

NOT EVERY FEELING IS INTENTIONAL

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ABSTRACT

The most promising representationalist account of sensations and occurrent emotions is the 'impure' version of representationalism, which analyses the structure of an intentional state as consisting of an intentional content and a psychological mode. However, a critique of representationalism could question the analogy between propositional attitudes and sensory modes. Propositional attitudes cannot be exemplified without an object; but the same is far from clear in the case of sensory modes. In order to have a plausible account of non-intentional emotions and sensations, we need to conceive these mere feelings as playing certain characteristic functional roles. What makes this account possible is the observation that having a certain functional role does not entail that the state is intentional.

Key words: representationalism, intentional content, bodily sensations, non-intentional mental states

1. Intentionalist theories of mental states

A representationalist (or intentionalist) theory of a certain class of mental states explains all mental features of the states in question by reference to their representational (or intentional) features.¹ (I am going to use 'representational' and 'intentional' interchangeably). The explanation may have the following structure. We start with an initial idea of what characterises these mental states: what their nature is, how they are individuated, how they are distinguished from each other. These ideas can, but need not be very systematic; they could simply include observations like the following ones: what is desired is part of the nature

¹ When I talk about a 'representationalist theory of mental states', I don't mean Jerry Fodor's Representationalist Theory of the Mind. The idea here is that all mental features can be understood as following from the representational role of mental states. This is weaker than Fodor in one sense: it is not committed to the means of implementations, for example to the claim that the mind manipulates representations. It is also stronger than Fodor's view, because it may apply to all sorts of mental features that Fodor doesn't consider; phenomenal character and the like).

of a desire; seeing that the train is coming is a different mental state from hearing that the train is coming, and so on. Next we should have an idea of the components of a representational state. Take for example Searle's theory of intentional states: they consist of an intentional content and a psychological mode (Searle 1983). Then we need to align these two sets of ideas: everything that is part of the mental nature of a state should be grounded in some representational feature, so whenever two states differ or agree in their mental nature, they should differ or agree in some corresponding representational feature.

This is an abstract description of the account, but in practice, the procedure is likely to be different. Detecting the structure or components of representational states already depends on finding relevant similarities and differences among the mental features of certain states. Suppose that you believe that thinking about Cicero and thinking about Tully are different mental states. If you are trying to fit these states into a representationalist theory, then you can't say that the representational structure of a state is exhausted by having a certain referent; because if you do, then you cannot account for some mental difference in terms of a corresponding representational feature. Instead, you better say that the mode of presenting a certain referent is part of the representational structure of the state (or something along these lines).

All accounts will agree at least on one component of an intentional state: that it has intentional content. It is sometimes said that intentional or representational contents are associated with conditions of satisfaction, but at this stage, this is too restrictive. For example, if love is an intentional state, its content may be the presentation of the beloved person under a certain mode. But it's unclear that 'love' has satisfaction conditions (or if it does, it isn't a semantic issue). I'm going to put aside debates about the nature of contents, and will focus on the question of whether intentional states have further components.

Since everyone agrees that representational states have content, the most conservative version of a representationalist theory would account for mental features only in terms of representational contents. The theory would have to assume the completely general mental attitude of *representing*, which is shared by all states, and account for all remaining differences and similarities in terms of differences and similarities of representational content. Such a minimalist (or 'pure') representational theory is clearly hopeless for large classes of mental states. One objection that has been raised against the pure representationalist theory is that unconscious and conscious mental states can share the same content. My unconscious standing belief that pigs eat acorn is different from my conscious judgement that pigs eat acorn. But surely being conscious is an important mental feature, and if having this feature doesn't follow from simply having a representational content, this is bad news for the pure representationalist theory.

Chalmers suggests that one could rescue the pure representationalist theory "by denying that there are unconscious representational states" but, he adds "that view is

now almost universally rejected” (Chalmers 2004,157).² One way out of this difficulty would be to refine our account of the structure of representational states by introducing the attitude of *consciously representing* (instead of simply *representing*), and explain unconscious representation as derivative of conscious representations. However, it’s clear that even this version is unsatisfactory. When I consciously *judge*, *doubt* or *deny* that pigs are omnivores, these three mental states are clearly different, even though they all involve consciously representing that pigs are omnivores. That is why it is customary to distinguish a further component in an intentional state: Searle calls it the ‘psychological mode’ (Searle 1983), Crane calls it the ‘intentional mode’ (Crane 2003), Chalmers calls it the ‘manner of representation’ (Chalmers 2004). This is the same as the attitude-component in the case of propositional attitudes.

