exactly is a concept-aspect? Is it something all concepts have (as parts or elements within them) or just a special group of concepts? To say that only some concepts but not all have these three aspects sounds rather strange and unmotivated, because then we do not know what differentiates one kind of concept from another. So the first option sounds more reasonable.

A point that remains unexplained in Strawson's proposal is the determination of similarities in CP between people in the actual world. The actual-world-free aspect of concepts gives us identical CP across Twins, but the picture *does not tell us* how we can establish *similarities* in CP between people who are not Twins. Arguably, the same or similar CRS aspect would contribute to these similarities in CP, but this is not further explained by Strawson and he seems to restrict similarities to the identity of CP across Twins. What he seems to suggest is that, if we set aside the actual-world-free aspect and focus on the actual world, what we find are just differences in CP between people due to their different CRS aspect.

Another problem that is specifically related to the CRS aspect is that it is not clear how the role that a certain concept has in our mental economies can *contribute* to the cognitive experiential character. That is, a broad picture of CRS would contend that the role a certain concept plays in a particular conceptual network is necessary for the individuation of its content, but Strawson's claim here is quite different, as the conceptual network in which the concept is situated is a concept-aspect that contributes to CP. The problem now is: how can a network of *dispositions* affect phenomenology and experience, which is something actual and occurrent? It seems odd to say that occurrent CP differences across individuals are due to the different

conceptual inferential roles that certain concepts play, which is not at all occurrent.

To sum up, I see two main limitations with this view, the two related to the notion of concept-aspect and CRS. The first is that the postulation of an identical qualitative character across Twins makes it difficult to know when non-Twins in the actual world share CP, if the CRS aspect is needed in the picture to account for differences in CP. The second is the fact that occurrent and actual CP differences cannot be accounted for with the dispositional set of inferences that can be drawn from a certain concept that is what constitutes its CRS aspect.

8.2.4 *Conclusions*

In this section I have examined two proposals for specification of CP with respect to the content side. Pitt's proposal meets Martin's and Georgalis' objections, but I have noted one limitation, (i) fully internalist commitments, and two objections: (ii) explanatorily dubiousness for theories of content and (iii) the rigidity in CP variation. I then presented Strawson's account as also meeting Martin's objection but not Georgalis' one and also noted that, with respect to (i), his commitments are not as strong as Pitt's and thus (ii) is not that problematic, and he avoids (iii) by acknowledging a great deal of variability in CP. However, (iv) his proposal makes it difficult to know when non-Twins in the actual world share CP and (v) it is not clear that the CRS aspect can play the role Strawson wants it to play because it is a dispositional element and phenomenology is a matter of occurrent actual states. In what follows I am going to present a proposal close to Strawson's but that avoids the problems just noted.

8.3 PROPOSAL: EXPERIENCED CONCEPTUAL NETWORK

The account I am putting forward here is a proposal for the specification of CP that seeks to answer the challenge of specification without having the limitations I find in the proposals presented. It is an example of how the specification in experiential kinds is possible and it presents a picture in which cognitive experiential similarities and differences are established.

Notice that none of the proposals mentioned explicitly takes into account the relation of CP with our *acquired knowledge*. When asked about thinking on a certain topic, one of the features that seem to contribute to the cognitive experience is the previous knowledge we have of the topic in question. Consider again the case of understanding: in the contrast between understanding and not understanding, what seems to happen is that when one understands a given proposition, one embeds the proposition understood within one's previous

knowledge, and this seems related in some way to the experiential difference in the two cases. This relation of the cognitive experience with our acquired knowledge and the embedding of the proposition understood in our previous knowledge seems to be particularly relevant in the phenomenology of cognitive states and it is this idea that I develop in this proposal.

8.3.1 *Elements of the picture*

EXPERIENCED CONCEPTUAL NETWORK AND BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE Consider the following example. A gardener and I are standing in front of a field and we both see a flower and think the thought *that the flower is beautiful*. She is an expert in flowers and I am not. What are the experiential similarities and differences between the gardener and me in the cognitive episode?

The differences in phenomenal character have multiple sources. They are produced by differences in inner speech –yours being a certain kind of tone and speed and mine another– in images associated with this thought and possible emotions and feelings triggered by the scene. If we suppose, for the sake of the argument, that all these elements are the same in you and me, as are the concepts FLOWER and BEAUTIFUL, can we still say that we have different experiential or phenomenal character while entertaining the thought that the flower is beautiful?

The picture I am putting forward answers this question affirmatively. The idea is that there are further interesting and salient differences because of the *Experienced Conceptual Network* (ECN) in which our thoughts are embedded in our mental lives. My proposal is that the connections and the "position" of the concept in our cognitive mental lives form a kind of network. The network of concepts around the concept that constitutes the focus, FLOWER in our case, is formed by all those concepts that are activated together with the main one, as we will see in detail.

This ECN is occurrently activated and experienced in a way that depends on the *background knowledge* one possesses about a certain concept. This background is to be understood as a set of dispositional beliefs that we may differently carry depending on our expertise in a certain area or subject matter. Different people, and the same person at different times, can have different background knowledges, as their sets of beliefs may change across individuals and time. The background knowledge is the element in virtue of which different ECN will be phenomenologically present. This relation of dependency between the ECN and the background knowledge can be further clarified by saying that the ECN is in fact *part* of the background knowledge that precisely is activated and is occurrent and experienced. Just

the concepts that are embedded in our dispositional set of beliefs can consciously appear in the ECN.

How do these elements relate? The theory proposes that each time there is an activation of a certain concept, i.e., FLOWER, *some* of the concepts of the background knowledge are activated simultaneously, forming the ECN mentioned above. The concept FLOWER is not experienced alone or isolated, but it is given in experience embedded in a network of related and associated concepts that *also* contribute to the phenomenal character of the conscious thought. The network is "bigger" or "smaller" depending on the knowledge of the person of the given concept, which allows somehow the creation of more links to the central concept. The idea is that the more knowledge one has of a certain subject, the bigger the network is, and the richer is the cognitive phenomenology at a given time. If a gardener and I – and I don't know anything about flowers – both entertain the thought *that the flower is beautiful*, we will both have a different networks in virtue of the different links we have associated with the concept FLOWER in our background knowledge. The network of the gardener will be bigger and will have more connections, while mine will be poorer and probably related to other concepts. As a first approximation to the specification question, we can say that her phenomenology will be richer than mine.

Notice that the background is not occurrently experienced (it is dispositional) but produces variation in the activation of certain conceptual networks. An interesting question at this point is the following: what makes it the case that some concepts of the background are activated and not others? Why is it precisely *this* part that gets activated and not another one? The answer to this involves appealing to the *empirical* aspect of the proposal, in that exactly which concepts are activated cannot be determined a priori but by means of empirical research. We can say that the part of the background knowledge that has more probability of being activated will depend on past experiences and memories and will be tied to personal and psychological aspects of this sort.

The idea of the activation of ECN is similar or analogous to what we find in our perceptual consciousness. ECN is somehow felt or experienced with the occurring concept you are instantiating, just in the sense in which one can say that there is phenomenal consciousness in the *peripheral* areas of the visual field that are not the main focus of our attention. The idea here is that phenomenal consciousness is broader than the consciousness of those aspects that are the focus of attention. I am suggesting that we should apply the distinction between foreground and background elements of consciousness to thought, as I also mentioned in 3.2.2. This analogy I am making between conscious thought and perceptual experience does not commit the view to any claim regarding whether outside the scope of atten-

tion we still find phenomenal consciousness or not, that is, whether phenomenology overflows cognitive accessibility (Block, 2011b). The analogy is also suggested by Husserl when he admits that conscious episodes like thinking experiences also have an experienced background or "halo" of other mental episodes that surround them and are considered as "potential", that is, they are not the object of direct attention (Husserl, 1913, § 35).

In this respect, one aspect of the proposal that needs to be clarified is the relation between the central *concept* instantiated and the *peripheral* ones or the ones activated depending on the background knowledge. The central concept is the one that is activated when consciously thinking a certain thought if, for the purposes of simplicity, we restrict this focus as being just one concept, but the central concepts are in fact the ones that are present in the proposition. How should we account for the difference between this foreground concept and the others in the ECN? The central concept is normally the concept we are entertaining and thus the one that occupies our attention, but my claim is that the other peripheral ones *are also* experienced in conjunction with this focus. What distinguishes the central one from the peripheral concepts are two main things. Firstly, they are experienced with different grades of vivacity or intensity, from a high degree of intensity of the central one to a low degree of intensity of the ones in the periphery. Although the periphery contributes to the cognitive experience, it is experienced as a kind of secondary state, and as such it is not given as clearly as the central one. Introspectively, we might have difficulty in determining which are these concepts of the background, because of their elusiveness. Secondly, the inferential capacity that the peripheral propositions have (with their concepts) is very different from the inferential capacity of the central proposition entertained. From the central concepts of the proposition entertained one might be able to infer many things and be disposed to react in certain ways, but such inferential capacity is not attributable to the peripheral propositions and concepts.

One might argue that the ECN is based on an analogy with the perceptual case that is not satisfied in an important point: whereas in the perceptual case you can say that you also perceive the peripheral elements, in thought it does not seem that you also *think* about the other concepts that are activated and that form the background elements of consciousness. One might suggest that this difference makes things sound strange for my view, but notice that this difference makes sense if we see that the concepts activated in the ECN are not whole propositions but concepts that constitute these propositions, and we do not properly take concepts alone to be *thought of*, that is, to be the object of cognitive attitudes, but instead, intentional objects are whole propositions. Peripheral or background propositions are not thereby thought of too, even if their constituents are experienced.

