

## INTENTIONALITY: TRANSPARENT, TRANSLUCENT, AND OPAQUE

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**ABSTRACT:** Exploring intentionality from an externalist perspective, I distinguish three kinds of intentionality in the case of seeing, which I call *transparent*, *translucent*, and *opaque* respectively. I then extend the distinction from seeing to knowing, and then to believing. Having explicated the three-fold distinction, I then critically explore some important consequences that follow from granting that (i) there are transparent and translucent intentional states and (ii) these intentional states are mental states. These consequences include: first, that existential opacity is neither the mark of intentionality nor of the mental; second, that Sellars has not shown that all intentionality is non-relational; third, that a key Quinean argument for semantic indeterminacy rests on a false premise; fourth, that perceptual experience is intentional on Alston's Theory of Appearing; fifth, that either some mental causation is more than internal physiological causation or some mental states are epiphenomenal.

### I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant developments in the philosophy of mind over the past thirty years has been the rise of externalism. This thesis, also known as anti-individualism, holds that at least some mental states do not supervene solely on contemporaneous bodily states. Though a lively debate persists over *whether* externalism is true, a growing literature has arisen exploring what follows *if* it is true. Topics explored in this vein have included knowledge in general and self-knowledge in particular, skepticism, perception, and psychological methodology, among others. This paper pursues this line of inquiry by exploring the topic of intentionality from an externalist perspective.

With any inquiry that explores what follows *if* a given thesis is true, those who reject the thesis may also reject its consequences. Even so, an exploratory inquiry of this kind may prove philosophically interesting not only to those sympathetic to the thesis, but also to those unsympathetic or uncommitted to it, insofar as the inquiry allows them to judge the thesis by its fruit. Taken in this light, my exploration of intentionality from an externalist perspective may prove interesting not only to externalists, but also to internalists and to the uncommitted.

My inquiry will be pursued as follows. In section II, I elucidate how externalism and internalism will be understood for the purposes of this paper. In section III, the topic of intentionality is addressed. In contrast with most discussions of intentionality, which focus (often exclusively) on the intentionality of propositional attitudes such as beliefs, hopes, desires, and the like, my discussion begins with the intentionality of seeing. Synthesizing distinctions concerning the nature of seeing drawn by Ryle, Kim, and Dretske, I distinguish three kinds of intentionality, which we may call *transparent*, *translucent*, and *opaque*, respectively. I then extend the distinction from seeing to knowing, showing how this three-fold distinction subsumes Russell's distinction between knowledge of things (by acquaintance) and knowledge of truths. I then further extend the distinction to belief.

Having explicated the three-fold distinction, I then explore in section IV some important consequences that follow from granting (i) that there are transparent and translucent intentional states, and (ii) that these intentional states are mental states. These consequences include: first, that intentional inexistence (as this notion is commonly understood) is neither the mark of intentionality nor of the mental; second, that Sellars has not shown that all intentionality is non-relational; third, that a key Quinean argument for semantic indeterminacy rests on a false premise; fourth, that perceptual experience is intentional on Alston's Theory of Appearing, even though he denies that it bears the standard marks of intentionality; fifth, that either some mental causation is more than (internal) physiological causation or some mental states are epiphenomenal.

## II. INTERNALISM AND EXTERNALISM

For the purposes of this paper, internalism will be understood as the thesis that all mental states supervene solely on contemporaneous bodily states, and consequently that no mental state is essentially relational, where *relata* include objects or states of affairs in the subject's extra-bodily environment. States (such as seeing or knowing) that involve relations to objects or states of affairs in the extra-bodily environment will, on internalism, be classified as hybrid states composed of (i) an intrinsic, mental component (supervening solely on contemporaneous bodily states), and (ii) an extrinsic, non-mental component (a relation to one or more objects or states of affairs in the subject's extra-bodily environment).

Externalism will be understood here as the thesis that at least some mental states do not supervene solely on contemporaneous bodily states, and that at least some mental states are essentially relational where *relata* include objects or states

of affairs in the subject's extra-bodily environment. Unlike the internalist, the externalist holds that at least some states (such as seeing or knowing) that involve relations to objects or states of affairs in the extra-bodily environment are not hybrid but genuine mental states. In other words, the externalist will count as genuinely mental at least some states that involve relations to objects or states of affairs in the extra-bodily environment, and do so without factoring out a separate, purely internal component as what is genuinely mental.

With this distinction now drawn, we turn in the next section to the topic of intentionality, which we will approach from an externalist perspective. By "externalist perspective," I mean a perspective that does not assume the truth of internalism from the get-go, but rather that accepts the tenets of externalism as delineated above.

