

The Three Circles of Consciousness

Uriah Kriegel

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Introduction/Abstract

A widespread assumption in current philosophy of mind is that a conscious state's phenomenal properties vary with its representational contents. In this paper, I present (rather dogmatically) an alternative picture that recognizes two kinds of phenomenal properties that do not vary concomitantly with content. First, it admits phenomenal properties that vary rather with *attitude*: what it is like for me to *see* rain is phenomenally different from what it is like for me to *remember* (indistinguishable) rain, which is different again from what it is like for me to *visualize* (indistinguishable) rain – where these differences cannot be traced back to variations in content. Secondly, there is a kind of phenomenal property that varies neither with content nor with attitude but is altogether invariant across all conscious states: a substantive phenomenal commonality among what it is like for me to see, remember, and visualize rain, cats, or dogs. This substantive commonality, I will suggest, is the *for-me-ness* component of what it is like for me to have any of these experiences. I will close by discussing the interrelations among these three concentric layers of phenomenality: content-based, attitude-based, and for-me-ness.

1 Content-Based Phenomenality

It is commonly thought that there is a tight connection between a conscious state's phenomenal character and its representational content. By 'phenomenal character,' I mean what it is like for the subject to be in the relevant state; by 'representation content,' I mean what the state represents. Given an understanding of phenomenal character and representational content, we may understand the notions of a 'phenomenal property' and 'content property' as follows. Suppose C is a conscious state with properties P_1, \dots, P_n . Call a property P_i a 'phenomenal property' of C if the fact that C instantiates P_i contributes constitutively to what it is like for the subject to be in C, in the sense that the following counterfactual obtains: if C had not instantiated P_i , C's phenomenal character would *ipso facto* be different. (I include the '*ipso facto*' requirement to exclude cases where change in

some property would *merely causally* entrain changes in phenomenal character.) Call a property P_i a ‘content property’ of C if the fact that C instantiates P_i contributes constitutively to what C represents, in the sense that if C had not instantiated P_i , C ’s representational content would *ipso facto* be different. (I am using ‘represents’ non-factively here: when you hallucinate a lemon, what your hallucination represents is a lemon, not *nothing*.)

The philosophy of mind of the past quarter-century has been intensely interested in potential dependence or grounding relations between phenomenal and content properties. Suppose C represents purple (a purple surface or volume, say), and there is a purplish way it is like for its subject to be in C . Then C has a content property P_c (the property of representing purple) and also a phenomenal property P_p (the property of there being a purplish way it is like for the subject to be in C). The facts that C has P_c and that it has P_p have seemed to many to have something to do with each other. Although some have argued that the two could come apart (e.g., Peacocke 1983, Block 1996), most philosophers have tended to think that they cannot: a conscious state instantiates P_c if and only if it instantiates P_p . But this kind of biconditional raises a certain Euthyphro question: does C have P_c because it has P_p (does it represent purple because there is a purplish way it is like to be in it), or does it have P_p because it has P_c (there is a purplish way it is like to be in it because it represents purple)? Thinking about this Euthyphro question in terms of metaphysical dependence, we can distinguish four *prima facie* approaches to it:

- (1) *Content first*: C ’s having P_p (the phenomenal property) asymmetrically depends upon C ’s having P_c (the content property).
- (2) *Phenomenality first*: C ’s having P_c asymmetrically depends upon C ’s having P_p .
- (3) *No priority*: C ’s having P_p and its having P_c are mutually dependent.
- (4) *Independence*: Neither C ’s having P_p nor C ’s having P_c is dependent on the other.

The first position is associated with so-called representationalism or intentionalism (Dretske 1995, Byrne 2001). The second is associated with the ‘phenomenal intentionality view’ (Horgan and Tienson 2002, Loar 2003). The third can come in several varieties, but one prominent option is an ‘identity view’ (Chalmers 2004, Pautz 2010), whereby P_c and P_p are ultimately one and the same property, differently described. The fourth position corresponds to what Horgan and Tienson (2002) call ‘separatism,’ the view that P_c and P_p have nothing to do with each other, metaphysically speaking. A separatist would typically deny the necessary correlation between phenomenal and content properties, but she can also accept the correlation and insist that it does not reflect any metaphysical dependence.

As a purely sociological observation, it should be noted that separatism, once a widespread *assumption* among philosophers of mind, has become a minority position over the past quarter-century. Most debates in the area have concentrated on which of the other

three positions is most plausible: representationalism, phenomenal intentionality, or the no-priority view.

This picture of the logical geography requires some refinement, however. For philosophers of both representationalist and phenomenal-intentionality persuasions have often sounded an identity-theoretic note. Michael Tye, a leading representationalist, writes: 'Phenomenal character (or what it is like) is *one and the same as* a certain sort of intentional content' (Tye 1995: 137; my italics). Terry Horgan, a leading phenomenal intentionality theorist, is inclined toward the identification of P_c and P_p (personal communication). Yet Tye and Horgan do not seem to have a 'loud agreement,' being simply confused about the fact that they actually agree with one another. So how should we make sense of their disagreement?

I think the answer is that disagreement is, in the first instance, on something like *epistemic* rather than metaphysical priority. The representationalist holds that content properties are epistemically more basic: we understand a phenomenal property by reductively explaining it in terms of some content property, which in turn we understand in broadly information-theoretic terms, hence without appeal to phenomenal notions. The phenomenal intentionalist proposes the opposite direction of epistemic priority: we understand the content property in terms of the phenomenal property, and grasp the nature of the latter through direct introspective acquaintance, hence without recourse to representation idiom. A third position is that the single property we have here can be understood neither first under its phenomenal guise nor first under its content guise; on the contrary, upon reflection we realize that the two descriptions must co-refer, as we are unable to grasp the phenomenal property otherwise than as intentional or the intentional property otherwise than phenomenal.

To summarize, representationalism can be understood as the disjunction of (a) the claim that phenomenal properties are metaphysically grounded in content properties and (b) the claim that phenomenal properties are identical with content properties but the phenomenal description, or conception, of those properties is epistemically derivative upon their content description/conception. The phenomenal intentionality view is a similar metaphysical-priority-or-epistemic-priority disjunctive thesis. And the no-priority view denies both metaphysical and epistemic priority.