If we want to characterise representational states like conscious judgements or conscious desires, we provide the intentional content and the intentional mode. Describing or giving the content need not involve any mention of the subject and her mental features (unless she is thinking about herself or about her mind): conveying the content can be done in terms of pigs, acorns, things like that. But the intentional mode essentially involves a *subjective element*, in the sense that it presupposes some minded creature. If judging, deciding or pondering are going on in the world, there have to be thinking subjects appropriately modified for this to be happening. Searle’s term ‘psychological modes’ is a fitting one: it indicates that the home of these modes is the psyche.

2. The intentionalist account of feelings

So far our examples were drawn from the area of cognitive states; let us now see what we can say about the prospects of an intentionalist account of feelings. I am going to put aside perceptual states, and focus on the case of bodily sensations and occurrent emotions³. This is a well trodden ground, and the options are familiar. One option is to say that (at least some) feelings lack objects; here is a statement by Sir William Hamilton:

In the phenomena of Feelings – the phenomena of Pleasure and Pain – ... consciousness does not place the mental modification or state before itself; it does not contemplate it apart – as separate from itself – but is, as it were, fused into one. The peculiarity of Feeling, therefore, is that there is nothing but what is subjectively subjective; there is no object different from the self – no objectification of any mode of the self. (Hamilton 1859-60, 572)

² I am actually inclined to go against this almost universal consensus on the basis of arguments presented by Brie Gertler (Gertler 2007), so if this were the only problem with pure representationalism, I wouldn’t think that the problem was insuperable.

³ Emotions are plausibly divided into two groups: one group has more the character of standing states, with love as a typical example; the other group includes episodes in the stream of consciousness, like elation or panic. I am interested in the second group here.

Hamilton contrasted feelings with cognition: “In the phaenomena of Cognition”, he says, “Consciousness distinguishes an object from the subject knowing” (Hamilton 1859-60, 571). I used Hamilton in particular among the many possible sources of this view, because Brentano quotes precisely these lines in expounding his own, contrasting, view that all mental phenomena are intentional (Brentano 1874, 89). In response to Hamilton’s claim, Brentano first calls attention to the fact that we often attributes objects to feelings: it’s often the case that “we are pleased with or about something, that we feel sorrow or grieve about something” (Brentano 1874, 89). This is certainly true: when I am pleased with my new vegetable garden, the emotion clearly has an intentional object.

I want to say that in this case, it is clear that the feeling is intentional because it is directed at something *beyond* itself: at something whose existence is not dependent on being the object of that mental state. Without attempting to defend this conception in detail here⁴, let me just register that I am interested only in this kind of intentional objects; when I try to assess the prospects of an intentionalist account of mental states, I mean to restrict possible intentional objects to those which – if they exist – can exist independently of being the object of an experience. And therefore I am not convinced by the second part of Brentano’s answer to Hamilton, because Brentano, while noting that intentional acts can take external objects, also held the view that the objects of intentional states are sometimes internal objects. Sensations are internal objects of – well, sensations. Feeling dizzy, for example, is an experience that is supposed to be directed at the sensation of dizziness.

One of the reasons that I want to steer clear of internal intentional objects, is that I find this view quite confusing. ‘Dizziness’ is naturally regarded as the name of the whole experience, and one can conceive the experience as instantiating a mere feel and having no objects. The difficult issue is to see what would decide between regarding dizziness as a quality, or an internal object, of an experience. That is why I prefer to restrict the investigation to the question of whether mental states have intentional objects whose existence is ‘transcendent’, that is, not dependent on being the object of the experience in question.