### III. THREE KINDS OF INTENTIONALITY<sup>1</sup>

Intentionality is the property of being about, or directed at, something. From an externalist perspective, the intentionality of perception, and of seeing in particular, provides a useful starting point for a discussion of intentionality more generally. Synthesizing distinctions drawn by Ryle, Kim, and Dretske, we may differentiate objectual from factive seeing, and literal from figurative factive seeing.

Seeing an object (or touching, smelling, tasting, or hearing it) is an intentional state in that it is about, or directed at, something.<sup>2</sup> For example, if Sarah sees a tree, her state of seeing is about or directed at a tree. Following Ryle (1949), we may categorize Sarah's seeing a tree as a *perceptual success state*.<sup>3</sup> In Ryle's words:

Verbs of perception such as "see," "hear," "detect," "discriminate" and many others are generally used to record observational successes, while verbs like "watch," "listen," "probe," "scan" and "savour" are used to record observational undertakings, the success of which may still be in question. . . . The simple-seeming assertion "I see a linnet" claims a success, where "I am trying to make out what is moving" reports only an investigation. . . . The words "perception" and "perceive" . . . cover only achievements, as do the specific verbs of perception "see," "hear," "taste," "smell" and, in one sense, "feel." (222–223)

A key feature of a perceptual success state, such as seeing or touching an object, is that one sees or touches it only if it exists.<sup>4</sup> As Kim notes: "I cannot see or touch a tree unless a tree exists, and I cannot see or touch this particular tree unless this particular tree exists" (1993, 186).<sup>5</sup> To be sure, one can figuratively "see" a tree in the sense of hallucinating one, but one can literally see a tree only if it exists.<sup>6</sup>

Seeing (or touching) objects or things is not the only kind of perceptual success state. Dretske and others emphasize that we can also see facts about things. For instance, Sarah may see a rabbit, and also see facts about it (e.g., that it is white, that it is fidgety, that it is furry, and the like). Failing to see a fact about an object, however, does not entail that one fails to see the object. Consider Dretske's example of a child who, while glancing at a sofa, mistakes a black cat for an old sweater:

Though the child does not recognize the cat (*as a cat*), she must, in some sense, see the cat in order to mistake it for a sweater. Nevertheless, though the child sees a black cat on the sofa, sees an object fitting the description, she does not realize that this is a correct description of what she sees. She thereby fails to see the corresponding fact: *that* there is a black cat on the sofa. She sees an object (the black cat on the sofa), but not the fact (that there is a black cat on the sofa) corresponding to it. (1990, 131)

Building on these points of Ryle, Kim, and Dretske, we may distinguish between (at least) two kinds of perceptual success state: objectual seeing (seeing objects or events) and factive seeing (seeing facts about objects or events). Each is intentional in the sense of being about or directed at something. Each is also what we may call “existentially transparent” (or *de re*) in the sense that the ascription of each licenses an existential generalization. That is, if Subject *S* sees object *o*, it follows that *o* exists; and, if Subject *S* sees that object *o* is *F* (where *F* is some characteristic of *o*, and where “that object *o* is *F*” refers to some fact about *o*), it also follows that *o* exists. In fact, a necessary condition for a state to qualify as a perceptual success state is that the state be genuinely relational: *S* sees *o* or sees that *o* is *F* only if *o* exists. Moreover, if *o* is external to *S*’s body, then *S*’s seeing *o* or seeing that *o* is *F* cannot supervene solely on *S*’s contemporaneous bodily states.<sup>7</sup>

However, objectual seeing is what we may call “referentially transparent,” whereas factive seeing is what we may call “referentially opaque.” Objectual seeing is referentially transparent in the sense that the ascription of such a state admits of substitution of co-referring terms without change in truth-value. Alternatively put, if subject *S* sees *a*, and *a* = *b*, then *S* sees *b*, whether or not *S* realizes that she is seeing *b* or realizes that *a* = *b*. For instance, if Sarah sees the Sultan of Brunei, then Sarah sees the richest monarch in the world, provided that the Sultan of Brunei is the richest monarch in the world.

By contrast, factive seeing, though existentially transparent like objectual seeing, is referentially opaque in the sense that the substitution of co-referring terms in the ascription of such a state may result in a change in truth-value. Alternatively put, unless a subject *S* realizes or is aware that *a* = *b*, *S* may see that *a* is *F* without seeing that *b* is *F* (or vice-versa) even if *a* = *b*. For instance, if Sarah does not realize (or know, or even believe) that the Sultan of Brunei is the richest monarch in the world and hence does not recognize or identify him as the richest monarch in the world, then even if it is true that Sarah sees that the Sultan of Brunei is at the lectern and even if it is true that the Sultan of Brunei is the richest monarch in the world, it may still be false that Sarah sees that the richest monarch in the world is at the lectern. Consequently, factive seeing is referentially opaque even though it is existentially transparent or *de re*.