Regardless of which line one takes on question of priority, many philosophers of mind hold that phenomenal properties covary with content properties. More specifically:

Covariance: For any conscious state C and phenomenal property P_p , there is a content property P_c , such that C instantiates P_p if and only if C instantiates P_c .

As we have seen, even the separatist can accept *Covariance*, though most likely she will not.

2 *Attitude-Based Phenomenality*

Opponents of *Covariance* have often attempted to adduce instances of sensory qualia that, they claim, go beyond conscious state's content. Peacocke (1983) argued that a subject can have a visual experience of two equally sized trees, one of which is farther away from the other, such that (i) the experience represents the two trees as equally sized but (ii) the sensory quale associated with each tree is different (one 'takes up' more of the subject's 'visual field' than the other). Block (1996) argued that when we rub our eyes long enough, we have 'phosphene experiences' that (i) do not represent anything but (ii) involve an unmistakable sensory quality of glowing blobs in our visual field.

For reasons I do not want to go into here, I do not believe that alleged counterexamples of this kind work. All the same, I contend, there are plenty of exceptions to *Covariance*, exceptions which have something in common. These exceptions are, however, of a very different kind.

To appreciate the relevant kind of case, I want to start with a seemingly unrelated distinction between three kinds of belief report. Compare:

(B1) S_1 believes that there are ghosts.

(B2) S_2 believes that ghosts exist.

(B3) S_3 believes in ghosts.

The mental states ostensibly reported by B1-3 are clearly related: they are all in the business of doxastically committing the subject to the existence of ghosts. But if we take the reports' grammatical structures at face value, they report mental states with subtly but importantly different intentional structures. There are live debates on just how we should understand B1, but here I want to focus on B2 and B3. Note that the specification of *what is believed* in report B2 includes the word 'exist,' suggesting that existence shows up in the *content* of S_2 's belief. In contrast, in B3 the specification of what is believed is one word long – it is exhausted by 'ghosts' – and involves no existential term. So as long as we take at face value the reports' grammatical structure, then, it would seem that S_2 's belief commits S_2 to the existence of ghosts in virtue of its content, whereas S_3 's does not. At the same time, S_3 's belief clearly does commit S_3 to the existence of ghosts (indeed, that is *all* believing in ghosts does!). It follows that that this existence-commitment is not part of the content of S_3 's mental state. Rather, it would seem to be an aspect of the very attitude of *believing in*: to believe *in* something is to doxastically commit to its existence. One way to put this is to say that while S_2 's belief represents ghosts as existing, S_3 's belief represents-as-existing ghosts. Here the existential term is used as a modification of the verb 'represents,' suggesting that existence-commitment a *mode* or *way* of representing rather than part of

what is represented. Another way to say this is that existence-commitment is a *content property* of S_2 's belief but an *attitudinal property* of S_3 's belief.

Now, we may certainly refuse to take the grammars of B1-3 at face value, and so deny that existence-commitment is ever an attitudinal property of our beliefs. Still, the contrast between B2 and B3 is useful in bringing out two different intentional structures that conscious states might potentially exhibit. When a conscious state C commits to the F-ness of x , it may be either because C represents x as F (where x 's being F is *what* C represents), or because C represents-as-F x (where *what* C represents is only x , and as-F is *how* C represents x).

With this in the background, I may state my main claim in this section as follows: quite a few of the phenomenal properties of our conscious states are attitudinal rather than content properties, properties these have not in virtue of *what* they represent, but in virtue of *how* they represent. More specifically:

Contrarian: For some conscious state C and phenomenal property P_p , there is no content property P_c , such that C instantiates P_p if and only if C instantiates P_c .

I will now, rather dogmatically, go over a series of phenomenal properties that I take to be attitudinal, hence outstrip content properties. I adopt the dogmatic stance not because I think the claims I make are somehow *obvious*, but because space is limited and I have argued for these claims more fully elsewhere. The exercise in this paper is to *pull together* the results of those disparate arguments in order to articulate a certain picture of the phenomenal realm.

Consider first a pair of subjects S_4 and S_5 , such that (i) S_4 sees my dog, (ii) S_5 visualizes my dog, and (iii) due to extraordinary circumstances, the details, vivacity, and determinacy of S_4 's seeing are identical to those of S_5 's visualizing. On my view, there is still a difference in the overall phenomenology of S_4 's and S_5 's experiences. (Nobody in such circumstances would be confused as to whether s/he is perceiving or imagining!) I want to say that the difference between these overall phenomenal characters has to do with the *realness* of that which is represented: perception involves a subtle feeling of realness that attaches to the object, whereas imagination does not, and may even involve a subtle feeling of *unreality*. And yet, I want to claim, *what* is perceived or imagined is strictly the same: my dog. If so, the realness-related difference must be grounded in the *manners* in which the two experiences represent my dog: while S_4 's experience represents-as-real my dog, S_5 's does not (and perhaps even represents-as-unreal my dog). This is a difference in the experiences' *attitudinal* properties: S_4 does not *see* my dog's realness, and S_5 does not *visualize* my dog's unreality; they *see/visualize* only my dog. (True to my dogmatic stance, I have not provided here any *argument* for these claims. For actual arguments, see Kriegel 2015a Ch.6 and Arcangeli & Kriegel ms.)

A similar contrast attends, in my opinion, perception and episodic memory. Suppose S_6 sees the rain falling, while S_7 episodically remembers a qualitatively indistinguishable rain (or remembers *seeing* that rain).¹ Moreover, suppose the circumstances are sufficiently odd that the vivacity/determinacy of the two experiences matches. There are various differences between these two experiences, including differences in functional role. But in addition, I contend, there is a certain *phenomenal* difference, one that seems to concern *felt temporal orientation*: in remembering the rain, we experience it as past, but in seeing the rain, we experience it as (in the) present. It is because of this felt temporal orientation that each of us would immediately know whether s/he is busy seeing or remembering rain. Nonetheless, I contend, still dogmatically, the content of the two experiences is strictly the same: a (type-)identical rain is represented. The felt temporal orientation must therefore be 'attitudinally encoded' in these experiences, so to speak. We might say that while S_7 's experience represents-as-past the rain, S_6 's represents-as-present the rain. (Again, I have offered no *argument* for any of this. For such an argument, see Kriegel 2015b.)