8.3.1.1 *The nature, structure and content of concepts*

This proposal has to specify what takes concepts to be (what is their nature), and what is the relation of the proposal with theories about the structure and content of concepts. With respect to the issue of the nature of concepts, the standard way to present the views is dividing them into three main approaches: concepts as mental representations, concepts as Fregean senses or concepts as abilities. With respect to the structure of concepts, we find structuralist and non-structuralist views, and with respect to content determination, we might distinguish conceptual atomism and conceptual holism. The aim of this section is to briefly present these different views and my take on them. Whereas I will assume that concepts are mental representations, my proposal remains neutral with respect to the structure of concepts and theories of content determination.

When it comes to the nature of concepts, one approach claims that concepts are mental representations. On this approach, concepts are the vehicles of thought and other propositional attitudes and they are brain states employed when a subject undergoes a certain thought episode. As psychological entities within a internal system of representation, concepts are internal representation *types* that have individual instances as *tokens*, as described in the general framework of the representational theory of mind. In a nutshell, the representational theory of mind (RTM) claims that thought occurs in an internal system of representation, according to a certain set of transformation rules. Concepts are the elements that constitute propositions and beliefs. Defenders of the representational theory of mind usually appeal to the explanatory capacities of the theory in explaining the productivity of thought – the fact that we can entertain an infinite number of thoughts –, in accounting for the way in which mental processes can be both rational and implemented in the brain, and in accommodating the structure of mental processes.[18] The representational view is the default position in cognitive science (Pinker, 1995) and enjoys widespread support in psychology and philosophy of mind, particularly among those authors whose work runs in relation and contact with cognitive science (Carey, 1985[19], Fodor, 1998, Laurence and Margolis, 1999, Machery, 2009, Prinz, 2002). We find disagreement with respect to many features of concepts, but construing concepts as mental representations seems to be the common ground in philosophy and psychology. In my proposal, and as I also presented in 1.2.3, I

18 Even if there is this tight relation between concepts as mental representations and RTM, one could defend the view that concepts are mental representations but reject the RTM in favor of a connectionist model (Machery, 2009, p. 13), according to which brain structures are complex networks.

19 Susan Carey (2009, p. 5) says: I take concepts to be mental representations - indeed, just a subset of the subject's entire stock of a persons mental representations. (...) I assume representations are states of the nervous system, that have content, that refer to concrete or abstract objects (or even fictional entities) to properties and events.

take as a default position on the nature of concepts the broad view that concepts are *mental representations* and the constituents of propositions or thoughts.

There are two other views on the nature of concepts that could have trouble with this assumption. One such view is the one according to which concepts are *Fregean senses* in that they constitute the mode of presentation of a certain referent, that is, the way a certain referent is presented to us, and it is claimed that such modes of presentation enter into the representational content. This approach to concepts is motivated by Frege's Puzzle, according to which there is a problem of how to account for the difference in cognitive significance that occurs between identity statements of the form a=b and a=a where a and b are singular terms. Pairs of statements of these forms differ in cognitive significance, because competent speakers of the language may obtain knowledge from statements of one form (i.e. a=b) but not from those of the other form (i.e. a=a). For instance, a competent speaker of English and, in particular, of the proper names 'Mark Twain' and 'Samuel Clemens', may gain knowledge from the statement 'Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens', but generally not from the statement 'Mark Twain is Mark Twain'. For the speaker may not know that 'Mark Twain' and 'Samuel Clemens' are correferential terms. Frege's solution to the puzzle involved the postulation of senses, which account for this cognitive significance difference (Frege, 1892). On this view concepts are constitutive parts of propositional contents, which are usually conceived of as abstract objects and so concepts are abstract entities, as opposed to mental objects (Peacocke, 1992)[20].

Still a third approach defends that concepts are thought of as *abilities* (Kenny, 2010, Dummett, 1993), and this means that a subject has a certain concept when she is able to do certain things: use words in a certain way, discriminate certain things, or reidentify certain entities. The concept of TABLE, for example, amounts to the abilities to discriminate between tables and non-tables and to draw certain inferences about tables.

Even if these two approaches to the nature of concepts differ in what they consider a concept to be, or what 'concept' primarily refers to, it is important to note that the Fregean sense approach does not deny the existence of mental representations with a certain content. In this way, even if concepts are fregean senses, this view admits that there are mental vehicles that carry representational content (Peacocke, 1992). A bit more complicated is the case with defenders of the ability view, that tend to adopt such view because of a certain skep-

20 Peacocke expresses the difference in two concepts by appealing to the modes of presentation: "Concepts C and D are distinct if and only if there are two complete propositional contents that differ at most in that one contains C substituted in one or more places for D, and one of which is potentially informative while the other is not" (Peacocke, 1992, p. 2).

ticism regarding the existence and utility of mental representations, which traces back to Wittgenstein (1953). But one could maintain that defenders of the ability view usually accept that these abilities are *accompanied* by mental states that theorists of concepts as mental representations usually identify as concepts (Kenny, 2010, p. 106-107). So even if my assumed position is the mental representation view, people who prefer these other approaches to the nature of concepts are *prima facie* in a position to accept my proposal, insofar as they admit the existence of certain mental representations with content in conscious thought and despite the fact that they will disagree as to whether these mental representations are to be primarily considered concepts or not.

When it comes to the *structure* of concepts, theories differ as to whether concepts are structured entities or not. To classify views on this front one has to focus on the possession conditions of concepts, namely, the set of necessary and sufficient conditions that a subject must comply with in order to be said to possess a concept. In this way, concepts are structured entities if and only if in the possessing conditions of a concept there are other concepts involved, and concepts are not structured if one can possess a concept independently of the possession conditions of any other concept.[21]

Structuralist views differ depending on the set of concepts and the relations that are specified as part of the possessing conditions of concepts. What is known as the *Classical theory* of concepts is the view that a concept C has definitional structure in that it is composed of simpler concepts that express necessary and sufficient conditions for falling under C. The most used example is the concept BACHELOR, which is traditionally said to have the constituents UNMARRIED and MAN. The idea is that something falls under BACHELOR if, and only if, it is an unmarried man. The classical theory offers a good account of concept acquisition but faces many other problems: the most important one is that so far not many examples of concepts with necessary and sufficient conditions of application have been provided. A theory that emerged as a reaction against the classical theory of concepts is the *Prototype theory*, according to which a concept C does not have definitional structure but has probabilistic structure in that something falls under C only if it satisfies a sufficient number of properties encoded by C's constituents. The intuition behind the development of these types of theories might be traced back to Wittgenstein's (1953) remarks on the fact that the things that fall under a concept often share a family resemblance. The theory accounts

21 The discussion on the structure of concepts has received a lot of interest in part because it is related to the issue on how concepts are learned (Fodor, 1998, Carey, 2009): how a subject learns a concept may say something about its structure and, at the same time, the structure of concepts determines which processes we must follow in order to learn it.

well for some psychological phenomena and explains why it is so difficult to produce definitions. Another family of theories that react against the classical one is the *Theory theory* of concepts, according to which concept categorization is a process that resembles scientific theorizing and so concepts stand in a relation to one another in the same way as the terms of a scientific theory (Carey, 1985).

Non-structuralist views, on the other hand, defend that one can possess a concept independently of the possession conditions of any other concept. In this respect, Fodor says that "satisfying the metaphysically necessary conditions for having one concept never requires satisfying the metaphysically necessary conditions for having any other concept" (Fodor, 1998, p. 14).

We have seen that my proposal assumes that concepts are mental representations and constituents of thoughts, but it does not require any particular view regarding the structure of concepts and their possession conditions, because the occurrence of the ECN and its peripheral concepts is *not* what determines the structure of the concept but just determines the cognitive phenomenology when a certain thought is entertained. My proposal is silent with respect to what are the possession conditions of concepts and thus what is their structure. Even if the ECN model appeals to a conceptual network, this network is not meant to enter into the structure of concepts. Thus, different views on the structure of concepts are thus compatible with the ECN model.

Finally, when it comes to the *determination or individuation* of the content of concepts, several theories have been competing in philosophy. Among the most prominent options, we can say that *Conceptual Holism* is the label that can be used to present those views that defend that the *content* of a concept is determined by its relations to other concepts. This is the view normally endorsed by Conceptual Role Semanticists (Block, 1986) and can be defended in a weak and in a strong version: according to the weak version, the content of concepts is *partially* determined by its relation to other concepts and, according to the stronger version, the content is *fully* determined by this relation to other concepts.[22] On the other hand, what has been called *Conceptual Atomism* presents the view that the content of concepts is determined by its relation to the world and not by its relation to other concepts (Fodor, 1998). This relation can be cashed out in terms of causal, informational or functional relations, for example. Conceptual atomism is

22 Usually, structuralist views on concepts also defend a form of Conceptual Holism, but they do not need to: one could defend that in order to possess a concept we need the relation to other concepts but what determines conceptual content is the relation to the world, for example. Or the other way around: concepts are unstructured but what determines their content is their relation to other concepts (although this last conjunction of views may be less plausible). This risk of conflating both issues is suggested by Rey. (1985), and for a detailed explanation of the independence between views on the structure of concepts and views on conceptual content determination, see Artiga (unpublished).

aligned with the anti-descriptivist tradition of Putnam (1975), Kripke (1980) and others in the philosophy of language. Moreover, it also has a weak and a strong version, depending on whether the relations to the external world *partially* or *totally* determine the conceptual content. We have already seen that Strawson accepts that some concepts' content is partially determined by causal relations to the world.

As already said, a feature of the ECN proposal is that it engages in the *specification and determination of CP,* and not in the determination of the conceptual content. So an important aspect of the theory is that it can be compatible with several ways and theories of concept individuation. Whether one prefers conceptual atomism or conceptual holism, this should not preclude one from accepting my proposal for CP individuation. This is so because once the concept is instantiated and its content is determined, in whatever way this has been done (and according to our best theory of concept individuation), then CP arises with the network of concepts related to them.