This requirement is satisfied by the views that analyse sensations as directed at certain parts of the body. The intentional object of one’s back itching is a certain location on one’s skin; this ‘object’ could indeed exist even if it wasn’t the object of this particular experience, so it satisfies the requirement of being transcendent. Here again we might raise the question of whether the nature of the sensation is exhausted by its having a certain intentional content; in other words, whether pure representationalism is a viable option for bodily sensations. If we extend the requirement of transcendence to the whole intentional content, then the way the object is represented should comprise a state of affairs whose existence doesn’t depend on being experienced. In that case, the pure representationalist account for bodily sensations is very implausible. The object represented – part of one’s back – is transcendent. But they way it appears in the ex-

⁴ I deal with this question in more detail in Farkas forthcoming.

perience – itching – is an essentially subjective feature, in the earlier sense: if itching is going on in the world, then there must be a minded creature whose consciousness is appropriately modified. There is no itching without someone’s experiencing itching, whereas in the case of ordinary transcendent contents, like one’s back being, say, *sun-burnt*, this state of affairs can obtain even when it is not an object of any experience.

Fortunately for the representationalist program, this isn’t a great embarrassment, because we already know that we have to give up pure representationalism. Propositional attitudes require introducing psychological modes, and so one possibility is to regard itching as analogous to attitudes: one is aware of the part of the skin in an itching sort of way; or one ‘itches’ the part of the skin. As Tim Crane emphasises (Crane 1998), this isn’t a disappointing compromise for representationalist accounts, because they are already committed to accepting subjective factors.

On Michael Tye’s representationalist account of pain, the characteristic painfulness of a pain experience is part of the content of the state. A certain bodily part is represented as having a painful quality. Tye spends considerable energy on trying to show that ‘painful’ is not experienced as the quality of the conscious episode, but rather as the quality of the hurting bodily part, and this is evidence, according to him, that the painful characteristic is part of the content of the experience. But actually, it seems to me a moot point whether ‘pain’ is experienced as a quality of the bodily part or of the experience. I suppose that one version of the ‘qualia’ view of pain seems phenomenologically unconvincing: this would be the view that intentional content and qualitative features are completely independent components of the mental state. On this view, the pain experience represents the foot, and has an additional painful qualitative colouring, that has nothing to do with the representational content. This is indeed unconvincing, because it’s part of the phenomenology of the experience that it’s the *foot* that hurts, rather than just hurting being present, in addition to the awareness of the foot.

However, conceiving painfulness as the psychological mode or as a manner of representing avoids this implausible split view. The decisive point is that *painful* – just like *itchy* – is a subjective quality. As Crane puts it: “But on reflection, it is clear that the concept of *hurting* is covertly relational. Something cannot hurt unless it hurts someone; in fact, a part of one’s own body cannot hurt unless it hurts *oneself*” (Crane 2003, 52). That painfulness is a subjective quality seems to be acknowledged also by Tye. He says that when we apply the term ‘pain’ to the quality that is represented in a pain experience, “it applies to the quality represented insofar as (and only insofar as) it is within the content of a pain experience” (Tye 2006, 101). So the exemplification of this quality does depend on someone’s having an appropriate experience.

The account can be extended to certain emotions. If I am pleased with the new vegetable garden or apprehensive about slugs eating the lettuce, the states can be conceived as being aware of some intentional contents under a certain – pleased or apprehensive – intentional mode.

3. Feelings without an object

On the version of the representationalist account that we have found most promising, bodily sensations with a felt location have an experience-independent element: a certain part of the body, and a subjective, experience-dependent element: the manner the bodily part is felt. On the same account, directed emotions also have these two components: the object of the emotion, and the subjective manner in which the subject relates to the object. My next question is the following: is it necessary that all sensations and emotions consist of these two elements? More specifically, *is it possible for a sensation or an emotion to have just a subjective feel, and no experience-independent object?*

Philosophers who defend an intentionalist account of some (type of) experiences usually try to cover all experiences (of that type.) Aiming at generality can have different motivations: the attempt to find the mark of the mental, or to pave the way for a reductive account of mental states. Once this general motivation is present, considerable ingenuity can be spent on showing that all experiences of a certain type indeed have an object. But we should step back for a moment and ask: do we have some general argument to show that all mental states of a certain type – for example, all sensory experiences – must have an object? For if we don't have such an argument, then at least the option that some experiences are objectless should be left open; and then we should look at the particular cases and make up our mind as best as we can.