We considered above the use of “*S* seeing that *o* is *F*” in what we might call “the literal visual sense,” where it implies that *S* objectually sees *o*. For ease of reference, let us call such states of factive seeing “states of visual factive seeing.” There is, by contrast, a figurative, non-visual sense of “*S* seeing that *o* is *F*” that

does not imply that *S* objectually sees *o*, and is used in the wider sense of “realizing or understanding that *o* is *F*.” Let us call these states of factive seeing “states of non-visual factive seeing.” In this connection, two kinds of non-visual factive seeing are worth distinguishing.

To understand the first, consider the example of a blind boy seeing that (in the figurative sense of realizing or understanding that) his new puppy is a beagle. This state is presumably intentional in the sense that it is directed at something, namely, the fact that his new puppy is a beagle. Like states of visual factive seeing, it is existentially transparent (*de re*) in the sense that it licenses an existential generalization (e.g., the blind boy’s seeing that his new beagle is a puppy entails that his new puppy exists), and it is also referentially opaque in that substitution of co-referring terms may lead to a change in truth-value (e.g., though it may be true that the blind boy sees that his new puppy is a beagle, if he does not know that his new puppy is the fourth puppy of the litter of his Aunt Sarah’s dog, it may be false that he sees that the fourth puppy of the litter of his Aunt Sarah’s dog is a beagle).

In contrast with the example above, consider the example of a blind boy seeing that (in the figurative sense of realizing or understanding that) Santa Claus is Kris Kringle. This state is presumably intentional in the sense that it is directed at something, and if we countenance the existence of (non-Russellian) propositions, we may say that it is directed at the proposition “Santa Claus is Kris Kringle.” In contrast with the first kind of non-visual factive seeing and with visual factive seeing, the ascription of such a state is both existentially and referentially opaque. It is existentially opaque (not *de re*) in the sense that it does not license an existential generalization (e.g., the blind boy’s seeing that Santa Claus is Kris Kringle does not entail that Santa Claus or Kris Kringle exists). It is also referentially opaque in that substitution of co-referring terms may lead to a change in truth-value (e.g., though it may be true that the blind boy sees that Santa Claus is Kris Kringle, it may be false that the blind boy sees that Saint Nick is Kris Kringle).

Let us call the first kind of non-visual factive seeing “non-fictive non-visual factive seeing,” and the second “fictive non-visual factive seeing.” Instances of the first kind involve actual facts about actual objects, instances of the second involve fictive facts about fictive objects.<sup>8</sup>

Though states of objectual seeing, visual factive seeing, and non-fictive non-visual factive seeing cannot supervene solely on a subject’s contemporaneous bodily states when they involve a relation to an actual object external to the subject’s body, states of fictive non-visual factive seeing may supervene in this way, since they involve no relation to an actual extra-bodily object.

Let us now generalize. We may characterize as a *transparent intentional state* any state meeting each of the following three conditions: (a) it is about, or directed at, something; (b) the ascription of such a state is existentially transparent; and (c) the ascription of such a state is referentially transparent. A transparent intentional state is thus transparent in two respects. We may take objectual seeing as a paradigm example of a transparent intentional state.

We may characterize as a *translucent intentional state* any state meeting each of the following three conditions: (a) it is about, or directed at, something; (b) the ascription of such a state is existentially transparent; and (c) the ascription of such a state is referentially opaque.<sup>9</sup> A translucent intentional state is thus transparent in one respect but opaque in another.<sup>10</sup> We may take visual factive seeing and non-fictive non-visual factive seeing as paradigm examples of a translucent intentional state.

We may characterize as an *opaque intentional state* any state meeting each of the following three conditions: (a) it is about, or directed at, something; (b) the ascription of such a state is existentially opaque; and (c) the ascription of such a state is referentially opaque. An opaque intentional state is thus opaque in two respects. We may take fictive non-visual factive seeing as a paradigm example of an opaque intentional state.

#### IV. EXTENDING THE DISTINCTION

Having distinguished three kinds of intentionality in the case of seeing, we turn next to the intentionality of knowledge and of belief.