It has sometimes been claimed, against representationalists, that different *perceptual modalities* can represent the same features, but in different *ways* (Block 1996, Lopes 2000). For example, we can see, hear, and smell spatial locations; the resulting visual, auditory, and olfactory experiences differ phenomenally despite representing the same location. This might be construed as a claim about differences in phenomenal attitudinal properties. There have been responses from representationalists on this score, essentially claiming that there are environmental features we can only see and others we can only hear, and that these modality-specific features ensure that the experiences' respective representational contents are in fact different (Dretske 2000, Byrne 2001). Thus, for any location L, there is also the-look-of-L and the-sound-of-L, and it is these kinds of entity (rather than L itself) that the relevant visual and auditory experiences represent. Accordingly, here I do not wish to assume that the properties of being visual, being auditory, and so on are phenomenal attitudinal properties; but nor do I wish to assume the opposite. What I would like to insist on is that in other domains, it is hard to deny that parallel modality-specific phenomenal properties exist.

Consider for example the phenomenology of emotional experience, such as S_8 's fear of a snake. It has often been claimed that in fearing a snake, we are experiencing the snake as somehow dangerous to us. If S_8 did not experience the snake as dangerous, her experience would not properly count as a fear. At the same time, S_8 does not fear *that the snake is dangerous*; no, she simply fears the snake. (Nor does she fear *the snake's dangerousness*, since what she fears is a concrete thing, not an abstract entity.) Plausibly, then, the danger-commitment is 'attitudinally encoded': S_8 's experience does not represent the snake as dangerous but rather represents-as-dangerous the snake. If so, the

phenomenal difference between fearing a dog and loving him is an attitudinal rather than content difference: in both experiences a dog is what the experience represents; the difference is in the *manner* in which the experience represents what it does. Crucially, in this area the move of positing such intentional objects as the-dangerousness-of-the-dog and the loveliness-of-the-dog is implausible. For what we emote about seems to be manifestly the dog himself: it is the dog who bears his teeth and barks at us, not his dangerousness; it is not the dangerousness-of-the-dog that threatens to bite us, but the dog itself. (Still dogmatic, I refer the reader to Kriegel forthcoming for an argument to this effect.)

Moods have often been specially problematic for representationalists. For they appear to be somehow completely undirected, that is, have *no* representational content. In an attempt to defend a representationalist treatment, it has been suggested that although moods are not directed at anything in particular, they nonetheless have a *generalized* directedness. What this means is that they represent properties of the world as a whole: depression represents the world as dull, anxiety represents the world as threatening, and so on (Crane 1998, Seager 1999). This account manages to assign a representational content to moods, but it has struck many as counterintuitive, insofar as moods seem typically to arise not due to the unfortunate detecting or tracking of such global properties, but from within the subject's psyche, so to speak (Kind 2013). One way to reconcile the intentional character of moods and their endogenous character might be by going attitudinalist. We might hold, for instance, that depression represents-as-dull the world, anxiety represents-as-threatening the world, and so on. Here all that is 'tracked' or 'detected' is the world; the element of dullness or threateningness is 'contributed' by the subject's internal state. (A case for this attitudinal account of mood is in Kriegel Ms.²)

Consider next desire, wish, craving, and other phenomena of the will. When S_9 desires (wishes for, craves) chocolate, there is a sense in which the chocolate appears good to her – she *experiences* the chocolate as good, or as good *for her* (not necessarily in a moral sense!). Such 'conative states' are goodness-committal (Stampe 1987) in roughly the same sense fear is danger-committal and belief-in is existence-committal. This is the traditional guise-of-the-good thesis (Tenenbaum 2007). Moreover, this goodness-commitment is part of the *phenomenal character* of conative states: the desire *feels* like it casts chocolate in a positive light. On my view, however, this goodness-commitment is attitudinally encoded: what S_9 desires is not that the chocolate *be good*, nor the chocolate's goodness; no, she simply desires the chocolate. It is what she desires that she hopes to eat, and what she hopes to it is the chocolate, not its goodness. We might say that the desire casts chocolate in a positive light rather than casts light on a positive chocolate. That is: S_9 's state does not represent chocolate as good but rather represents-as-good chocolate. (For the argument, see Kriegel 2017.)

There is a tradition that takes belief, judgment, and all other intellectual activities to lack proprietary phenomenal character. Recently, however, proponents of so-called cognitive phenomenology have claimed that at least some cognitive states, such as making the judgment that I own a private jet, have a properly intellectual phenomenology irreducible to the phenomenology of whatever accompanying imagery I might experience (Bayne and Montague 2011). One of the main arguments for this draws on the immediacy of our knowledge of such cognitive states (Goldman 1993). It is a notable fact, however, that I can know immediately not only whether I judge *that I own a private jet* or *that the weather is nice*, but also whether I *judge* that I have a private jet or *desire* that I have a private jet (Pitt 2004). The latter two present themselves differently to introspection. What is the difference? One natural suggestion is: while the desire represents-as-good my having a private jet, the judgment represents-as-true (or perhaps represents-as-*obtaining*) my having a private jet. Desire that *p* and judgment that *p* represent *the same thing*, the same state of affairs (*p*), but represent it in different *ways*: *sub specie boni* in one case, *sub specie veri* in the other.



There are, in my opinion, many other, increasingly more subtle phenomenal attitudinal properties in our mental life. In particular, different *types* of cognitive state (judging, accepting, supposing, etc.), different *types* of conative state (desiring, craving, wishing), different types of emotional state (fear, anger, indignation), different types of mood (depression, anxiety, elation) and perhaps different types of perceptual state (visual, auditory, and so on) are distinguished by their specific species of attitudinal properties. But the above array covers some of the most robust and most generic ones: representing-as-true, representing-as-good, representing-as-real/unreal, representing-as-dangerous, representing-as-threatening, and so on. We have here an entire domain of phenomenal properties that goes beyond the content properties of conscious states. In other words, we have here a whole slew of counterexamples to *Covariance*.

If all these counterexamples are sitting right beneath our noses, how could they be missed so easily? I speculate that this has to do with a combination of two factors: (i) the prominence of the ‘transparency of experience’ thesis (Harman 1990) in contemporary philosophy of mind and (ii) the blindness of the transparency observation to the difference between representing *x* as *F* and representing-as-*F x*. I close this section with some elaborations on this speculation.