8.3.1.2 Problems

One might argue that it is not clear that my account is independent of theories on the structure and content of concepts. For what happens in my example of the gardener and I when we both instantiate the concept FLOWER is that we do not in fact have the same concept of FLOWER. This worry can be put both for the structural aspect of concepts and for the content one. This is a problem that arises for Structuralism regarding the question of when two subjects can be said to share concepts or to possess the same kind of concepts, if the expert has many more connections in her mental economy that the non-expert. The worry also arises for Conceptual Holism as theories of conceptual content determination, if they claim that the relation to other concepts is what determines the conceptual content of a given concept. If new beliefs add new links to the concept's content determination, how can I maintain the content of the concept fixed (in order to compare CP between individuals)? It seems that these views wouldn't allow my proposal to compare among individuals and in the same individuals across time. And, moreover, the ECN model might not be neutral because the alleged cognitive phenomenal difference between the gardener and me that I have explained through the ECN can simply be explained by possession of a different concept. The EC network is thus not required and just complicates matters.

What this kind of theories can say is that, in our example, the gardener and I share a *relevantly similar concept*, by sharing a sufficient number of beliefs, for example, which would secure concept stability. With this addition, and if the comparison across individuals is secured for these theories, then their adoption is not an obstacle for adopting my proposal, and the proposal would continue to be neutral with respect to the various theories.

At the same time, some might argue that Conceptual Atomist theories deny the role of the conceptual network in the determination of conceptual content, which is to be done by relations to the world. Then it would seem that they are also in a position to deny my described ECN, which is precisely a network of concepts. Clearly here, atomistic theories just have to accept the thesis of the network for the individuation of phenomenal character, not for the content of the concept. And there seems to be nothing in this kind of theory that precludes it from acknowledging the ECN.

8.3.1.3 *Similarities and differences*

One strength of the proposal is that it helps to determine phenomenal similarities and differences in CP in a principled way. Remember that Martin's (forthcoming) concern was that we do not expect there to be anything interesting in common across different episodes of thinking which involve the very same thoughts, any salient feature. And Georgalis (2006) couldn't find a uniform feature of identical type.

On the assumption that comparison between us is possible, we can say that our cognitive phenomenologies vary depending on the ECN: similar ECN, namely, activation of similar network of concepts would amount to similarities in CP, and very different ECNs would amount to very different phenomenologies. The most clear cases are the extreme ones: a person with a great deal of knowledge about a certain matter, when instantiating a central concept of that subject, would have a very rich phenomenology, by way of the ECN, compared to the non-expert on the topic. The extreme cases between the expert and the non-expert show relevant differences in CP, and in between we have a gradual sequence of more or less similar ECN.

A natural question that arises here is how are the *similarities* and *differences* in ECN to be *determined*. If different networks account for differences in CP, which ultimately rest on the background knowledge one possesses as dispositional set of beliefs, is it possible to ever have the *same* CP in two people or in the same person across time? It seems that we need a criterion for determining the feature of the network that allows us to compare between different networks. Is it its dimension? The number of connections? The nature of such connections? A response to these questions would be necessary in order to approach the two questions that were also contrasted in the other two accounts. Remember that the questions for which we seek answers are:

- 1. Does the same CP determine the same cognitive content?
- 2. Does the same cognitive content determine the same CP?

So let's begin by explaining how the similarities and differences between ECN are established. Then, we will have the resources to respond to these two issues.

I have already said that the ECN is the responsible for similarities and differences among CP. But what exactly are the aspects or parameters that determine such variations? The two parameters responsible for the similarities and differences are two aspects of the ECN: the *dimension of the network* and the *number of shared concepts*. These two parameters mark the cognitive experience of a certain kind with respect to its phenomenal character. By 'dimension' I mean having a greater or smaller number of connections with other concepts, so that the resulting network is bigger or smaller. The dimension would thus distinguish between *richer* and *sparser* phenomenologies. The dimension is the parameter that determines the kind of CP at a given time for a certain subject. If we also want to compare this CP with other CPs in the same subject at different times or between two different subjects at the same time, then the second parameter will be relevant: *'shared concepts'* refers to the concepts that are instantiated in the different ECN. Two networks containing the concepts FLOWER, PLANT would share concepts. In this way, the dimension parameter determines rich or sparse kinds of phenomenologies and the shared concepts is further needed for comparison between people, together with the dimension of the ECN.

Both the dimension and the shared concepts will thus determine possible experiential kinds that can be compared between people. These different kinds of CP would group similar instances of CP. 'Experiential kinds', as we already noted in Martin, are not to be understood as natural kinds or other relevant types of kinds, but as the category under which different instances of CP fall.

If two persons think the thought *that the flower is beautiful*, we can compare their different networks according to these two parameters. If we suppose that these two people have similar background knowledge, and they display an ECN of a very similar dimension, they could still differ with respect to the peripheral concepts they have activated. Person A may have the concepts GREEN, SHORT and BEAUTIFUL and person B may have the concepts BROWN, TALL and ORCHID. In this case there is no similarity of concepts between them because they do not *share* a single concept of the ECN besides the central one, FLOWER, on which we have centered the case.

What can we say with respect to the *sameness* of CP? It seems that the problems with conceptual holism can be reproduced here, as the ECN is an holistic network of concepts that determines different experiential kinds. Do two individuals ever have the same kind of CP, or a subject at two different times? The proposal predicts that two subjects would have the same kind of CP if they share the dimension of ECN and most of their concepts. These two parameters ultimately depend on the background knowledge of the person in question. This situation should not be difficult to imagine: two individuals with a network containing similar number of concepts activated and these

concepts being the same (however this is to be determined, which is open to different theories of conceptual content individuation). This possibility would be exemplified by two persons that don't know anything about plants and, when thinking the thought *that the flower is beautiful* activate just one peripheral concept, PLANT. This would be a case of sameness of CP, described as very sparse and as containing just one peripheral concept activated with the central one.

To recap: the two parameters responsible for the similarities and differences within CP (from the content side) are the *dimension* and the *number of shared concepts* of the peripheral activated concepts. The first parameter gives us similar or different CP depending on merely the *dimension* of the ECN and the second parameter adds an important differentiation even when two ECN are of the same dimension: they would be similar if they share most concepts and different if they don't.

Notice that CP offers a great deal of variability with respect to dimension and content relations, restricting the possibility of a similar CP just when the two conditions are satisfied (the same dimension and number of shared concepts). I think this is a desirable result, which may be responsible for the elusiveness of CP and the initial skepticism in trying to specify it. This feature of my account contrasts with theories that posit a tight link between cognitive content and cognitive phenomenology, like Pitt's.

The table of options that determine differences and similarities would be the following:

Table 1. Similarities and differences with respect to the features of the ECN

Features of ECN	
= dimension/ = shared concepts	= CP
= dimension/ $\neq$ shared concepts	= /$\neq$CP*
$\neq$dimension / = shared concepts	= / $\neq$ CP*
$\neq$dimension /$\neq$ concepts	$\neq$ CP

In this table, the possibilities in lines 1 and 4 are clear: the first delivers the same CP and the second a different CP. But with the cases in line 2 and 3 things become more complicated. In case 2, if we have the same dimension of the ECN but the number of shared concepts is different, there is a sense in which the CP is the same, namely, the phenomenology is rich or sparse in the same way. But related to the concepts activated and their different content, the phenomenology is different. The same happens with our case in line 3, where we have different dimension and the same shared concepts. If the dimension of the two networks compared is differently enough in dimension, as it is the case with the expert and the non-expert, then even if they

share all the concepts, we should attribute a different overall CP. But if the dimension is just slightly different and the concepts shared are the same, then we should attribute the same CP.

8.3.1.4 *Relations of cognitive content and CP*

Now that we have seen the possibilities of variation depending on the two parameters of the ECN, we are in a position to evaluate the relations between the CP and the cognitive content. As we also examined in other specification proposals, this account has to give an answer to two main questions:

- 1. Does the same CP determine the same cognitive content?
- 2. Does the same cognitive content determine the same CP?

With respect to 1), the answer is negative, given that the same CP can produce very different ECN and thus different cognitive content. As I have already said, in this view, the phenomenal character associated with the content component of the experience of thinking is independent of what determines or individuates thought's cognitive content. This is one main point of departure from Pitt's and Strawson's view on the relation between CP and cognitive content: for Pitt CP totally individuates cognitive content and for Strawson CP partially does so. In general, this is a point of departure from those accounts that ground cognitive or intentional content in phenomenal character. With respect to 2), the answer that the view provides is that the same cognitive content (the proposition entertained) *can* produce the same CP (first option on the table) but it *does not necessarily determine* the same CP, given that there are the other three options in the table. As already seen, CP specification does not *only* depend on the central concepts instantiated but on the ECN and its two main parameters of variation, the dimension of the network and the shared concepts between two different networks.

The account can still answer a more specific question regarding the direction of determination from cognitive content to CP, which has to do with instantiating the *same* or *different* central concepts. The possibilities in the Table 1 are evaluated with respect to two networks with the *same central concept*. Now the question also arises with respect to different central concepts:

- (i) Can different *central* cognitive content have the same CP?
- (ii) Can the same *central* cognitive content have different CP?

Question (i) has to be understood as asking for the possibility of two different persons with a different central concept having similar CP, and question (ii) the reverse.

On the one hand, the answer to (i) must be affirmative, given that the variation in CP *is not due* to the content of the central concepts instantiated but to the dimension and the number of shared concepts of the network. This is the case, for example, of concepts like FLOWER and PLANT. It is not hard to imagine that these two different concepts, however their content is individuated, once they are instantiated, can produce similar ECN, because they are close concepts and the background knowledge behind them surely overlaps.