Alex Byrne does offer a general argument: he defends the claim that all bodily sensations, as well as all perceptual experiences, are intentional (Byrne 2001). Byrne's starting point is the generally accepted claim that the nature of sensory states is given by their phenomenal character. He argues that whenever a subject notices a change in the phenomenal character of her experience, the 'way things seem to her' changes. And the way things seem to the subject is nothing but the content of her experience.

There are two things to note about Byrne's argument. One is that he has a much more liberal conception of intentional objects than I do. He holds that if afterimages, phosphenes or pains-as-objects turn out to be mental particulars which cannot exist independently of being experienced, they can still serve as intentional objects. The other is that Byrne's argument relies on two different senses of 'things seeming in a certain way' (this is pointed out by Tim Crane, 2009). In the case of an ordinary perceptual experience, it's natural to say that how things seem to me – that there is a green parsley leaf on the table – is the same as the content of the experience: that there is a green parsley leaf on the table. However, 'the way things seem' can also mean 'the way things feel' where 'things' doesn't refer to objects, but rather to the experience. Dizziness feels different from nausea, or things feel different to the subject when she feels dizzy or nauseous. There need be no suggestion here that anything beyond the mere feel is involved; possibly all we mean is that one feels different when one is feeling dizzy or feeling nauseous.

As I said, one possible motivation for giving a representationalist account of mental states is to pave the way for a naturalistic reduction. The hope is that one can give a naturalistic reduction of what it is for a state to have a certain intentional content, and the attitudinal component of propositional attitudes can be analysed in functional terms. If the attitude+content analysis can be extended to sensations and emotions, then perhaps a similar analysis is available for them. But a possible motivation is not the same as an argument. So the question still stands: do sensations and emotions always have to have a transcendent object?

So far our account of has been relying on a similarity between propositional attitudes and the sensational element of sensations: we included the attitude of judging, as well as the feeling of itching, under intentional modes or manners of representing. However, it is now time to revisit this similarity. In the case of propositional attitudes, it makes no sense to suggest that an attitude could be exemplified without being directed at something. One cannot just be in a state of judging without the judgement being directed upon something; and one cannot doubt or deny, without doubting or denying something. 'Doubt' and 'judge' also have intransitive uses, according to dictionaries, but this form seems to be used where the objects of doubting or judging are unspecified, rather than lacking.

In contrast consider a sensation like feeling dizzy. Dizziness covers a number of different sensations: vertigo, the feeling as if one would be fainting, the feeling of weakness, the feeling that one has when one stands up too quickly, and so on. Perhaps occasionally one feels vaguely aware of one's head, or one's surroundings, when feeling dizzy, but there seems to be nothing in the nature of the feeling itself that would require some direction. It is no wonder that non-intentional qualia views of sensations had some popularity (whereas no-one suggested a similar position for cognitive attitudes). It makes perfectly good sense to say that one's consciousness is simply modified in a certain way without anything being involved beyond this consciousness, and that this modification gives the entire nature of the experience. We do use locutions that apparently convert every kind of feeling into the feeling of something: of the feeling of 'dizziness', for example. However, dizziness, if it's anything other than the whole experience, is a mental particular, or an internal object; and as I said before, I restrict my investigation to independent intentional objects.

The same can be said about certain emotions. While it seems clearly plausible that to be happy about seeing an old friend again is a state that combines an object and a subjective feel, why should we think that happiness always requires some direction? It seems easy to understand the idea that someone just feels elated, without any particular thing being the object of elation. Again, all these feelings can be grammatically formulated to take an object: 'I feel elation'; but elation is a subjective feel that won't serve as an independent intentional object. The stock example of undirected anxiety, or a feeling of peace and tranquillity also provide potential examples of objectless feelings.

I am not questioning the claim that some bodily sensations and occurrent emotions have intentional objects. Many of these feelings are indeed plausibly regarded as combinations of an object and a subjective intentional mode. I am asking simply whether they always need to have an object; whether we can make sense, and find potential examples, of feelings that lack an object. Two kinds of cases may be distinguished. One, which seems *prima facie* plausible in the case of some bodily sensations, is that certain subjective feelings – like pain, or itch – require an object, while other kinds of feelings – like dizziness – don't. The other type of case is the case of emotions, when the same subjective feeling – happiness, anxiety – can come both in an objectless and in a directed version.