Although the transparency claim is very influential, there is no standard way to formulate it. Here are three significantly different formulations:

(T1) When we introspect our phenomenal states, we are only aware of the environmental features these states represent.

(T2) When we introspect our phenomenal states, we are only aware of these states' representational contents.

(T3) When we introspect our phenomenal states, we are only aware of these states' representational properties.

Representationalists of a phenomenal-externalist bent (Dretske 1996, Lycan 2001) have tended to focus on T1, though sometimes the more modest T2 is leaned upon. Phenomenal intentionality proponents have sometimes stressed a variation on T2 (Horgan and Tienson 2002, Kriegel 2007) that we might formulate as follows: when we introspect our phenomenal states, we are always aware of them qua contentful states. Now, under certain assumptions, T3 might certainly seem equivalent to T2; but once we recognize attitudinal properties of the form *representing-as-F*, the equivalence disappears. For in a sense such properties are representational as well: they concern ways of *representing* an object, after all. They are not purely vehicular properties that can survive the destruction of the representation. Take away the fear's representation of a snake and you take away its representation-as-dangerous of the snake. So the property of representing-as-dangerous is in a very real sense a representational property – though not a property a state has in virtue of its representational *content*.

And yet, attitude-based phenomenal properties are very different from content-based ones. For phenomenal states do not *inherit* these properties from the character of the represented environmental features. On the contrary, the environmental features are experienced in a certain light in virtue of the way the states do their representing: the chocolate is experienced in a positive light because the stance we take toward it is that of desire rather than (say) fear. If we rather feared the chocolate, our experience would cast it in a dangerous rather than positive light. In this respect, attitudinal-representational properties are deeply different from content-representational properties. But because they are nonetheless representational properties, properties that do not get instantiated independently of the representing of things, when we introspect our phenomenal states we do not encounter anything beyond those states' representings. Introspection itself cannot tell apart – at least not very easily – whether an introspected experience represents *x* as *F* or represents-as-*F x*. For example, while introspection can tell that our fear of a snake involves both a snaky phenomenology and a danger phenomenology, and indeed that the two are connected, it cannot tell whether the fear represents the snake as dangerous or represents-as-dangerous the snake. That is, it cannot tell us whether the relevant representational property is a content property or an attitudinal property. Or at least, it cannot tell this with the kind of ease and confidence that those who wield the transparency observation tend to expect. In other words, we can *confidently* assert T3, but not T2, let alone T1.³

Perhaps a suitably trained introspection *could* (help) instruct us on such matters. But in any case, nothing in the literature on transparency addresses the envisaged kind of subtle introspective exercise. On the contrary, that literature takes the introspective deliverance it focuses on as *obvious*, requiring no patient dwelling and examining. My claim is that all that is delivered therein is the much more coarse-grained truth that nothing we encounter in introspection goes beyond the representational. That the properties encountered in introspection are content properties rather than attitudinal-representational properties is something nobody has ever shown. So while there is an important introspective insight at the heart of the transparency claim, such theses as T1 and T2 are not simple articulations of what introspection delivers, but layer questionable philosophical interpretation on top of what is strictly delivered by introspection.⁴

3 *For-me-ness*

Phenomenal characters can vary, I have argued, not only in content-based ways but also in attitude-based ways. There is a difference between what it is like for me to see red and what it is like for me to see blue, but there is also a difference between what it is like for me to see red and what it is like for me to *imagine* red. Presumably, however, there is also something that remains invariant across all phenomenal characters – a certain commonality of phenomenal characters that marks them as a natural group of phenomena and distinguishes them from other phenomena. There is something *in common* between what it is like for me to see red, what it is like for me to see blue, and what it is like for me to imagine red. The commonality, we may say, is there being something it is like for me.

In this ‘something it is like for me,’ the element designated by ‘something’ appears to involve a kind of merely *formal* commonality – ‘something’ functions as a variable that simply ranges over the myriad different ways it could be like for me to be in some conscious state. But there is also another element, or aspect, of ‘something it is like for me,’ the one designated by ‘for me.’ Call that element the *for-me-ness* of conscious states. This *for-me-ness*, I contend, is *not* a merely formal commonality of phenomenal characters. It is a *substantive* commonality, something that is common to all phenomenal characters but which we can also isolate in thought and contemplate ‘on its own.’ While the bluish way it is like for me to see blue is different from the reddish way it is like for me to see red, the element of *for-me-ness* in these two ways-it-is-like-for-me is strictly identical, and not only in the sense that we can define a genus, or determinable, of which both bluishness and reddishness are species, or determinates, and which *qua* genus or determinable remains invariant. Rather, there is a very specific, very determinate aspect of bluish-for-me-ness and reddish-for-me-ness that is common to the two, namely, *for-me-ness* as such. Moreover, I want to say, *for-me-ness* is not just a (substantive) *commonality* among all conscious

states, but is also a *peculiarity* of theirs: nonconscious mental states occur *in* me, but are not *for* me in the relevant sense. As a substantive commonality that is also peculiar to its conscious states, for-me-ness is on this view effectively ‘the mark of the conscious.’

How exactly should we characterize for-me-ness as such? The issue is vexed and entire volumes can and should be dedicated to it. My thought here is that introducing for-me-ness as the substantive commonality among all phenomenal characters might be the least committal way to home in on it; we can later debate the exact profile of this substantive commonality.

Introducing for-me-ness as the substantive commonality among all phenomenal characters, hence among all conscious states, brings in two dimensions. On the one hand, for-me-ness should be thought of as just a commonality across phenomenal properties, in that it is not some detachable, self-standing quale that can occur on its own (Zahavi 2014). There is no phenomenal character exhausted by the presence of for-me-ness. For-me-ness is always the for-me-ness *of* some concrete felt content (and/or attitude). It is not a quale in its own right, but a standing dimension of any and every specific quale – a *sine qua non* for all qualia. (I use ‘qualia’ here to denote phenomenal characters, or perhaps components of such; I do not use it in a way that implies a non-representational status.) On the other hand, although for-me-ness is just a commonality among phenomenal characters, and cannot constitute a phenomenal character all by itself, it does have a substantive nature, one that makes a specific *contribution* to (every) phenomenal character. This distinctive contribution can be isolated in thought, as a kind of subjective significance whereby all the subject’s experiences are present to her. Every experience is *experienced* by the subject, and is so in a way that goes beyond the mere grammatical appropriateness of the cognate accusative: we do not experience our experiences *just* in the sense in which we smile our smiles and dance our dances, but in a fuller, more substantive sense that captures the for-me-ness of experiences.