On the other hand, the answer to (ii) again is affirmative, precisely because the same concept FLOWER can produce in one person a large network of related concepts and in another person just instantiate one peripheral concept and thus be very poor. I think this variability is in accordance with the introspective intuition mentioned earlier in the chapter, that is, that CP varies a great deal even between people instantiating the same thoughts.

This would thus be the general results:

Table 2. Same and different central concepts

Features of the ECN	= central concept	≠central concept	
= dimension/ = concepts	= CP	= CP	Exp. kind 1
= dimension/ ≠ concepts	= /≠CP	= /≠ CP	Exp. kind 2
≠dimension / = concepts	= /≠CP	= /≠ CP	Exp. kind 3
≠dimension /≠ concepts	≠CP	≠ CP	Exp. kind 4

The four different options that appear in Table 2 above could be interpreted as different *experiential kinds* when it comes to cognitive phenomenal character. The first experiential kind would be the one that would be shared between individuals or within individuals at different times. The other two experiential kinds would mark differences in one parameter but similarities in the other, thus marking experiential kinds 2 and 3 (the second one shares the dimension but not the concepts and the third one shares the concepts but not the dimension). These intermediate cases deliver same CP when the different parameter (shared concepts in 2 and dimension in 3) is not extremely different, and different CP when it is. The fourth experiential kind would be the one that marks great deal of variability in CP and it would mean that individuals "sharing" this kind do not have anything in common with respect to CP.

8.3.1.5 *Summary of the proposal and main points*

The proposal presented for the specification of CP for the content side provides a positive account of the nature of CP that explains similarities and differences between thinking experiences with regard to the

content side. This proposal is based on the distinction between *central* concepts and *peripheral* ones, both constituting the Experienced Conceptual Network. The central ones are the constituents of the propositions and the peripheral concepts the secondary concepts that are consciously experience in a less vivid way and whose proposition has an inferential capacity that is poorer than the proposition entertained. This ECN is activated together with the central concepts and depends on the background knowledge that one possesses about the proposition entertained.

Moreover, this proposal provides us with a way of determining similarities and differences in CP with respect to the content side, by introducing two main parameters: first, the dimension of the ECN, and second, the shared concepts. These two elements are responsible for the possibilities of variation in CP, which remain identical when the central concept is the same as when it is different. The upshot is that we have two clear cases (1 and 4 in the table) and two mixed cases (2 and 3 in the table). These four resulting options can be seen as different experiential kinds, thus partially responding to the challenge we took up in the beginning. My proposal meets Martin's objection but not Georgalis': on the one hand, it allows us to distinguish different experiential kinds by detecting relevant similarities and differences between episodes of conscious thought but it is not in virtue of this CP that we can pick up different types of conscious thought, as it is the case in Pitt's view. With respect to the objection/challenge of asymmetry, my proposal is in the same position as Strawson's (when it comes to the content side).

It is important to say that this ECN proposal is a model that results from the challenge to respond to the asymmetry objection and the skepticism raised against the very project of specification. It has also been designed in a way that avoids the limitations or problems that I find in Pitt's and Strawson's proposals, which constitute two of the main developments on this question. The ECN model receives some support from the idea that, if we have reasons to believe that in visual perceptual experience we have areas of the periphery we are conscious of, and many people seem to endorse this view, why then should we think that in thought we just experience the central concept without other connected concepts? The model appeals to notions that are already at play in philosophy and cognitive sciences and builds up a proposal that contributes to highlighting similarities and differences in CP and, moreover, gets an answer to the questions of the relation between CP and cognitive content.

Indeed, in the examples presented of cognitive phenomenology – the understanding case, the experience of counting, the seeing-as cases, the perception of distance and size relations, the experience of "naturalness", etc – the hypothesis seems to be confirmed: the

phenomenal differences in such cases are related to an increase in conceptual connections and acquired knowledge.

Interestingly, the ECN model is ultimately an empirical hypothesis on the specification of cognitive phenomenology, as we would need some empirical experiments in order to further support the model and know which are the conceptual networks activated. One suggestion may be to try to test this proposal with the DES method, which until now has only provided more general results as the presence of unsymbolized thinking. I take this empirical aspect of the proposal as a positive feature, given that can lead to empirical research to contrast it.

With respect to the main problems assessed in Pitt's and Strawson's proposals, we should note the following points:

1) *Internalism/externalism commitments*: the ECN is independent of conceptual content determination, so it is not committed to any view regarding conceptual content determination. This means that both internalist and externalist views of conceptual content could accept the ECN proposal, because it is compatible with both of them.

2) *Explanatory power for content determination*: the ECN proposal is silent with respect to conceptual content determination, so it is not required to explain how the content is determined.

3) *Variability*: it accounts for a great amount of variability in CP, which seems to be in accordance with our introspective experience when consciously thinking thoughts and seems to be related to our initial difficulty to specify it and its elusiveness. In particular, I have argued that there is no supervenience or determination relation between cognitive content and CP: on the one hand, the differences in cognitive content do not necessarily make differences in CP, and so the same CP does not determine the same cognitive content. This is so because if a given central concept or concepts instantiated change, as the proposition entertained changes, the same ECN can be maintained if the background knowledge tied to that proposition is similar. And the same holds in the other direction: the differences in CP do not necessarily imply differences in cognitive content, and so the same cognitive content does not determine the same CP. This is so because very different ECNs can be activated depending on the background knowledge of the person and with respect to the same proposition entertained.

4) *Similarities and differences*: the ECN proposal predicts similarities and differences according to the conceptual network activated together with the central concept instantiated, with two main parameters for variation: the dimension of the network and the shared concepts.

5) *Dispositional/occurrent* elements: the ECN, in contrast with the CRS aspect Strawson appeals to, is a matter of occurrent elements within consciousness that is activated when a subject thinks a certain

proposition and that is affected by the background knowledge that in itself is a dispositional set of beliefs that are not felt.

CONCLUSIONS

I started this chapter by noting the need to specify the nature of CP, once the existence question of CP is answered affirmatively and a specific cognitive phenomenology view is established. This need for specification encounters some problems I explained through the objections of Martin and Georgalis. I took the objections presented as representing a challenge for the proponent of a specific CP. Martin's version of the objection is that we do not seem to find relevant similarities and differences in CP among instances of conscious thought that would allow us to have experiential kinds, and Georgalis' version is that we do not find a uniformly identifiable phenomenal feature in conscious thought in virtue of which we can classify types of conscious thought.

Then I examined Pitt's account on the relation between content and phenomenology in his constitutive view and argued that this view gives an answer to both versions of the objection, given the identity relation between phenomenology and intentional content. With respect to Pitt's account I have noted one limitation, namely, (i) fully internalist commitments, and two objections: (ii) explanatorily dubiousness for theories of content and (iii) the rigidity in CP variation. I then presented Strawson's account as also meeting Martin's objection but not Georgalis' one and also noted that, with respect to (i), his commitments are not as strong as Pitt's and thus the objection (ii) is not that problematic, and he avoids (iii) by acknowledging a great deal of variability in CP. However, (iv) his proposal makes it difficult to know when non-Twins in the actual world share CP and (v) it is not clear that the CRS aspect can play the role Strawson wants it to play because it is a dispositional element and phenomenology is a matter of occurrent actual states.

Finally in this chapter, I have presented and developed a proposal for the specification of CP in relation to cognitive content, which explores the intuition that the background knowledge we posses on certain concepts and propositions has a role to play in the specification of CP. A way to cash out this idea has been to motivate the view that when we entertain certain propositions, the concepts involved in them are not the only ones that are experienced, but we also have to acknowledge the peripheral concepts. All them form what I have called the Experienced Conceptual Network (ECN), which is activated when entertaining a certain proposition and depends on the background knowledge. Moreover, this proposal provides a way of determining similarities and differences in CP with respect to the con-

tent side, by introducing two main parameters: first, the dimension of the ECN, and second, the shared concepts. The dimension determines richer or sparser kinds of phenomenologies and the shared concepts introduces a new parameter to compare between subjects in a time or between different times in a subject. These two elements are responsible for the possibilities of variation in CP, which remain identical when the central concept is the same as when it is different. The upshot is that we have two clear cases (1 and 4 in the table) and two mixed cases (2 and 3 in the table). These four resulting options can be seen as different experiential kinds, thus partially responding to the challenge we took up in the beginning by answering Martin's objection but not Georgalis' one, given that it allows us to distinguish different experiential kinds by detecting relevant similarities and differences between episodes of conscious thought but it is not in virtue of this CP that we can pick up different types of conscious thought, as it is the case in Pitt's view. Georgalis objection is a challenge that my proposal cannot meet for the content side, but that can be answered by the cognitive attitude side, as we will see in the next chapter. Moreover, the proposal does not have the problems that Pitt and Strawson views have and the hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the examples of cognitive phenomenology presented at the beginning, where the phenomenal differences are related to an increase of conceptual connections. Finally, the ECN model is interestingly an empirical hypothesis on the specification of cognitive phenomenology, for which further empirical support could be provided.

9

COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY AND COGNITIVE ATTITUDES

9.1 PRELIMINARIES

In the previous chapter I provided a specification for the *content* component, through the Experienced Conceptual Network. The main views that I examined before my proposal were specifications of *content* cognitive phenomenology, more or less assuming that the attitude involved in the cases presented was that of consciously *entertaining* a certain proposition. Strawson (2011) explicitly defends cognitive experiential content in the understanding cases and remains silent for the attitude side, although he acknowledges the prospects of analyzing the attitude component with respect to CP as a task for the study of non-sensory phenomenologies:

> Does cognitive phenomenology extend to the study of phenomenological differences between what one might call the 'cognitive attitudes' –between entertaining the thought that *p*, believing that *p*, meditating on the fact that *p*, seeing (intellectually) that *p*, supposing that *p*, and so on? (Strawson, 2011, p. 315).