4. Functional role and intentional object

The suggestion is to conceive some feelings as mere modifications of consciousness lacking a transcendent object. Are we suggesting, in other words, that these feelings are *qualia*, in one sense the term is used in philosophical discussions? That depends on which sense we are talking about; for on certain understandings, the proposal that some emotions are qualia is very implausible. To see this, we have to take a look at certain debates surrounding the qualitative features of mental states.

In his influential paper, "The intrinsic quality of experience". Harman considers the following well-known objection against functionalism:

When you attend to a pain in your leg or to your experience of the redness of an apple, you are aware of an intrinsic quality of your experience, where an intrinsic quality is a quality something has in itself, apart from its relations to other things. This quality of experience cannot be captured in a functional definition, since such a definition is concerned entirely with relations, relations between mental states and perceptual input, relations among mental states, and relations between mental states and behavioral output. (Harman 1990, 40-41)

The objection is, briefly, that functionalism can tell you merely what an experiential state *does*, but not what it *feels like*; and the latter cannot be captured by the former. What sort of example would give further support to this claim? Harman mentions redness, and the possibility of an inverted spectrum is indeed the basis of one of the standard criticisms against the functionalist theory of the mind. If two subjects who are red-green colour inverters are functionally equivalent, then we have a case where entirely different feelings could do the same thing (play the functional role associated with 'red' in our vocabulary), and the very same feeling (the subjective sensation of red) could do entirely different things. The possibility of inverted spectrum seems to show that there is a completely contingent connection between functional role and intrinsic quality. Given an intrinsic quality, it could be endowed with any arbitrary functional

role; and given a functional role, any feeling could play it. This shows convincingly that functionalism leaves out something: namely the qualitative aspect of mental states. We may call these qualitative aspects ‘qualia.’

So one influential argument for the existence of mere qualia is based on a case where there doesn’t seem to be any meaningful connection between the quale and the functional role; and indeed the notion of a quale may be explained partly by referring to such cases. If this is our understanding of qualia, then, let me repeat, pairings between qualia and functional roles are entirely contingent.

We get a potentially different picture if we look at other type of cases that may support the claim that functional roles cannot grasp the intrinsic feel of certain types of mental state. This is the possibility of zombies: creatures who are functionally equivalent to us but completely *lack* any qualitative feelings.⁵ The case is meant to show that the functional role doesn’t account for the entire nature of a mental state, because feelings are part of that nature, because you could have the same functional role without the feeling. We might then say that the qualitative aspect is the intrinsic feel we have, and zombies lack.

The possibility of zombies is consistent with the claim that the feeling *does* determine some sort of functional role, even though the functional role doesn’t determine the feeling. If this were true, then you could have creatures who share functional roles, but one has a feeling, and the other lacks feeling entirely (a real subject and a zombie counterpart), but you couldn’t have two subjects with the same feeling and entirely diverging functional roles. Take for example the feeling of comfort and discomfort. One can imagine a zombie who, in typically comfort-evoking situations, shows comfort-behaviour, but doesn’t feel anything inside. This would show that functional role doesn’t necessitate an intrinsic feeling, but wouldn’t sever the connection between feeling and functional role entirely. The suggestion of inverted comfort and discomfort feelings in functionally equivalent subjects is not especially compelling. The idea of a qualitative aspect that emerges from these considerations is different from the idea suggested by the possibility of red-green colour-inversion. Intrinsic feelings determine some functional role, even if a functional role can exist without their presence.

How does this issue relate to the question of whether experiences are intentional? Notice that having a typical functional role is not the same as having an intentional object. Functional roles are characterised by typical causes and effects, but neither causes, nor effects are necessarily intentional objects. Consider a case when certain kind of physiological factors (say, drinking too much coffee) regularly cause a state of nervous irritability in someone. The resulting state is not a merely dispositional state, but a state

⁵ The zombies in this scenario are functionally equivalent to us, but may be physically different. I am assuming multiple realisability: the same functional role can be realised by physically different states. So when I appeal to the possibility of functionally equivalent zombies, I do not commit myself to the possibility of physically qualitatively identical zombies.

that's characterised by a constant colouring of one's consciousness. This state, in turn, has typical behavioural effects, say, snapping at people. Here the connection between feeling and functional role doesn't seem to be arbitrary. Feeling-inversion is not a very natural thought in this case: it isn't especially plausible that a feeling of peaceful contentment could replace nervous irritability and have exactly the same effects.