#### KNOWLEDGE

To know is to know *something*. To be in a state of knowledge is to be in a state that is about, or directed at, something. Hence, to be in a state of knowledge is to be in an intentional state. In this connection, consider the familiar epistemic distinction between *objectual knowledge* (i.e., knowledge of a concrete particular; e.g., Sarah's knowing Martin) and *factive knowledge* (i.e., knowledge that such and such is the case; e.g., Sarah's knowing that Martin is her cousin).<sup>11</sup> The distinction between objectual and factive knowledge is akin to the distinction Russell drew between knowledge of things (by acquaintance) and knowledge of truths, albeit without the Russellian doctrine that the only possible objects of knowledge by acquaintance are sense-data—non-physical objects of immediate awareness.<sup>12</sup>

In light of our distinction, objectual knowledge may be characterized as a transparent intentional state in being both existentially and referentially transparent: if *S* objectually knows *a*, then (i) *a* exists, and (ii) if *a* = *b*, then *S* knows *b*, even if *S* does not realize or know that she knows *b* or that *a* = *b*. For instance, if Sarah knows Masaru Hayami, then she knows the present Governor of the Bank of Japan, even if she does not realize that she knows the present Governor of the Bank of Japan or that Mr. Hayami is the present Governor of the Bank of Japan.

By contrast with objectual knowledge, some instances of factive knowledge are translucently intentional (and involve actual facts about actual objects) while others are opaquely intentional (and involve fictive facts about fictive objects). As an example of translucently intentional factive knowledge, consider Sarah's (non-fictive) knowledge that Mr. Hayami lives in Tokyo. The ascription of such knowledge to her is existentially transparent (or *de re*) in that it licenses the

existential generalization that Mr. Hayami exists, but it is also referentially opaque in that substitution of co-referring terms may result in a change in truth-value. For instance, even if Sarah knows that Mr. Hayami lives in Tokyo, she might not know that the present Governor of the Bank of Japan lives in Tokyo if she does not know that Mr. Hayami is the present Governor of the Bank of Japan.

As an example of opaquely intentional factive knowledge, consider Sarah's (fictive) knowledge that Santa Claus is a jolly fat man from the North Pole. The ascription of such knowledge to her is existentially opaque in that it fails to license the existential generalization that Santa Claus exists. It is also referentially opaque in that, even if Sarah knows that Santa Claus is a jolly fat man from the North Pole, if she does not know that Santa Claus is Kris Kringle, she might not know that Kris Kringle is a jolly fat man from the North Pole.

In terms of supervenience, though states of objectual knowing and states of translucently intentional factive knowing cannot supervene solely on a subject's contemporaneous bodily states when they involve a relation to an extra-bodily object, states of opaquely intentional factive knowing may supervene in this way since they do not involve such a relation.

## BELIEF

Consider the distinction between belief *de re* and belief *de dicto*. As Kim puts it: "Roughly speaking, *de dicto* belief is believing a certain proposition, a dictum, to be true, while *de re* belief is believing of some *object*, a *res*, that it is so and so" (1993, 185). Defining "internal state" as meaning neither rooted outside times at which it is had, nor outside the objects that have it, Kim notes:

Beliefs *de dicto* will in general be internal states. The belief that the tallest man in the world is a spy does not entail the existence of a tall man or a spy; the belief that ghosts are malevolent does not entail the existence of ghosts. On the other hand, belief *de re* is plausibly viewed as noninternal when the object of belief is other than oneself. If a given belief is *de re* with respect to a certain object, then this object must exist if that *de re* belief is to exist. You cannot have a belief about Mt. Everest unless Mt. Everest exists. And unless, furthermore, you are in a certain historical-cognitive relation to it. (1993, 185)

Kim adds that if internal states supervene (solely) on contemporaneous bodily states whereas noninternal states do not, then belief *de re* is not supervenient in this way when the object of belief is other than oneself, whereas belief *de dicto* is (1993, 185).

Put in our terms of existential transparency and existential opacity, belief *de re* is existentially transparent whereas belief *de dicto* is existentially opaque (and put more generally, an opaque intentional state since it is also referentially opaque).<sup>13</sup> The following question then naturally arises: Is belief *de re* also referentially transparent and hence a transparent intentional state, or is it referentially opaque and hence a translucent intentional state?

If we side with Quine (1966) to the extent that we take referential transparency (and the substitutivity that goes with it) to go hand in hand with existential transparency, then we will take belief *de re* to be (in our terms) transparently intentional.<sup>14</sup>

By contrast, suppose we agree with Burge (1977; cf. Elgin 1985; and Kaplan 1998) that in at least some cases a belief *de re* may (in our terms) be existentially transparent and yet referentially opaque. As Burge puts it:

For example, we may say, “Alfred believes that the man in the corner is a spy.” We may refuse unlimited substitution of terms denoting the man in the corner on the grounds that Alfred’s belief involves thinking of the fellow in the corner and not, say, as the firstborn in Kiev in 1942. Yet we may also be intending in our ascription to relate Alfred *de re* to the man to whom we refer with the expression “the man in the corner.” In short, the term “the man in the corner” may be doing double duty at the surface level—both characterizing Alfred’s conception and picking out the relevant *res*. It would be ill considered to count this simply a case of *de dicto* belief. (1977, 341)

To side with Burge, then, entails holding that at least some beliefs *de re* are (in our terms) translucently intentional.