He continues stating that differences in attitudes are differences in cognitive phenomenology, and that this can not be excluded from cognitive phenomenology on the grounds that CP is only concerned with *ps* and *qs* (contents).

The view Pitt puts forward is also silent on the attitude component of cognitive phenomenology. When stating the main thesis of a proprietary, distinctive and individuative phenomenology for conscious thought, he states that he is talking about *entertaining a proposition*, a merely having in mind. He is explicit in differentiating this from *propositional attitudes* (Pitt, 2004, p. 2-3) and so from the claim that there is a phenomenology specific of consciously bearing a certain attitude to a particular proposition.

As cognitive episodes have two components, attitude and content, we should examine the relation between attitude and cognitive phenomenology if my proposal is to be complete. Thoughts, as contents, are thought of in different ways: they can be merely *considered*, *believed*, *doubted*, *supposed*, *wished*, and so on. I have treated cognitive attitudes in 6.3, with the immediate knowledge of cognitive attitude argument. The conclusion was that cognitive attitudes have a specific phenomenal character. The purpose of this chapter is to further

specify this phenomenal character in relation to the attitude side of conscious thought. As before, the two main question that will be examined are:

- 1) Does same cognitive attitude determine same attitudinal cognitive phenomenology?
- 2) Does same attitudinal cognitive phenomenology determine same cognitive attitude?

In what follows I will survey two main views and their results of specification and I will finally present my own take on the relation between CP and cognitive attitude, relating it with the versions of the objection/challenge we began with in the previous chapter.

9.2 THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

I will begin by examining the phenomenological position regarding cognitive attitudes as exemplified by Husserl in the *LU*. I presented Husserl's theory as showing an account close to Pitt's but which nevertheless does not seem to be committed to Pitt's individuative and constitutive claims on intentional content. Now we can recall this theory again as showing the same as before but with respect to the attitude component.

Husserl's account of intentionality in the *LU* implies that there are experiential differences among different *Qualities*, and Qualities are precisely different ways of relating to intentional contents such as supposing, doubting, wondering, and so on. Differences in Qualities (cognitive attitudes) are differences in experience. As I have also argued in the previous chapter, this phenomenological claim can be cashed out as a supervenience claim: there is no difference in cognitive attitudes that is not a difference in experience or phenomenal character. This supervenience claim has its reverse determination claim: sameness of phenomenal character determines sameness of cognitive attitude. Moreover, Husserl's formulation seems to be compatible with a supervenience claim in the other direction: there is no difference in phenomenal character without a difference in cognitive attitude. And so the determination reverse one: the same cognitive attitude determines the same phenomenal character.

As I also argued before, Husserl's theory is not committed to the strong individuative claim regarding content, and it seems to me that the same applies here with respect to the cognitive attitude. Husserl's phenomenological approach implies that differences in Quality are differences in experience, differences in how it feels to undergo such an episode, but this again tells us nothing more specific regarding stronger claims of constitution or individuation from phenomenal character to cognitive attitude. The phenomenological approach claims

that experience needs to be taken into account for describing and explaining the structures of intentionality and mental episodes, but this, to my mind, does not imply that specific phenomenal properties constitute cognitive attitudes, even if phenomenological approaches can lead to this view.

9.3 PHENOMENOLOGY *versus* FUNCTIONALISM

A main obstacle for the phenomenological picture and for the recognition of the role of phenomenal character in cognitive attitudes is the broad functionalist picture that is presupposed in most work in philosophy of mind. The functionalist orthodoxy provides an account of propositional attitudes in terms of the causal/functional role that a certain mental state has in a web of interconnected attitudes and in relation with physical inputs and behavioral responses (Block, 2007b, chap. 2). This is the broad picture, which is usually complemented by a reductive account of all propositional attitudes into logical combinations of belief and desire: to fear that p is just believing that it is possible that p and desiring that not-p; being glad that p is just believing that p and desiring that p; hoping that p is believing that p is possible, believing that it is possible that not p and desiring that p (for discussion of the project, see *Searle (1983)* and Gordon (1987).

This functionalist picture for propositional attitudes is accepted even by friends of *qualia* (Block, 1990) and with it the implication that phenomenal properties do not relate in any significant or interesting way with cognitive attitudes. The absence of literature that develops on the relation of specific propositional or cognitive attitudes to phenomenal character exemplifies this point.[1]

9.3.1 *Goldman's approach*

Following the phenomenological insights, Goldman (1993) proposes an account of propositional attitudes according to which propositional attitudes can be accounted for by appealing to our experience of them. He acknowledges that philosophical orthodoxy favors a functionalist account of attitudes types, but he argues that it ultimately fails for reasons concerning self-knowledge. Goldman argues against functionalism that it is an implausible theory of our *self-ascription* of mental states, because we can be ignorant about the causal connections between mental states and yet we are able to classify them immediately and reliably. In connection to what I said above, I think that Goldman's objection is not enough to reject functionalism about self-knowledge, because the functionalist can either deny that there is this kind of immediate self-knowledge and go for an inferential-

1 A few introductions to propositional attitudes show this: Baker (1994), Crane (2001) or McKay and Nelson (2010).

ist position, or postulate an unconscious inferential mechanism that enables one to immediately know the kind of mental state she is in. However, there are plausible replies to these functionalist responses, which I have already presented in 6.2.1.

His phenomenological proposal is tentative, and it is defended with four different arguments. The first one appeals to the TOT phenomenon and to the attitude of entertaining a conceptual content, which we already commented in 5.2.4.

The second tries a version of the Knowledge Argument for *qualia* (Jackson, 1982):

> I suggest a parallel style of argument for attitude types. Just as someone deprived of any experience of colors would learn new things upon being exposed to them, viz., what it feels like to see red, green, and so forth, so (I submit) someone who had never experienced certain propositional attitudes, e.g., doubt or disappointment, would learn new things on first undergoing these experiences. There is 'something it is like' to have these attitudes, just as much as there is 'something it is like' to see red (Goldman, 1993).

Goldman's sees this possibility as very plausible, and also does Goff (2012), but there have been some authors that take a critical stance towards the possibility of creating a version of the knowledge argument for conscious thought (Bayne, manuscript). To examine this possibility in detail goes beyond the reach of this thesis, so I shall say nothing more on this front here.[2]

His third argument has also been commented in 2.1 and appeals to the introspective discriminability of attitude strengths: the classification abilities of subjects are not restricted to broad categories such as beliefs, intentions, desires, etc., but also include *intensities* – how firm is a certain intention, how much they desire an object, etc. The importance of attitudes strengths is that many words in the mentalistic lexicon are designed to pick up them, like *certain, confident, doubtful, etc.*, and they represent positions on a credence scale. Goldman argues that the very occurrence of these intensities requires explanation. With respect to this, functionalism seems to be silent.[3] Perhaps the functionalist has a possible response to Goldman by saying that a conscious desire, for example, can be intense *independently* of its phenomenal character and accounted for by different contents. The desire to finish the thesis and the *intense* desire to finish the thesis can be accommodated by the functionalist if she attributes different contents

2 For a discussion of the knowledge argument applied to high-level properties, see Bayne (2009).

3 'The other familiar device for conceptualizing the attitudes – viz., the 'boxes' in which sentences of mentalese are stored – would also be unhelpful even if it were separated from functionalism, since box storage is not a matter of degree. The most natural hypothesis is that there are dimensions of awareness over which scales of attitude intensity are represented' (Goldman, 1993).

to both desires and thus different functional roles to them, so I don't see this argument as a very compelling one for the phenomenological view.

A final argument he proposes is that a phenomenological account of propositional attitudes is able to distinguish between mental and non-mental states, something that the functionalist has no resources to make:

> Notice (...) that many non-mental internal states can be given a functional-style description. For example, having measles might be described as: a state which tends to be produced by being exposed to the measles virus and tends to produce an outbreak of red spots on the skin. So having measles is a functional state; clearly, though, it isn't a mental state. Thus, functionalism cannot fully discharge its mission simply by saying that mental states are functional states; it also needs to say which functional states are mental. Does functionalism have any resources for marking the mental/nonmental distinction? The prospects are bleak (Goldman, 1993).

Goldman's contention is that *mental* states are states having phenomenology, or a close relation to phenomenological events. This reason seems to create an important problem for the functionalist, if she wants to include the mental/non-mental distinction within his framework. However, notice that the functionalist has resources to account for this distinction: if what distinguishes the mental from the non-mental is experience or phenomenal properties, and if these properties are ultimately reducible to functional properties, then the distinction can also be accounted with functional properties.

In Goldman's phenomenological approach the relation between attitude and cognitive phenomenology is not further specified, but, given that it is a phenomenological view that wants to account for propositional attitudes as an alternative to functionalism, it seems reasonable to suppose that the phenomenal character will constitute what it is to be a certain attitude and thus that answers to (1) and (2), which are weaker claims, would then be affirmative.

I find phenomenological approaches appealing and I share with Goldman the criticism to functionalism as unable to provide a plausible account of the self-ascription of cognitive attitudes, even if not for the reason he proposes but for the ones I provided.

9.3.1.1 *A note on stronger views*

We also find some other views on cognitive attitudes that attribute an important role to phenomenal character. This is the case of Klausen (2008) and Shields (2011), for example. What distinguishes them from

other phenomenological views is that both authors regard phenomenal character as *essential* to propositional attitudes: Klausen restricts the scope of the claim to occurrent mental states or events and argues for propositional perception and acts of thinking as being essentially phenomenal. Shields argues that, ranging over different contents, there are some feelings that are essential and intrinsic to cognitive attitudes. This is the case, for instance, of the feeling of curiosity and the cognitive state of being curious or wondering.