Note well: in saying this, I do not mean to imply that the subject must be somehow aware of *herself*, or of some ‘me,’ in having her experiences. Rather, she may be aware just of the experiences, and it is this awareness that makes these experiences *for her*. If we use the label ‘mineness’ to designate the more robust phenomenon of awareness of oneself in addition to one’s experiences, we could put the point by saying that for-me-ness need not amount to mineness. On my view it is only the thinner phenomenon of for-me-ness that constitutes the mark of the conscious, the substantive commonality among (and peculiarity of) all conscious states.⁵

As a mere commonality and yet a substantive one, for-me-ness serves a double function as both (i) a component among others in a conscious state’s overall phenomenal character and (ii) a precondition for the existence of all other phenomenal components (*as*

phenomenal components). Compare the keystone of a thirteen-stone masonry arch. On the one hand, it is a stone among others composing the arch, as intrinsically ‘beefy’ as the other twelve. On the other hand, if we remove it the whole arch collapses, and to that extent it is a precondition for there being any other arch-component. (If the arch collapses, the individual stones do not disappear, but they are no longer arch-components. By the same token, if a conscious representation of a red surface loses its for-me-ness, the representation of the red surface need not disappear – it may become a subpersonal representation – but it is no longer a *phenomenal* property.⁶)

All this is of course highly controversial. Many philosophers have denied the very existence of for-me-ness (Dretske 1993, Schear 2009). But such philosophers owe us an alternative account of the substantive commonality among conscious states, or an argument to the effect that there is no substantive commonality among conscious states. In that respect, for-me-ness is not just phenomenologically compelling, but also does a certain explanatory work, insofar as it accounts for the apparent substantive commonality across experiences.

A representationalist might suggest that the substantive commonality among all conscious states is precisely their *contentfulness*. But in fact most representationalists accept that nonconscious states are often contentful as well (tacit beliefs, repressed desires, and subpersonal perceptual representations are some examples). Citing *phenomenal contentfulness* as the ultimate substantive commonality only raises the question of what makes an instance of contentfulness phenomenal. (My answer: its for-me-ness!) Some representationalists have cited a special kind of *functional role* as common to all conscious representations and distinguishing them from nonconscious ones (Tye 1995). But a commonality of functional role is not a *phenomenal* commonality, if only because a state’s functional role is a *dispositional* property, whereas phenomenality is an *occurrent, categorical* property.⁷

Introducing the phenomenon of for-me-ness as the substantive commonality among all conscious experiences is useful in resisting certain undue theoretical expectations. In particular, I have in mind the potential expectation that we should be able to use something like ‘phenomenal contrast’ (Siegel 2007) to bring for-me-ness into sharper relief. The contrast method has become so pervasive in current philosophy of consciousness that some might expect a contrast argument for for-me-ness. But the expectation is unfulfillable in the case of any phenomenal feature necessarily present in *every* conscious state (see McClelland, this volume). For the contrast method attempts to isolate phenomenal features by juxtaposing experiences in which they are present and ones in which they are absent (or else experiences where there is variation in the determinates of the same phenomenal determinable); whereas it is in the very nature of for-me-ness to be invariant across, and yet present in, each and every conscious experience.

My point is that the contrast method is *blind in principle* to any absolutely ubiquitous and invariant feature of experience, hence to any property constitutive of the very possibility of having a conscious experience. It is simply ill suited for making manifest any such feature. Consider the following case. Sometimes, we only notice that the refrigerator has been humming when it *stops* humming. But the fact that we only *notice* it then does not mean we did not *experience* it while it was humming. Arguably, when the refrigerator stops humming there is an immediate change in our overall phenomenology – which suggests that the humming was part of our overall phenomenology before it stopped. Now, we can imagine a world – call it ‘Fridge World’ – where people are born with a tiny irremovable object in the back of their necks, which is too small to detect with the naked eye but which hums audibly throughout their lives. Arguably, it is impossible for these people to use the phenomenal contrast method to bring into sharper relief the pervasive presence of this humming quality in their experience. Yet if the hum *were* to stop, there *would* be a change in their overall phenomenology, indeed a *noticeable* change (though how exactly they would conceptualize the change is an open question). This suggests that the hum is phenomenally real but ‘invisible’ to the contrast method.

There are important differences between the hum in Fridge World and for-me-ness in the actual world. For one thing, for-me-ness, as understood here, is not only ubiquitous in conscious experience, but is *necessarily so*. Accordingly, the corresponding counterfactual is more complicated for it: if for-me-ness were extinguished, one would not simply have a different kind of experience, but would stop experiencing altogether (one would turn into a zombie). In both the hum quale and for-me-ness, though, the absolute universality of the relevant dimension of experience means that it cannot be made manifest using the contrast method. Something more circuitous is needed if we are to fix on the relevant phenomenon. The present suggestion is simply to try to grasp that which (i) remains invariant across all conscious experiences but (ii) can be thought (though cannot occur) in isolation from any specific type of conscious experience. This is just trying to grasp the substantive commonality among all phenomenal characters.



Elsewhere, I have argued that for-me-ness is also compatible with the transparency of experience (Kriegel 2009 Ch.5). It might be thought that a version of the transparency thesis would undermine the notion that for-me-ness is phenomenally real. Consider the following relatively weak version of transparency:

(T4) When we introspect our phenomenal states, we are only aware of these states’ first-order representational properties.

T4 is weaker than T1 and T2, inasmuch as it makes a claim about representational properties rather than representational contents or represented environmental features.