Though my sympathies lie with Burge, my aim here is not to argue that his view should be accepted over Quine’s. My point, rather, is that distinguishing between transparent and translucent intentionality provides us with a useful way of representing a basic disagreement over belief *de re*, and to locate it within the broader context of intentionality taken more generally.<sup>15</sup>

## TAKING STOCK

From an externalist perspective, I distinguished between three kinds of intentionality in the case of seeing, and extended this three-fold distinction to knowledge and to belief. Approaching it from this perspective has enabled us to take intentionality to be a genus of which there are three main species, and hence to reject the traditional identification of intentionality with opaque intentionality. In the next section, I turn to some examples of how this three-fold distinction makes a difference.

## V. SOME WAYS IN WHICH THE DISTINCTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

In this section, I argue that, if one grants (i) that there are transparent and translucent intentional states, and (ii) that these intentional states are genuine mental states, a number of important consequences follow.

## INTENTIONALITY AS THE MARK OF THE MENTAL

Three theses commonly credited to Brentano, the first two of which entail the third, may be summarized as follows:<sup>16</sup>



Thesis 1. Intentional inexistence is the mark of intentionality.

Thesis 2. Intentionality is the mark of the mental.

Thesis 3. Intentional inexistence is the mark of the mental.

A widespread interpretation of Brentano takes his notion of intentional inexistence to be that of existential opacity, an interpretation that, exegesis-wise, is probably incorrect.<sup>17</sup> In any case, understanding intentional inexistence as existential opacity is philosophically interesting in its own right. So we will do so in light of our three-fold distinction.

Put in our terms, the first thesis takes existential opacity to be what distinguishes the intentional from the non-intentional. If there are genuinely mental transparent and translucent intentional states, however, intentional inexistence or existential opacity cannot be the mark of intentionality *per se*, but only of opaque intentionality. The mark of intentionality is aboutness or directedness, but aboutness or directedness is not co-extensive with intentional inexistence. If so, the first thesis is false.

The second thesis may be put as follows:<sup>18</sup>

2a. Anything mental is intentional.

2b. Only something mental is intentional.

2c. Nothing physical is intentional.

In light of our three-fold distinction, the second thesis can be taken in at least four ways. One we may call the *Opaque Intentionality Interpretation*:

2.1a. Anything mental is opaquely intentional.

2.1b. Only something mental is opaquely intentional.

2.1c. Nothing physical is opaquely intentional.

If we take transparent and translucent intentional states to be genuine mental states, however, sub-thesis 2.1a of the above interpretation is false.

Moreover, if we take opaque intentional states to be mental states, the corresponding (i.e., the first) sub-thesis of the following two interpretations is also false:

*The Transparent Intentionality Interpretation:*

2.2a. Anything mental is transparently intentional.

2.2b. Only something mental is transparently intentional.

2.2c. Nothing physical is transparently intentional.

*The Translucent Intentionality Interpretation:*

2.3a. Anything mental is translucently intentional.

2.3b. Only something mental is translucently intentional.

2.3c. Nothing physical is translucently intentional.

Only the following interpretation of the second thesis allows us to recognize that transparent, translucent, and opaque intentional states all count as genuine mental states:

*The Disjunctive Interpretation:*

2.4a. Anything mental is transparently, translucently, or opaquely intentional.

2.4b. Only something mental is transparently, translucently, or opaquely intentional.

2.4c. Nothing physical is transparently, translucently, or opaquely intentional.

Turning now to the third thesis, we may conclude the following. If transparent and translucent intentional states are genuine mental states, then since none of them involves intentional inexistence, it follows that, contra this thesis, intentional inexistence is not the mark of the mental.

## **HAS SELLARS SHOWN THAT INTENTIONALITY IS NON-RELATIONAL?**

Wilfred Sellars famously argued in his remarkable paper “Being and Being Known” (1963a) that intentionality is non-relational. His argument may be put thus. Consider an intentional state such as thinking of a golden mountain. No golden mountain exists in the real order. But if intentionality is genuinely relational, then the thinker must be related to something. And what could that something be? Only two unsatisfactory answers (thought Sellars) present themselves: the Cartesian answer and the Extreme Realist answer.

According to the Cartesian answer, the relatum in question is a content having *being-for-mind* (or *objective being* in the scholastic sense). “Thus the thought of a golden mountain is a thought which is related to a golden mountain *qua* having being-for-mind, being for the mind that is thinking of it” (1963a, 41). Sellars rejected this answer on the ground that postulating a domain of contents mediating between the mind and the real order fosters skepticism and idealism.