This stronger modal connection between phenomenal character and cognitive attitudes is also usually shared by those who think that there is some necessary or essential connection between intentionality (or a component of it) and phenomenal consciousness. These modally robust views, however, have the problem of accounting for cases of *unconscious intentionality*, that is, they have to say whether the unconscious state that p and the conscious state that p are the same or different kind of state, or have the same or different intentional content. Specially pressing is the problem for views in which intentionality (or a component of it) is *grounded* or based in phenomenal consciousness, like the phenomenal intentionality view, because such views have to explain in virtue of what there is unconscious intentionality, if there is such kind of intentionality at all. Different views have been offered to account for this problem (see, Searle (1990), Strawson (2008), Kriegel (2011b), Loar (2003) and Pitt (manuscript)) and I shall not go into the examination of their success or failure here, but in any case it seems to me that the problem of unconscious intentionality (or unconscious cognitive attitude) is an important one that should give us reasons to remain *prima facie* skeptical to such views.

9.3.1.2 *Summary*

In this first part of the chapter I examined two main approaches to cognitive attitudes, the functionalist and the phenomenological one, in order to evaluate them with respect to the issue of the relation between CP and cognitive attitude.

On the one hand, I presented the phenomenological account put forward by Husserl on the *LU* as one giving affirmative answers to both questions: the same cognitive attitude determines the same attitudinal CP and the same attitudinal CP determines the same cognitive attitude. This seems a plausible interpretation of Husserl's view in the *LU* and follows from the supervenience claims that I think can be attributed to his view: there is no difference in Quality (cognitive attitude) without a difference in experience (phenomenal character) and vice versa.

Within the phenomenological line, I surveyed Goldman's approach to propositional attitudes, in which the same phenomenal character would determine the same propositional attitude and vice versa, precisely because propositional attitudes are accounted for by their

phenomenal character. On the other hand, an alternative picture of propositional attitudes is the functionalist account, which does not specifically give any answer to (1) and (2) precisely because there is no recognition of phenomenal character in relation to cognitive attitudes within this framework. Moreover, functionalist accounts seem to fail with respect to the immediate knowledge we have of our cognitive states. In what follows, I will present my own view on the matter.

9.4 PROPOSAL

In this section I will propose my own take on the relation between cognitive attitude and phenomenal character. As I have already argued in 6.3, we have reasons to believe that cognitive attitudes have a specific phenomenal character and that reductionist accounts of attitude phenomenology fail. This was neutral to the specification question and to the answer to our two main questions:

- 1) Does same cognitive attitude determine same attitudinal cognitive phenomenology?
- 2) Does same attitudinal cognitive phenomenology determine same cognitive attitude?

If different cognitive attitudes contribute specifically to the cognitive phenomenal character then we have reason to say that these attitudes determine the same kind of phenomenal character for the side of cognitive attitudes. So the answer to (1) would be yes, the same cognitive attitude determines the same attitudinal CP. This determination relation has its reverse supervenient claim: no difference in CP without a difference in cognitive attitude. Of course, the attitudinal phenomenal character won't be *all* the phenomenal character present in the cognitive episode, given that the ECN will make its contribution for the content side. Regarding question (2) I also suggest to follow the interpretation I have given of Husserl's view in which the same attitudinal cognitive phenomenology determines the same cognitive attitude, or cognitive attitudes supervene on attitudinal cognitive phenomenology.

As already presented, my idea is to consider propositional attitudes as different *bearers* of different *types* of phenomenal character and make the case somehow analogous to that of perception. Different perceptual modalities have its analogous structure in cognition for the attitude side with different *cognitive attitudes.* What vision, audition, taste, etc., are to perceptual experience, believing, doubting, judging, intending are to cognitive experience. An assumption of this part, that many authors also accept, is that propositional attitudes are *real*, that is, that our folk-psychological ascriptions of them are approximately true. Another important point in the account is that the specificity claim is defended for a subset of cognitive states, so that *saying that*,

for example, should be excluded from the domain, given that it is not a mental state, to begin with (Klausen, 2008, p. 447). Non-conscious and dispositional states such as beliefs do not fall under the domain we explore either. I thus restrict the domain of cognitive attitudes to those conscious and occurrent cognitive attitudes.

Notice that the supervenience and determination claims I am endorsing here do not commit the view to more demanding claims such as the essentiality of phenomenal character to cognitive attitudes and so it is neutral with respect to what may ultimately *constitute* or *individuate* propositional attitudes. I have shown some initial skepticism regarding the position that renders phenomenal character as essential to cognitive attitudes, precisely for the problem of unconscious intentionality. Moreover, I do not think that phenomenal character suffices for constituting cognitive attitudes. Consider for example the case of wondering and doubting: even if their phenomenal character is distinct in the two (and so determines different cognitive attitudes), it may not be sufficient to make these attitudes the attitudes they are. Indeed, the functional role associated with each of them may be different enough as to be relevant to be taken into account. If I just wonder whether an argument is sound, I may leave it without changing it, but if I doubt that an argument is sound, then it seems that I will be more inclined to correct it or to abandon it. This consideration leads me to think that a functionalist component must supplement the determination claims made above and is compatible with them. At the same time, remember that functionalist accounts of propositional attitudes have the problem of not being able to account for the immediate knowledge of cognitive attitudes, but my view won't be committed to this drawback because the supervenience claim between cognitive attitude and attitudinal CP suffices to account for the immediate self-knowledge of our own conscious mental episodes.

At this point, remember the versions of the objection/challenge with which we began the previous chapter. The results of my proposal regarding the ECN were that, for the content side, relevant similarities and differences can be established that allow us to speak of experiential kinds (Martin), but also it was not the case that CP picked out different kinds of conscious thought (Georgalis). Now we can see that Georgalis' objection can be answered if we focus on the cognitive attitude side: if the same attitudinal phenomenal character determines the same cognitive attitude (without attitudinal CP individuating or constituting the cognitive attitude), then attitudinal CP picks out different kinds of conscious thought, namely, conscious entertainings, doubtings, hopings, etc. In other words: in conscious thought, from the side of cognitive attitudes, we find a uniformly identifiable phenomenal feature, namely, attitudinal CP, in virtue of which we can classify conscious thoughts in different kinds (enter-

tainings, doubting, etc), given the symmetrical supervenience claim between cognitive attitude and attitudinal CP.

A question that might arise for this proposal is the following: how many different cognitive attitude phenomenologies should we distinguish? Is there a distinctive phenomenology for each one or are there fundamental kinds of attitudes to which the other ones are reducible? I think the answer to this question needs careful examination of different cognitive attitudes one by one, but what seems true is that the reduction of all propositional attitudes to belief and desire, which was one of tenets of some functionalist analysis, cannot work. *Entertaining* a proposition, for example, does not involve any belief or desire, as one can entertain the proposition without believing or disbelieving it, and without wanting it to be the case. The reason for this, as Kriegel (2013a) notes, is that "entertaining involves neither mind-to-world nor world-to mind direction of fit with respect to the propositional entertained". Entertaining, thus, is a kind of neutral propositional attitude.[4]

9.4.1 *The Experiential Unity of Attitude and Content*

So far I have presented a view according to which there is a certain specific cognitive phenomenal character associated with cognitive content in the way that ECN determines, and that there is an attitudinal phenomenal character supervenes on the cognitive attitude in a symmetric way. But an important feature of the view still has to be presented: the *experiential unity* of attitude and content. As we have seen, some views argue for the existence of a specific phenomenal character for thought's contents and remain silent with respect to the cognitive attitudes. And there are other authors who argue for *just* the attitudinal component having cognitive phenomenology. This is the case of Brown (2007), who argues not just in favor of attitudinal cognitive phenomenology but also *against* one argument for attributing phenomenal character to the content. Let's briefly see his view.

His idea is that while sensations have qualitative content, attitudes just have attitudinal phenomenology. In his view, as well as in other higher-order theories of consciousness, the qualitative character is not necessarily conscious, but this should not bother us here. What I am interested on instead is that he gives some reasons why some people may have thought that the qualitative character is had by the content. First, since in the cases of linguistic understanding and other similar scenarios, changes in content imply changes in the phenomenal character of thought, then the quality for the thought must be part of the content. Second, these authors may want to draw a parallel or similar distinctions with the sensory case. The idea of Brown's argu-

4 See Kriegel (2013a) for an account of entertaining as a propositional attitude not reducible to belief and desire and considered as basic.

ment is to deny that the phenomenal contrast between thinking that *p* and thinking that *q* leads us to suppose that there is a CP tied to the content in some way, but we do not need to do so if we have as a resource the appeal to the attitude, which he explores. A result of keeping the qualitative with the attitude is that the representational view of the mind is preserved and different theories of content do not have to account for this phenomenal character.

The natural question to ask then is how can he account for the cases of *understanding experience*, which have served many authors to argue in favor of cognitive content phenomenal character. Brown's response is that what accounts for what is going on in linguistic understanding scenarios is that once understood, you immediately *take an attitude towards the content* (Brown, 2007): you either affirm it or believe it, question it, etc. He claims that you certainly cannot take any of these attitudes towards a nonsense.

This last sentence is ambiguous. It can mean to take an attitude towards something which has no meaning, so for example, to consciously doubt that *fonumoli four sjy.* You can not certainly doubt this, because this does not mean anything, but neither can you understand a nonsense. If this is the meaning of the sentence, I do not see how this supports his view. Maybe, an 'attitude towards a nonsense' is meant to be a case in which you do not understand but yet have some attitude towards a content. If this is the idea behind the expression, it just seems false: someone can consciously judge that E = mc2, on the basis of testimony, etc., without she herself understanding the meaning of the propositional content. In summary, if the 'nonsense' is here 'without meaning', then Brown is right in that you cannot take any of these attitudes towards a nonsense, but neither can you understand it, so this reading does not make much sense in this context. And if the second reading is the appropriate, namely, that you cannot take an attitude towards something you do not understand, then it seems to be false because of the kind of counterexamples presented.