At the same time, it is stronger than T3, insofar as it requires our introspected phenomenal properties to be not just representational properties but *first-order* representational properties. This is intended to rule out higher-order and self-representational properties, such as a state's property of representing itself to represent red. Arguably, the proponents of transparency do not have such higher-order and self-representational properties in mind when they assert transparency. Thus T4 captures a relatively modest version of transparency. Yet it appears to threaten the phenomenological reality of for-me-ness, since the latter does not seem to be a first-order representational property.⁸

On the plausible assumption that for-me-ness is not a first-order representational property, its phenomenal reality is indeed incompatible with the thesis that all phenomenal properties are first-order representational properties. But I would argue that that the way T4 motivates the thesis that all phenomenal properties are first-order representational properties involves two inferential steps, and both are problematic. The first step involves the following assumption: if when we introspect our phenomenal states, we are only aware of their first-order representational properties, then plausibly, all the phenomenal properties our conscious states actually instantiate when we introspect them are first-order representational properties. (In other words, phenomenal properties do not remain in-principle-hidden from introspection while we introspect.) The second step makes another assumption: if all the phenomenal properties our conscious states instantiate when we introspect them are first-order representational properties, then plausibly, all the phenomenal properties our conscious states instantiate *at any time* are first-order representational properties. (That is, there are no phenomenal properties that show up *only* when we do not introspect.) The point I want to make in the remainder of this section is that the proponent of for-me-ness need not deny T4 itself; she can instead deny one or both of these assumptions.

There are certainly examples of the second assumption failing – cases where a conscious state instantiates a certain phenomenal property so long as it is not introspected, but where the introspecting of that state destroys the relevant phenomenal property. Brentano (1874: 29-30) offered as an example the quality of intense anger. It is in the nature of a certain kind of intense anger – rage, or fury – to be *consuming*. The subject who is not fully consumed by her anger, who maintains a certain emotional distance from it and clear-headedness with respect to it, is not an enraged or infuriated subject. But the very act of introspecting one's anger means that one is no longer consumed by it. In a way, one becomes a partly angry person and partly introspecting person, and has thereby taken some distance from the anger. One is no longer *identified* with one's anger. To that extent, the peculiar phenomenology of rage or fury is a phenomenology we cannot undergo when we introspect – the introspecting of our experience *destroys* its furious, consuming quality. This shows that even if all the phenomenal properties our conscious states instantiate

when we introspect them are of a certain type T, there may still be phenomenal properties our conscious states instantiate *when not introspected* which are not of that type.⁹

There may also be cases where a conscious state's phenomenal property is not introspectible, but not because it is destroyed by the introspecting of that state. It persists through the introspecting and yet evades introspective detection. This may seem initially strange, but it falls out of a certain conception of the relationship between for-me-ness and introspection (Kriegel 2009 Ch.5). I cannot *argue* here for the relevant conception, but I can *summarize* it. On this view, most conscious states 'live' in our stream of consciousness unintrospected, and for those, their for-me-ness consists in a certain (i) inbuilt (ii) peripheral awareness of their occurrence. The awareness is 'inbuilt' in the following sense: in order to have the relevant awareness of one's current conscious state, one need not be in any numerically distinct mental state; rather, it is in virtue of being in that very conscious state that one is aware of its occurrence. And the awareness is 'peripheral' in that it does not occupy the focus of one's attention, but is more akin to peripheral vision, say, or to fringe tactile awareness of the soles of one's shoes.¹⁰ However, it is part of the view that once a subject introspects, what happens is that the same old inbuilt awareness of one's conscious state ceases to be peripheral and becomes focal. Thus to introspect is not to enter a new and distinct mental state, but rather to have one's inbuilt awareness become attentive and central. The inbuilt awareness is a ubiquitous dimension of our conscious life, but while it remains peripheral during most of our conscious life, it becomes focal when we introspect. And just as, in this picture, the for-me-ness of a non-introspected conscious state *consists in* the subject's inbuilt *peripheral* awareness of that state, the for-me-ness of an *introspected* conscious state consists in the subject's inbuilt *focal* awareness of that state.

If we accept this picture of the relationship between for-me-ness and introspection, it is only to be expected that whenever we introspect our conscious state, the for-me-ness is not one of the things introspection reveals to us. For the for-me-ness of an introspected state is the introspecting itself, the revealing to us of *the rest* of the state's phenomenal character (namely, its content-based and attitude-based phenomenal properties). So it turns out that there *is* at least one phenomenal property that remains in principle hidden from introspection while we introspect: introspection does not reveal the introspecting, yet the introspecting does contribute to the overall way it is like for the introspector. (There is a felt difference between seeing a blue sky and introspecting seeing a blue sky!) The contribution the introspecting makes does not have to do with any of the phenomenal elements given in one's introspective awareness, but is the felt given-ness itself.

4 Conclusion: Concentric Circles of Phenomenality?

In summary, in addition to content-based phenomenal properties, there are two other types of phenomenal property: attitude-based ones and for-me-ness. Both of these constitute a certain blindspot for the transparency thesis, though for different reasons.

If we accept the views presented in §§2-3, there are at least two substantive commonalities among (i) an episodic memory of a brown dog, (ii) an episodic memory of a white dog, (iii) an episodic memory of a purple butterfly, and (iv) an episodic memory of the sound of a distant bagpipe. One thing common to (i)-(iv) is the for-me-ness they all involve. Another is the attitudinal phenomenal property of representing-as-past characteristic of episodic memory. I now want to compare three models of the latter's role in the composition of what it is like to undergo (i)-(iv). I call them the 'salad model,' the 'tree model,' and the 'circles model.' Each will cast in a different light the interrelations among content-based phenomenal properties, attitude-based phenomenal properties, and for-me-ness.

The salad model. On this model, what it is like for me to episodically remember a brown dog is fixed by the combination of three separate experiential 'ingredients': brown-dog phenomenology, episodic-remembering phenomenology, and for-me-ness. The phenomenal character of remembering a brown dog is simply the 'sum' of the phenomenal contributions made by each of these. But each is a 'detachable' ingredient that could recombine with other phenomenal ingredients to form different experiences. For example, the (content-based) brown-dog phenomenology could combine with (the attitude-based) imaginative phenomenology and with for-me-ness to compose what it is like for me to imagine a brown dog; the (attitude-based) episodic-memory phenomenology could combine with (the content-based) purple-butterfly phenomenology and with for-me-ness to compose what it is like for me to episodically remember a purple butterfly; and so on.

The salad model is perhaps the most straightforward, least theoretically involved model of the composition of phenomenal character. However, there are facts it fails to explain. Most notably, it does not explain why no content-based phenomenal property can constitute the phenomenal character of some experience all by itself – why, that is, a content-based phenomenal property must interlock with *some* attitude-based phenomenal property (and for-me-ness) to generate phenomenal character. This fact becomes a brute basic fact about the phenomenal domain. The salad model also does not explain the special status of for-me-ness as a substantive commonality among *all* phenomenal characters. If a phenomenal character is just a free combination of various ingredients, why does one ingredient show up in every known combo?