According to the Extreme Realist answer, the relatum in question is not some content mediating between the mind and the real order, but rather an item of the real order. On the Extreme Realist conception, the real order contains “subsistent” non-existent objects which serve as relata of intentional states. Sellars rejected this answer too on account of its ontological extremism.

Having found untenable the aforementioned versions of the relational conception of intentionality, Sellars concluded that intentionality is non-relational on the assumption that he had eliminated the alternative possibilities.<sup>19</sup> In this connection, we may ask ourselves whether this Sellarsian argument establishes that *all* intentionality is non-relational. If we recognize the existence of transparent and translucent intentional states, the answer is no: Sellars presupposed the traditional identification of intentionality with opaque intentionality, and this identification, from the perspective of the externalist account of intentionality developed here,

conflates a genus with one of its species. Even if we suppose that the existential opacity of opaque intentionality gives us reason to doubt whether the latter is genuinely relational, it gives us no reason whatever to doubt that transparent intentionality and translucent intentionality, each of which is existentially transparent, are genuinely relational. In sum, even if we were to suppose that Sellars succeeded in showing that opaque intentionality is non-relational, he would not have thereby shown that transparent intentionality or translucent intentionality (and hence that all intentionality) is non-relational.<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, if one shares Sellars's distaste for postulating a domain of contents mediating between the mind and the real order or his distaste for "subsistent" non-existent objects, but if one also recognizes the existence of transparent and translucent intentional states, the following argument may be generated for supposing that putatively opaque intentional states are not genuinely intentional:

1. In order for a state to be genuinely directed at, or about, something (and so be intentional), it must be genuinely relational and so have a relatum in the real order.
2. But putatively opaque intentional states are not genuinely relational since they have no relatum in the real order.
3. Hence, putatively opaque intentional states are not genuinely intentional.

If this argument is sound, then "opaque" intentionality is at best a kind of pseudo-intentionality.

### **SEMANTIC INDETERMINACY AND QUINE'S RESPONSE TO ALSTON'S OBJECTION**

To Quine's thesis about the radical indeterminacy of translation, Alston (1998) objected (among other things) that physics and semantics are on par methodologically in terms of underdetermination of theory by data. Given this methodological symmetry, Alston challenged Quine on why he thought that there is indeterminacy (no fact of the matter) in semantics but not in physics. For if underdetermination is compatible with truth and determinacy in the case of physics, why isn't it also in the case of semantics?

In response, Quine conceded the methodological symmetry. As Quine put it: "In my view, as in his [Alston's], the underdetermination of both disciplines is quite on par methodologically" (1988, 73). Quine claimed that the relevant asymmetry between physics and semantics lies elsewhere. To wit, in the case of semantics:

We can agree, I hope, that one's command of language, one's understanding of language, one's dispositions to respond, indeed one's very thoughts, cannot differ from one moment to another without some difference, however undetectable, in the states of one's physical organism. Call the doctrine materialism or psychophysical parallelism; either will do. Now the relation between the interchangeable but incompatible manuals of translation that

I have postulated is that they accord with exactly the same states of human organisms, however minutely modulated; all the same hidden states of nerves. This is the sense in which I say there is no fact of the matter. I am not talking of criteria, but of nature. (Ibid., 74–75)

Notice that Quine's reply presupposes that one's mental states supervene solely on one's bodily states: there is no change in one's mental states without change in one's bodily states.<sup>21</sup> The core of his argument may be encapsulated as follows:

1. All one's mental states supervene solely on one's bodily states.
2. If all one's mental states supervene solely on one's bodily states, then interchangeable but incompatible manuals of translation accord with exactly the same bodily states.
3. If interchangeable but incompatible manuals of translation accord with exactly the same bodily states, there is no fact of the matter (hence radical indeterminacy) in semantics.
4. Hence, there is no fact of the matter (hence radical indeterminacy) in semantics.

If there are transparent and translucent intentional states, however, and if these states are mental because intentional, then Quine's first premise is false. This is because transparent and translucent intentional states do not supervene solely on bodily states insofar as they are genuinely relational and include as relata one or more extra-bodily existents. What's more, even if we supposed that this argument of Quine's established radical indeterminacy in the case of *opaque* semanticity, it would fail to establish radical indeterminacy in the case of *transparent* or *translucent* semanticity. Even if radical indeterminacy were an ineluctable upshot of opaque semanticity, it would not follow that it is also an ineluctable upshot of translucent or transparent semanticity.