But the problem I see in general with Brown's approach is, however, that he proposes this argument to resist the attribution of phenomenology to the content component, but I think the argument is not sufficient to show this. The fact that we automatically take an attitude towards something we understand, by itself, does not show that the bearer of the phenomenal character is the attitude and not the content. In fact, as I will next argue, to attribute phenomenology to only *one* component is a dubious movement from the beginning.

I think the option of attributing phenomenology to just one side of the mental state is a very *unstable* position and has no grounds on which to be defended. I do not see why we should accept that *just* one component of cognitive states is the bearer of phenomenology.

To begin with, in experience we always find both aspects. In Husserl's *LU* there is a mutual dependence of Quality and Matter in the inten-

tional experience and it is the denial of this structure (in favor of just the recognition of the content side) that Husserl saw as one of the worst errors of philosophy:

> To define the presentation [representation] of a content as the mere fact of its being experienced, and in consequence to give the name 'presentations' [representations] to all experienced contents, is one of the worst conceptual distortions known to philosophy. (...) If we stick to the intentional concept of presentation (...) we shall be unable to judge that all differences between presentations reduce to differences in their presented 'contents'. It is clear, on the contrary (...), that to each primitive logical form a peculiar 'manner of consciousness', a peculiar 'manner of presentation', corresponds (Husserl, 1900-1901/1970, LU, II).

To acknowledge these two fundamental aspects is, to my mind, to recognize that there is a *experiential unity* between attitude and content, in the terms being used until now. The content is not just something "added" to the attitude, or the other way around. This means that the separation between attitude and content is done at a level of abstraction that is useful for analysis but that is not given in experience as such. We recognize such distinction on reflection but we do not encounter "contents as such" or "attitudes as such" in the stream of consciousness. To every experienced content there corresponds an experienced attitude. Thus, I think it is really odd to say that just the attitude is the bearer of phenomenology, because when the attitude is present in experience, it is always the attitude *of some content*, and the other way around.

The difficulty in attributing phenomenology to just one side is clearer perhaps when we really think what would that mean in experience. If you have two components in an experiential state, the content and the attitude, and there is no one without the other, it seems extremely difficult to decide which one of both components is *the* bearer of the phenomenal character, and it seems even more difficult to say why, if it is not by independent motivations or reasons that come from other theoretical commitments.[5] Klausen also expresses this concern:

> It would be very odd to believe strongly that Smith is the murderer, but being phenomenally conscious only of the strength of one's belief and *not* of Smith's being the murderer. For one normally experiences the strength of a belief as having to do with *what* one believes (Klausen, 2008, p. 450).

5 In Brown's case it seems to be the will to preserve representationalism for mental content.

To summarize this point we can say that, although the analysis of cognitive phenomenology and attitude/content has proceeded in two stages, and different results have been reached in each of them, we should recognize the experiential unity of both elements and its interaction in experience.

9.5 PUTTING THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER

This proposal analytically distinguishes between the attitude and the content component of cognitive attitudes and their relation to phenomenal character, but acknowledges its unity in experience. On the side of the content component, I have presented the model of the Experienced Conceptual Network as accounting for the similarities and differences in CP, due to the different background knowledges people possess. I argued that the supervenience and determination relation do not hold at this level, given that different cognitive content does not necessarily correspond to a different CP and differences in CP do not necessarily correspond to differences in cognitive content. From the part of the attitude component, I have defended the view that there is a distinctive kind of phenomenology for conscious cognitive attitudes and that this attitudinal phenomenal character supervenes and determines cognitive attitudes, even if the functional role is needed in order to individuate cognitive attitudes. I have argued that the symmetrical supervenience relation does not commit the view to a constitution relation.

If we take as an example one subject entertaining the thought *that philosophy is fun*, the account I am proposing will say the following. On the one hand, there is a distinctive phenomenology of the cognitive attitude of entertaining, which contributes to the overall cognitive phenomenology. This phenomenal character is distinctive of the attitude but does not individuate it, for which we require the functional role of the attitude in the mental economy. On the other hand, there is the network activated by the central proposition with the concepts PHILOSOPHY, FUN, which contribute to the overall cognitive phenomenology from the side of content. Different cognitive attitudes (and their phenomenal characters) can be correlated with different ECN, and thus with different experiential kinds of the sort exemplified in 8.3.1.4.

The similarities and differences in cognitive phenomenology between this first subject and a different one entertaining the same proposition will be cashed out in the following way. As for similarities, the cognitive attitude will always contribute the same attitudinal phenomenal character to the overall phenomenology, precisely because the account predicts that same attitude determines same attitudinal cognitive phenomenology. When it comes to content, we have seen a great amount of variability. Two subjects entertaining the same

proposition can have the same cognitive phenomenology if they have ECN of similar dimension and they share concepts to a great extend. In all the other cases we will have variation in cognitive phenomenology. Although this model predicts a great amount of variation, this variation occurs in a principled manner and allows us to classify in experiential kinds.

10

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation I set out to explore the experience of thinking with a particular question in mind: is there a specific experience of thinking and, if so, what kind of phenomenal properties are involved in it? This is a particular way of asking about the relation between conscious thought and phenomenal consciousness. My interest in this question arose from the observation that most of the philosophical and empirical studies on phenomenal consciousness focused on sensory or perceptual experience, or even on emotional experience, but left aside cognitive experience or the cognitive domain in general. If phenomenal consciousness really includes conscious thought or cognition, the neglect of research on the experience of thinking is a serious problem for the science of consciousness and conscious cognition. Moreover, the scarce literature on the topic of cognitive phenomenology seemed sometimes to include many issues that were not properly clarified, at least until the publication of Bayne and Montague (2011b), a compilation on the topic that has contributed to present the debates and at the same time to point to a new and fruitful field of research.

With this main question as a guideline, in the first part of the thesis I took up the challenge of clarifying the main issues in the debate and the methodological approaches that might be appropriate. In Chapter 1, the first important step in the project was to discuss how we should use the terms 'phenomenal character' and 'thought' or 'cognition'. I have argued that a good way to proceed is to understand 'phenomenal character' as the what-it-is-likeness intensional notion, without filling in the expression with the notions from the epistemic challenges. Regarding 'thought' and 'cognition', I suggested characterizing thoughts negatively as those mental episodes which are not sensations, perceptions and emotions. This is supplemented by a positive extensional classification of different kinds of cognitive episodes such as judging, hoping, understanding, intending, doubting, etc, that are treated in Chapter 9. Even if the conceptual is not what characterizes thought as such, in some parts of the thesis I have argued that in perception or in emotion we might find cognitive phenomenology insofar as the conceptual elements they contain are experienced. This last element constitutes one line of indirect argumentation for cognitive phenomenology, which has to do with the possible cognitive phenomenal character present in other non- (fully) cognitive episodes such as emotions, perceptions, etc. I have mainly focused on the perceptual case in 5.2.1.1 and suggested some arguments on this front, even though the main topic of the thesis is the phenomenology of

conscious thought. Within this first part I also thought it necessary to introduce a brief historical tour that explained why this question has emerged as a relevant question in philosophy and how the present state of the art really contrasts with the conceptions of experience and consciousness of modern philosophy and of some authors from the beginning of the twentieth century.

Still in the first part, I looked in Chapter 2 at some philosophical and psychological approaches to experience (and specifically to cognitive experiences) and the methodological problems they have, focusing mainly on the problems raised by introspection and introspective evidence. The debate on cognitive phenomenology is related to introspection in two main ways: sometimes the debate is framed as a debate about introspection, and some (if not all) philosophers put forward arguments based on direct introspective evidence that delivers contradictory reports and claims. Indeed, some authors even defend the obviousness of some introspective claims. Moreover, philosophers have highlighted the problem of disagreement, the problem of experience being linguistically silent and the problem of description. My take on these issues is that the philosophical problems surrounding introspective methods can be solved if we distinguish and choose between two different kinds of philosophical methods and the role they attribute to introspection. I have argued that the problems mentioned arise *if* introspection is taken to be the *only* method of philosophy dealing with experience and brute introspective reports in armchair philosophy are taken at face value and as being obvious. This is the common-sense phenomenological philosophy, which is to be contrasted with what can be called reflective phenomenological philosophy, an approach to experience that attributes a limited role to direct introspective evidence and demands its critical examination in the context of further arguments and reflection, thus avoiding claims of obviousness in either way (reductionist or non-reductionist).

From the psychological point of view, I reviewed the methodological problems related to introspection that lead psychologists to abandon introspective methods. Particularly interesting on this front is the imageless thought controversy at the beginning of the twentieth century. I suggested looking at a psychological introspectionist method, the DES method, which seeks to avoid these methodological problems and at the same time provides some results on conscious experience and, specifically, on conscious thought with the presence of "unsymbolized thinking". As I argued in 5.3.1.2, accounting for the experience of "unsymbolized thought" is a problem for reductionist views on cognitive phenomenology.

After clarifying the issue at hand and the approach I take towards it, I have spend the second part of the thesis arguing for SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY, the view that there is a specific phenomenal character of conscious thought that cannot be reduced to other non-

cognitive kinds of phenomenology. As I noted in 1.3, there are two main views to resist the one I favor: PHENOMENAL ELIMINATIVISM and REDUCTIONISM. In Chapter 3, I present THE OBVIOUS ARGUMENT for the conclusion that conscious thoughts have phenomenal properties and I resist some putative cases of conscious but not phenomenal thought, which are usually invoked by phenomenal eliminativists. I showed that two ways of arguing for non-phenomenal conscious thought do not succeed: firstly, the adoption of the restricted sense of 'phenomenal character' to that end is not warranted and, secondly, to claim that conscious thought is just access consciousness does not succeed either, or so I have argued. In 3.2 I have also defended the view that there are not unconscious phenomenal thought, even if this was not required by the general argumentation of the thesis.