The tree model. The second model has the potential to illuminate the features left unexplained by the first model. Here what it is like for me to episodically remember a brown dog is not understood as a composite of three detachable ingredients, but as a

species of a certain genus, namely, what it is like for me to episodically remember *something*. Another species of the same genus is what it is like for me to episodically remember a purple butterfly and yet another is what it is like for me to episodically remember a bagpipe sound. All these different species have a substantive commonality among them, namely, the attitude-based phenomenal property of representing-as-past. The genus itself, what it is like for me to episodically remember (something, anything), is itself a species of an even higher genus, namely, what it is like for me to have an experience (any experience). Other species of this higher genus include what it is like for me to perceive something, what it is like for me to imagine something, and so on. Here the substantive commonality among all the species is for-me-ness, which serves as the *summum genus* of the phenomenal realm. Thus we obtain an elegant picture of the relationship between content-based phenomenal properties, attitude-based phenomenal properties, and for-me-ness. There is a kind of taxonomic tree of conscious experiences in which we can identify four main sections. (1) Atop the tree is the summum genus Conscious Experience, whose mark is for-me-ness; (2) below it are species such as Episodic-Memory Experience, Imaginative Experience, and Emotional Experience; (3) below those are subspecies such as Episodic Memory of Brown Dog, Episodic Memory of Purple Butterfly, and so on; (4) at the bottom of the tree is the enormous variety of *maximally determinate* types of experience, such as token episodic memories of some particular brown dog of particular shape and color. For-me-ness is then understood as the substantive commonality unifying the highest genus; attitude-based phenomenal properties constitute the substantive commonalities unifying the second-layer species; while content-based phenomenal properties provide the substantive commonalities that unify the third-layer subspecies.

The tree model is doubtless more elegant than the salad model in the structure it imposes on the phenomenal realm. It also manages to explain what the salad model did not, namely, (i) that content-based phenomenal properties cannot be instantiated without some attitude-based phenomenal properties being instantiated and (ii) that no phenomenal property can be instantiated in the absence of for-me-ness. The explanation is simply that there are genus-species relations among these dimensions of phenomenality, and the relevant patterns of co-instantiation are characteristic of the genus-species relation: just as the property of being a cat cannot be instantiated without the property of being a mammal being instantiated, which in turn cannot be instantiated without the property of animality being instantiated, so content-based phenomenal properties cannot be instantiated without some attitude-based phenomenal properties being instantiated, and the latter cannot be instantiated without for-me-ness being instantiated.

At the same time, there is also a fairly simple and fundamental fact about the phenomenal realm that the tree model fails to explain, namely, that while one can episodically remember a brown dog, one can also visually perceive a brown dog, as well as

visually *imagine* a brown dog – and there is a substantive phenomenal commonality among those. The natural explanation of this commonality is that there is a content-based phenomenal ‘ingredient’ that reappears in each of them – a certain brown-dog phenomenology... This explanation is natural within the salad model, but is unavailable on the tree model. If what it is like to visually imagine a brown dog is just a subspecies of one phenomenal species, while what it is like to episodically remember a brown dog is a subspecies of a completely different phenomenal species, there is no reason to *expect* any similarities between them. In zoology, it is considered a curious fact requiring *special explanation* that wings have evolved on four different occasions: in birds, bats, pterosaurs, and some insects. The reason it is considered a curious fact in need of special explanation is that since bats are mammals and pterosaurs are reptiles, wings appear to constitute a commonality among species that belong to different genera.¹¹ It would be an odder fact in need of special explanation that content-based phenomenal properties reappear *routinely* in species of many independent phenomenal genera.

In fact, what prevents us from constructing a tree in which the attitude-level is represented as a species of the content-level, rather than the other way round? Thus, what it is like to episodically remember a brown dog, what it is like to visually imagine a brown dog, and what it is like to visually perceive a brown dog could be seen as three subspecies of brown-dog experience. Treating attitudinal properties as ‘higher’ (more generic) than content properties would appear arbitrary. The only reason we are *tempted* to subordinate the content-level to the attitude-level, rather than the other way round, seems to do with cardinality: there are simply many more content-based phenomenal properties than attitude-based ones.¹² Since there are also many more species than genera, we are *inclined*, once we have chosen the genus-species model, to see content-based phenomenal properties as species of attitude-based ones. However, it remains that the content-based and attitude-based phenomenal properties can combine in crosscutting ways fairly freely – something the tree model does not capture.

The circles model. The salad and tree models’ shortcomings had to do with failure to capture certain apparent patterns of co-instantiation among our three types of phenomenal property. We may summarize those patterns in six principles:

- (P1) A content-based phenomenal property cannot be instantiated without some attitude-based phenomenal property being instantiated (and vice versa!).
- (P2) Neither content-based nor attitude-based phenomenal properties can be instantiated without for-me-ness being instantiated.
- (P3) Some conscious states vary in their content-based phenomenal properties while remaining invariant in their attitude-based phenomenal properties.
- (P4) Some conscious states vary in their attitude-based phenomenal properties while remaining invariant in their content-based phenomenal properties.

- (P5) In the set of all conscious states, one finds variation in both content- and attitude-based phenomenal properties, but for-me-ness as such remains invariant.
- (P6) There are considerably more content-based phenomenal properties than attitude-based phenomenal properties (and only one for-me-ness property).

Already P1 and P2 count against the salad model, where for-me-ness, for instance, was seen as a self-standing detachable quale that simply happened to attach to every other known quale. For-me-ness is certainly not such a self-standing quale, but rather an invariant dimension across all phenomenal characters. P4 counts heavily against the tree model, meanwhile, despite the blunting force of P6. The genus-species relation is simply ill suited to capture the structure of the phenomenal realm given that substantive commonalities run across the content-level and attitude-level alike.