## THE THEORY OF APPEARING AND INTENTIONALITY

Alston (1999) presents a forceful defense of the Theory of Appearing, a direct realist account of objectual perceptual experience (hereafter "perceptual experience").<sup>22</sup> On this theory, perceptual experience consists in an irreducible relation of appearing in which *X* appears *P* to *S*, where *X* is/are one or more physical objects, *S* is some subject, and *P* is/are one or more phenomenal characteristics. Given the way in which the Theory of Appearing takes perceptual experience *not* to supervene solely on contemporaneous bodily states and to be essentially relational, the theory is externalist as this term is understood here. Interestingly however, despite the fact that perceptual experience is clearly, on this theory, intentional in the generic sense of being about or directed at something, Alston claims that the *X* appears *P* to *S* relation constitutive of perceptual experience does not, as he puts it,

bear the usual marks of an “intentional” relation. For one thing, if *X* appears *P* to *S*, and  $X = Y$ , it follows that *Y* appears *P* to *S*. The relation is refreshingly transparent. And more to the present point, *X appears P to S* entails that *X exists*. No “intentional inexistence” here. This is a relation that requires two actually existing terms. Nothing can look a certain way to me unless it is “there” to look that way. I can’t be directly aware of something that doesn’t exist. (1999, 191)

Notice that Alston’s denial that the *X appears P to S* relation bears the “usual” marks of intentionality is predicated on the traditional identification of intentionality with opaque intentionality. Our three-fold distinction provides those like Alston, who are externalists about perceptual experience, with a way to maintain that the appearing relation is intentional after all because it is *transparently* intentional. Consequently, these externalists can parry the objection that their account of perceptual experience verges on the contradictory in accepting (i) that perceptual experience is intentional in the sense of being about, or directed at, something, and (ii) that perceptual experience is referentially and existentially transparent. For although (i) and (ii) would be inconsistent if the only intentionality were opaque intentionality, they are consistent given our three-fold distinction.<sup>23</sup>

**INTENTIONALITY AND MENTAL CAUSATION**

A conception of mental causation motivating internalism may be summarized as follows. Only if the mental states of a person supervene solely on her internal bodily states can these mental states play a causal (or causal-explanatory) role in bringing about (or causally explaining) her behavior. For the causal powers of a person’s mental states supervene solely on her intrinsic properties: a person’s mental states have causal powers if and only if the mental states of any molecule-for-molecule duplicate of hers would also have those causal powers. Since the mental states of a person play a causal role in bringing about her behavior, since mental states can play this role only if they supervene solely on her internal bodily states, and since putative transparent and translucent intentional states do not supervene in this way, they are not mental states.

A proponent of this conception of mental causation may then propose factoring out and deeming as mental some narrowly individuated components of these states, components that do supervene solely on our bodily states.

Versions and variations of this argument have been articulated by a number of philosophers<sup>24</sup> and criticized by a number of others.<sup>25</sup> The general strategy that I favor in response is to argue in a fundamentally Burgean spirit against the internalist tenet that mental states can play a causal (or causal-explanatory) role only if they supervene solely on internal bodily states. As Burge points out, psychology, like other special sciences (e.g., astronomy, geology, physiology, and the like), studies “patterns of causation between entities and other entities in their >normal environments,” and as a result, its “explanatory kinds are individuated in a way that presupposes such relations” (1989, 316). Moreover:

Because the kinds recognized by these sciences are individuated by reference to patterns in a normal environment that reaches beyond the surfaces of individuals typed by those kinds, the kinds are not in general supervenient on the constituents of those individuals. It follows that the causal powers relevant to type individuating the explanatory kinds of a special science need not be “locally supervenient” on causal powers recognized by sciences that deal with underlying constituents. (Ibid., 317)

The fundamental issue here is where we think “real” causation goes on. If we think that mental causation is really nothing more than a kind of (internal) physiological causation, then one will naturally be inclined to accept the internalist tenet that mental states can play a causal role in bringing about behavior only if they supervene solely on internal bodily states. But worth noting in this connection is that it no more follows from (i) the fact that physiological causal processes are required for the occurrence of mental states that (ii) “real” mental causation is physiological causation, than it follows from (iii) the fact that micro-physical causal processes are required for the occurrence of physiological states that (iv) “real” physiological causation is micro-physical causation.<sup>26</sup>