The rest of part ii is devoted to the defense of a specific cognitive phenomenology against restrictivist views. To this end, I put forward in Chapter 4 my version of the PHENOMENAL CONTRAST ARGUMENT, which shows that there is a phenomenal change between the experiences contrasted and that this change cannot be explained by appealing to the elements that by hypothesis remain constant (precisely sensory/emotional elements). I presented some examples of cognitive experiences: the experience of understanding, entertaining a proposition, grasping a mathematical proof, the experience of counting in foreign currency, the experience of "naturalness", higher order perception like perceptual recognition (recognizing faces or the seeing-as phenomenon) and perception of spatial and size relations. Then I examined an objection to the very method of phenomenal contrast and argued that is not successful.

My presentation of the phenomenal contrast argument is complemented by a defense against some restrictivist views, which has constituted Chapter 5. In doing so, I added some remarks on phenomenal eliminativism and focus on reductionism, for which I distinguish two main views, Type1Red and Type2Red. As an instance of the former, I presented sensory reductionism and posed three problems for some versions of it: the kind of contribution they attribute to concepts in high-level perception, what attention cannot do in thought, and their impossibility of accounting for a minimal role of phenomenal character in conscious experiences. Also within sensory reductionism, I analyzed the particular strategy of inner speech reductionism, through a careful examination of the elements involved in the relation between conscious thought and inner speech and concluded that this strand of reductionism does not succeed either. I then turned to the examination of Type2Red and argued that it faces two main problems: how to account for the cognitive elements of the reduced states and for the possibility of pure abstract thought. With respect to the latter I provided the conceptual dialectics for making the case plausible and I argued that this conceptual possibility would give evidence for my

view given that both reductionists and anti-reductionists accept that there is an experience of thinking. Finally, I presented some empirical evidence on unsymbolized thought that I take to confirm my philosophical thesis and I respond to some possible objections.

Besides the obvious argument and the phenomenal contrast argument, my third positive argument is the epistemic one. I examined some versions of the EPISTEMIC ARGUMENT in Chapter 6 and I finally presented my own argument, which avoids the limitations of other accounts. My version of the epistemic argument can be run for cognitive episodes in general (6.2) and for cognitive attitudes in particular (6.3) and establishes that we can introspectively and immediately know the kind of mental episodes we are undergoing and which particular kind of cognitive attitude they exemplify. I then discuss the main possible objections to it.

Finally in this part, in Chapter 7 I considered another argument that might support the reductionist view, the ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT, which seeks to establish that thoughts are not the kind of entities suited for being in the stream of consciousness, given their non-processive character. I argued against the main premises of this argument, showing that its conclusion is not warranted. In doing so, I also casted doubt on the project of denying a specific cognitive phenomenology on the basis of a fundamental asymmetry between the cognitive domain and other paradigmatic experiential domains (sensory, perceptual, emotional, etc).

By this point I have made the case for SPECIFIC COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY. The third part of the dissertation aimed at providing a step forward in the discussion besides the existence question by exploring the nature question in a particular way, namely, in its relation to the intentionality of conscious thought. I took the specification of the nature of cognitive phenomenology as a challenge raised by what I called the asymmetry objection, which is cashed out in two different versions: Martin's one is answered in the proposal of Chapter 8 and Georgalis' one finds an answer in Chapter 9. In Chapter 8, I examine Strawson's and Pitt's proposals of specification on the relation between cognitive phenomenology and cognitive content and I pointed to some limitations of their views in order to finally provide a proposal which avoids these shortcomings. My proposal of specification is based on what I have called the *Experienced Conceptual Network*, which, as the name indicates, is a network of central and peripheral concepts that is activated and consciously experienced depending on the background knowledge one possesses about the central concepts. This proposal provides us with a way of determining similarities and differences in cognitive phenomenology with respect to the content side, by introducing two main parameters: the dimension of the ECN and the shared concepts. These two elements are responsible for the possibilities of variation in CP, which result in four experiential kinds,

as I explained in the chapter, thus presenting a way to overcome the asymmetry objection in the version of Martin. I further argued that my view answered negatively to the questions of *determination* between the two components: cognitive phenomenology does not determine cognitive content – because the same content CP can produce very different ECN and thus different CP – and cognitive content does not determine cognitive phenomenology – because the same cognitive content may give raise to different CP, given that we need to take into account the peripheral concepts of the network as contributing to the phenomenal character. This view finds support in the analogy with the peripheral consciousness in perceptual experiences, which is also vindicated here for the cognitive domain. As I also made clear in the chapter, my proposal is a philosophical account that has empirical consequences that could be further contrasted with the DES method or other empirically oriented methods.

The second element of the proposal is a specification of cognitive phenomenology in relation to cognitive attitudes, which I presented in Chapter 9. Previously in 6.3, the second epistemic argument, I showed that cognitive attitudes have a specific phenomenal character and in this chapter I complemented this by defending a supervenience claim between cognitive attitudes and attitudinal phenomenal character, which also maintains the reverse determination claims. I present this view after examining some phenomenological accounts of cognitive attitudes and contrasting them with functionalist views. I argued that the supervenience claim can be maintained within a functionalist view of cognitive attitudes individuation. The view over cognitive attitudes constitutes a way to overcome the asymmetry objection in the version of Georgalis. Also in this chapter I presented the experiential unity claim between cognitive content and cognitive attitude as an important aspect of my general view.

The final picture of the specification proposal is the following: on the one hand, we have a distinctive phenomenology for cognitive attitudes such that the same cognitive attitude determines the same phenomenal character and vice versa. This is complemented by a functionalist view on the individuation of cognitive attitudes. On the other hand, for each content thought of, the ECN is activated, thus contributing to the cognitive phenomenology from the content side and without determination (in any direction), a picture which provides a specification in experiential kinds.

This extended summary has given us an overview of this dissertation. Now, the main conclusion of my thesis is that there is an experience of thinking or conscious thought with a specific phenomenal character, namely, a phenomenal character that cannot be reduced to other non-cognitive kinds of phenomenologies. This general conclusion questions some well-established assumptions in philosophy of mind and consciousness studies, and opens the door to new research

in this direction. It clearly rejects the assumed asymmetry between the sensory/perceptual experience and the cognitive one in relation to phenomenal consciousness by arguing for an homogeneous presence of phenomenal consciousness in both domains. The specificity claim is not something that appears here for the first time in the literature, but there have not been entire monographs devoted to the topic over and above the compilation of articles in Bayne and Montague (2011b). Moreover, this thesis provides my own systematic way of presenting the relevant questions and the issues involved in the cognitive phenomenology debate. I offer arguments for the conclusion stated and I discuss the main ones that are already present in the literature. Particularly important is the discussion of the relation between conscious experience and introspection or introspective evidence, which is a debate that extends the scope of the topic but for which I have suggested a plausible way of going. In addition, this thesis shows that cognitive phenomenology can be further specified besides answering the existence question, and I take up such an enterprise for the content-side in order to finally offer a model that can be empirically tested and that does not have the problems of other existent accounts. This model is also complemented with a view on the relation and the specification of cognitive phenomenology and cognitive attitudes.

These conclusions respond to the aims specified in the introduction: is the experience of thinking an experience like sensory or perceptual experiences? Or is it rather a very different sort of experience? What are the properties involved in such a mental episode? Within the extension of phenomenal consciousness, should we include or exclude conscious thought? And if we recognize certain experiential properties in conscious thought, what is their relation to other features of conscious thought like its intentionality?

In general, the relevance of this thesis is the novelty of dealing with a rather unexplored area, both in philosophy and psychology or consciousness studies, and being able to clarify the questions at hand in a way that also becomes relevant for these areas. Thus, this thesis has direct implications for our grasp of the notion of phenomenal consciousness and what-it-is-likeness: my result is that we need to recognize a what-it-is-likeness associated with cognitive episodes and to acknowledge that the reach of phenomenal consciousness extends over cognition in a way that research in this domain could shed new light to consciousness studies. This is particularly relevant for vertical questions on consciousness, as the prospects of characterizing and solving the hard problem of consciousness. It might turn out that the hard problem of consciousness affects more kinds of states than is normally assumed, or that there are not easy problems of consciousness after all – given that the specific cognitive phenomenology view defends a skeptic position over *separatist* positions between intentionality and

phenomenal consciousness. Remember that many post-behaviorist philosophers of mind and cognitive scientists have proceeded under the assumption that both intentionality and phenomenal consciousness can and should be treated separately. My contention is that both enterprises are missing something important when applied to conscious thought, in two senses: they omit conscious thought when treating phenomenal consciousness and they omit phenomenal consciousness when treating conscious thought. The supervenience view I have defended between cognitive attitudes and attitudinal phenomenal character makes separatism more implausible by establishing this kind of dependence between phenomenal properties and the attitudinal component of intentionality.

Also, the relevance of the existence of cognitive phenomenology and the ECN model proposed is that it offers a philosophical model for further empirical research, as I have suggested in the course of this work. Even though I have provided a philosophical account of cognitive phenomenology, by way of discussing some introspective evidence and putting forward other philosophical arguments, cognitive phenomenology is a topic that can, and to my mind should, also be treated empirically. My brief incursion into the DES method is an attempt to show a possible route, and I have also suggested that my ECN proposal can be tested with this method. Hopefully, further research on cognition and consciousness will also shed light on the question.

Finally, and briefly stressing some of the points already made, this thesis provides a step forward in the cognitive phenomenology debate by way of offering a clarification of the issues, a way of approaching the experience of conscious thought, a route to discuss its main arguments and a specification proposal in relation to the two components of intentionality, cognitive content and attitude, in a way that further empirical and philosophical research can benefit from.

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