The important point is that state doesn't seem to be *about* its causes or effects. If the causes are physiological, one may not even be aware of them. And if nervousness causes one to snap at people, we would hardly say that the object of the nervousness was the snapping, or the people. The nervousness may elicit certain attitudes or feelings towards people, and these have the people as their objects, but it seems to me that the base feeling of nervous irritability, and the consequent annoyance with the unfortunate people who are around, are distinguishable mental states. One could be in the first without ever getting to the second.

An alternative suggestion, put forward for example by Tim Crane (Crane 1998), is that the object of a general mood-colouring emotion like nervous irritability is the whole world, as it were. Crane considers the case of what we may call 'undirected anxiety'. It is undirected in the sense that the person won't be able to name a concrete object of her anxiety. Yet, Crane argues, we can still see anxiety as directed: for it involves regarding the world "as a potentially disturbing place for oneself" (Crane 1998, 242). Contrast this case with depression, where "the world seems to the subject to be a pointless, colourless place: nothing seems worth doing" (Crane 1998, 242). For a similar view, Crane quotes Sartre's remarks about melancholy:

My melancholy is a method of suppressing the obligation to look for .. new ways [to realise the potentialities of the world] by transforming the present structure of the world, replacing it with a totally undifferentiated structure... In other words, lacking both the ability and the will to carry out the projects I formerly entertained, I behave in such a manner that the universe requires nothing more from me. This one can only do by acting upon oneself, by 'lowering the flame of life to a pin-point'—and the noetic correlate of this attitude is what we call *Bleakness*: the universe is bleak; that is, of undifferentiated structure. (Sartre 1939, 68-69, quoted by Crane 1998, 242)

It isn't obvious to me that everything that is described here shows the directedness of melancholy itself – rather than the directedness of the states *typically caused by melancholy*. When Sartre says that "I behave in such a manner that the universe requires nothing from me", we could understand this as describing the behavioural effects of the feeling of melancholy. Or if we hear that melancholy 'suppresses the obligation' to search for something new, this, again, could be understood as a description of the typical effects of melancholy: when you are melancholic, this stops you from engaging in new initiatives. And effects need not be intentional objects. I suspect that we may en-

counter here the two senses of ‘things seem in a certain way’ that I indicated when discussing Alex Byrne’s argument above. ‘Things seem bleak’ may just mean ‘I feel bleak’. This can, of course, be turned back: perhaps ‘I feel bleak’ just means that ‘Things seem bleak’. But I am far from being convinced that in general mood-colouring emotions, the world does indeed phenomenally appear as an object of the emotion.

Consider yet another case of feelings: the effect of two different drugs. One is a drug that removes anxiety and stress, causes one to be relaxed, to slow down. The state has a very distinctive qualitative feel. The other drug’s effect is making one alert, hyperactive, excitable. Again, this has a distinctive subjective feeling. This is another case where inversion seems implausible. I’d like to say that the characteristic behavioural effects of these two very different feelings are nothing but that: that is, *effects*. The involvement of the world in the affected behaviour is not the intentional object of the feelings; it is simply a consequence. Perhaps this point can be made even more plausible if we consider the reports of people who take one or other kind of drug more than once. As the drug is taking its effect, people report the onset of the distinctive feeling familiar from previous occasions; no thought or idea of the world around the subject needs to be present in this experience. It seems to me that here we may have a case where the mental state is simply a modification of one’s consciousness, without pointing to anything beyond itself. But this is perfectly compatible with saying that the feeling has its characteristic effect.