What I propose under the fancy name ‘circles model’ is forsooth just an acceptance of P1-P6, *plus an image*. The image is of three (gapless) concentric circles, with content-based phenomenal properties at the outskirts, attitude-based phenomenal properties in the middle, and for-me-ness as the nucleus (Figure 1). The image is not supposed to visually represent all the relationships laid out in P1-P6. But it is supposed to be compatible with them, and to avoid the problematic features of the salad and tree images. In using *circles* rather than tree-branches, it makes sense of the notion that different content-based properties can combine with different attitude-based ones, rather than being ‘accessible’ only to one attitude-level property. In using *continuous* circles, it avoids the image of detachable qualia that can in principle occur on their own (thus respecting the notion that content phenomenality, attitudinal phenomenality, and for-me-ness are but three dimensions of a phenomenal character – dimensions which can be separated in thought but cannot occur separately). The core of the three-circle model is really just the insistence that all six principles are true of the structure of the phenomenal realm.¹³

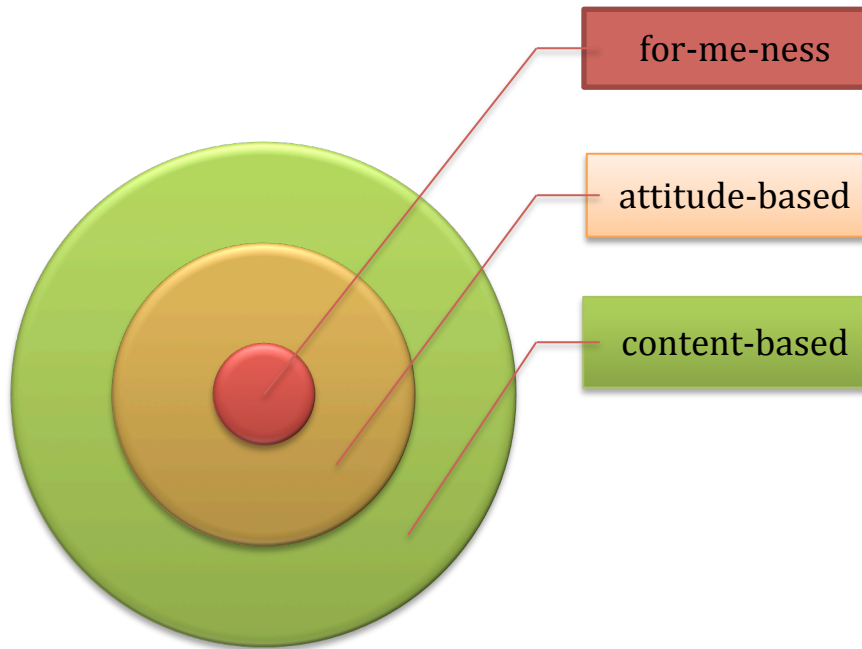


Figure 1. The three circles of consciousness

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¹ I take no stand here on whether such episodic memory's content is given by the rain, by the past seeing of the rain, or by *both* (see Fernández 2006). Nonetheless, for simplicity I will discuss the matter as though the object of the episodic memory is some external rain.

² The version of the account that I favor, and which seems to me to do greater justice to the undirected character of moods, holds that moods are not self-standing mental states, but rather modifications of other mental states: one can anxiously perceive, or anxiously remember, or anxiously love, but one cannot simply anxiousize. A mood contributes to one's overall experience a distinctive attitudinal feature, but makes no contributions of its own at the level of content. Thus, to anxiously remember *x* is to be in a conscious state that both represents-as-past and represents-as-threatening *x*; to euphorically love *y* is to be in a conscious state that both represents-as-lovely and represents-as-exciting *y*; and so on.

³ Mindful that I have not offered here any arguments for the attitudinal treatment of the phenomenal properties I claimed above were attitudinal, I hasten to add that the arguments I provide elsewhere (in the above-cited works) are *not* simple introspective assertions. Part of the reason is precisely that I doubt introspection can tell apart representing *x* as *F* and representing-as-*F* *x*.

⁴ This philosophical interpretation is founded on suspect theoretical principles, namely, that the representational character of a mental state is exhausted by its representational content, perhaps even the character of the represented environmental features. These principles embody a blindspot in contemporary philosophy of mind: the routine disregard or unawareness of attitudinal properties of the form *representing-as-F*.

⁵ My convictions in this area are very weak, but my inclination is to think that for-me-ness does amount to mineness in a normal human adult, but may not in nonhuman animals, children, and certain pathologies (Kriegel 2009 Ch.5).

⁶ The analogy may be imperfect, inasmuch as it is mostly the keystone's relational properties that confer on it its special status, so that it is substitutable for almost any stone used in making up the arch; whereas for-me-ness could not swap roles with the property of representing a red surface for the status of enabling all other phenomenality. Still, in both cases there is a single constituent of a structure that is also essential for the status of a number of other items as further constituents of that structure.

⁷ There are probably other antecedently reasonable candidates for the substantive commonality among conscious states, but for-me-ness offers one clear such candidate, and the one I am adopting here, admittedly with little argument. For more argument, see Kriegel 2009, forthcoming-b.

⁸ On the view I have defended, for example, it is rather constituted by a self-representational property of conscious states (Kriegel 2009 Ch.4). It is also possible to hold that it is a non-representational property altogether, a kind of 'intrinsic glow' inhering in conscious states. Either view is incompatible with the notion that all phenomenal properties are first-order representational properties.

⁹ It might be asked how we know of phenomenal properties that disappear under introspection. The answer is that according to Brentano, there is a kind of non-introspective inner awareness that accompanies all our conscious states. This is also my view; I go into it momentarily.

¹⁰ One *can*, of course, turn one's attention to the periphery of one's visual field, or to one's tactile sensation of the soles of one's shoes. But in the normal go of things, although these are aspects of our overall conscious experience, they remain outside the focus of conscious attention – they 'inhabit' the background or fringe of consciousness.

¹¹ I am using 'species' and 'genus' as metaphysical terms here, not zoological ones. (In zoology, these terms are not used as relative terms, so that *x* could be a species relative to *y* but a genus relative to *z*; rather, they are used to designate specific 'layers' in the tree-like taxonomy of the animal kingdom.)

¹² If we are diligent enough, in half an hour we can comprehensively enumerate the attitude-based phenomenal properties characteristic of normal adult human conscious experience; at least, we can enumerate all attitude-based phenomenal properties such experience uncontroversially exhibits, and then all those it *might* exhibit (pending certain controversies, such as that surrounding cognitive phenomenology). In contrast, enumerating the content-based phenomenal properties normal adult human conscious experience exhibits would be an extremely tedious long-term (indeed perhaps interminable) task.

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