5. Intrinsic quality, qualia

In the previous section, I argued that some feelings may have a characteristic functional role without having intentional objects: functional roles are given in terms of typical causes on effects, but neither causes, nor effects are always intentional objects of experiences. It is perhaps easy to overlook this point if one is caught up in the general dialectics of the debate surrounding the question of qualia. Consider the following claim by Ned Block:

The greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind – maybe even all of philosophy – divides two perspectives on consciousness. The two perspectives differ on whether there is anything in the phenomenal character of conscious experience that goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive and the functional. A convenient terminological handle on the dispute is whether there are ‘qualia’. Those who think that the phenomenal character of conscious experience goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive and the functional are said to believe in qualitative properties of conscious experience, or qualia for short. (Block 1996, 19)

The impression is that on one side, we have “the intentional, the cognitive and the functional”, and on the other side, we have qualia. Let me now consider an example of how the questions of intentionality and functional role got connected in the debate.

I started the previous section with Gilbert Harman’s formulation of the objection against functionalism from intrinsic qualities: the objection is that we are aware of the intrinsic qualities of experience, and functionalism says nothing about the intrinsic quality. One way to reply to this would be to show that contrary to what the objection says, functional role does account for intrinsic qualities. But this isn’t the route that Harman chooses; instead, he argues that we are *not aware of the intrinsic qualities of the experience in the first place*. And the way this is shown is by arguing that we are aware of the qualities *represented* in the experience, rather than the intrinsic qualities of the experience itself.

Since the objection against functionalism was supposed to be based on the observation that we are aware of the intrinsic qualities of the experience, and now it is shown that we are aware of the represented, rather than the intrinsic properties, the objection collapses. Or in any case, this is the idea. Now suppose that Harman and other intentionalists are right and the entire mental nature of a sensory state is given by its intentional properties. Functionalism will be better off than before if all intentional properties can be characterised in terms of functional roles. This is quite a big ‘if’, but it is generally thought that it’s easier to account for representation in functional terms than to account for qualia in functional terms. But be that as it may, even if Harman is right about all this, one thing still doesn’t follow: that all functional properties are intentional properties. It is still perfectly possible that some mental state can be characterised by a certain functional role and yet the state is not intentional.

Of course, overall, I disagree with Harman. I do not think that the entire nature of all sensory states can be given by their intentional properties. And I think that some of these feelings are mere feelings, without pointing to anything beyond themselves. But I also think it is perfectly possible to claim that these feelings have a characteristic functional role. This notion also preserves something from the idea of an intrinsic *as opposed* to a functional feature: if functional roles can be present without the feeling, the feeling is something beyond the functional role. However, as we saw, this is still compatible with the claim that the feeling determines some functional role.

Now I can answer an important objection brought by Tim Crane against the claim that some emotions are entirely non-intentional (Crane 1998).⁶ Crane takes a non-intentional feature to be a quale, and derives the notion of a quale from arguments based on the possibility of qualia inversion. The resulting notion, as we have seen, is the notion of a feeling which has no connection to either representational or func-

⁶ In fact, it was this objection that made me realise that emotional feelings have to be given a different account than sensory qualia like red and green (if indeed they are qualia).

tional features. Crane asks how should we understand for example the feeling of undirected anxiety, if it is to be a feeling of this kind. He argues that regarding this feeling as entirely independent from any functional role, as something that could figure in an inversion-scenario (for example, with contentment), is very implausible. He is right about that, but now we see that resistance to inversion is not, in itself, an argument for intentionality. Thinking primarily of the red-green case, Crane says that “it seems part of the very idea of qualia that there be this possibility [of inversion]: for qualia ‘point to’ nothing beyond themselves, which would make them associated with one kind of objectively identifiable state rather than another” (Crane 1998, 240). However, we have seen that ‘association’ with an objectively identifiable state need not be an intentional association; it could be a merely causal one.

To conclude. The most promising representationalist account of sensations and occurrent emotions is the ‘impure’ version of representationalism, which analyses the structure of an intentional state as a having of an intentional content and a psychological mode. Since the introduction of mode in addition to content is required by propositional attitudes anyway, this account seems to remain safely within the bounds of the representationalist program. However, a critique of representationalism could question the analogy between propositional attitudes and sensory modes. Propositional attitudes cannot be exemplified without an object; but the same is far from clear in the case of sensory modes. In order to have a plausible account of non-intentional emotions and sensations, we need to conceive these mere feelings as playing certain characteristic functional roles. What makes this account possible is the observation that having a certain functional role does not entail that the state is intentional.

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