Adequately addressing these issues about causation would take us well beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>27</sup> Suffice it to say here that if transparent and translucent intentional states are causally efficacious mental states, then it is false that mental causation is nothing more than a kind of (internal) physiological causation. Conversely, if it is true that mental causation is nothing more than a kind of (internal) physiological causation, then it is false that transparent and translucent intentional states are causally efficacious mental states. In the latter case, transparent and translucent intentional states are either not mental or else are mental but not causally efficacious and hence epiphenomenal.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This paper had two primary aims. The first was to show how, from an externalist perspective, we may draw a three-fold distinction between transparent, translucent, and opaque intentionality. The second was to critically explore some important consequences that follow from granting (i) that there are transparent and translucent intentional states, and (ii) that these intentional states are genuine mental states. Now that we have explicated the distinction and explored some of these consequences, many, particularly those of an internalist bent, may opt to “tollens” where externalists will “ponens.” Even so, I think it fair to say that, given the way that analytic philosophers have traditionally identified intentionality with opaque intentionality, new and interesting avenues of inquiry are made possible by deploying the distinction drawn in this paper. For as we have seen herein, this distinction is one that makes a difference in a number of significant ways.

## ENDNOTES

1. Note that I write of three kinds of intentionality with regard to mental states themselves, not just with regard to *ascriptions* of these states. An anonymous referee for this journal points out that internalists would take issue with this, claiming that it is the ascriptions that have these kinds of intentionality, not the states themselves. Though internalists might indeed make this objection, I am not assuming the truth of internalism, but rather exploring intentionality from an externalist perspective according to which at least some mental states themselves are *intentional* whereas their ascriptions are *intensional*. Corresponding to the three kinds of *intentionality* distinguished here that pertain to mental states, we may also distinguish, on my externalist view, three kinds of *intensionality* that pertain to the ascriptions of these states. In this connection, see the discussion in Fine (1989) concerning intensionality and hyper-intensionality; I thank a second anonymous referee for this reference.
2. As Crane puts it: "Seeing seems to be a paradigm case of the direction of the mind on an object" (1998a, 819).
3. One can accept Ryle's insightful point here without, of course, accepting his behaviorism also. Note that behaviorism is a form of internalism.
4. A qualification is needed here: the object that one sees exists *or has existed*. This qualification is needed to cover time lags between the reflection or emission of light from an object and its being processed by a subject's visual system.
5. Kim (1993) defends a version of internalism, and so would count seeing not as a genuine mental state but as a hybrid state. His point here about seeing a tree requiring the tree to exist, however, is independent of his internalism.
6. Advocates of the Causal Theory of Perception, such as Gerald Vision (1997), would add that the object must not only exist, but also be a cause of the state of seeing.
7. See Kim (1993) for a discussion of this point.
8. See Goodman (1976) and Elgin (1983) for an account of fictive language that does not commit us ontologically to fictive objects or fictive facts.
9. Elgin (1985), in her impressive article "Translucent Belief," was the first, as far as I know, to use the expression "translucent" in a philosophical discussion. As Elgin explains: "The conviction that the disjunction 'transparent or opaque' exhausts our options strikes me as mistaken. For many ascriptions of belief, neither construal is satisfactory. An intermediate position is wanted—one in which due attention is paid both to the words that are the medium of reference and to the things that are the objects of reference. I suggest then that we extend the metaphor and say that ascriptions of belief are neither typically transparent nor opaque, but *translucent*. A medium is literally translucent if it transmits light, but diffuses it in such a way that the outlines of objects cannot be clearly discerned. Correspondingly, a linguistic construction is metaphorically translucent if it transmits reference, but in such a way that the limits on paraphrase are not obvious" (1985, 75). For Elgin, a belief is typically (in my terms) existentially transparent or *de re*; as she puts it in one of her examples, "Sam cannot plausibly be said to believe that kangaroos are carnivores without its committing him to the existence of kangaroos and carnivores" (*ibid.*,

83). But though typically existentially transparent, a belief (on Elgin's theory) is not typically referentially transparent in my sense, namely, in the sense that the ascription of such a state admits of (any) substitution of co-referring terms without change in truth-value. Elgin offers an account where some, but not all, substitutions are permissible. Though I am very sympathetic to Elgin's account of belief, nothing in the account of translucent intentional states that I present in this paper commits me to holding Elgin's particular account of belief translucence.

10. A pertinent question that may be raised here is whether there are (or can be) cases of intentional states that involve a different kind of translucency: namely, where existential opacity and referential transparency are co-instantiated. Perhaps the following would be such a case: suppose Sally is visually hallucinating her dead grandfather, and suppose for the sake of argument that this state is intentional. The ascription of such a state to her is, let's suppose, existentially opaque. If the ascription of this state is also referentially transparent in that co-referring terms for "her dead grandfather" (e.g., "her grandmother's husband," etc.) can be substituted in "Sally is visually hallucinating her dead grandfather" without change in truth-value, then this intentional state is translucent in that it is opaque in one respect but transparent in another. Consequently, we may wish to distinguish between two kinds of translucency which we could call *translucent de re* and *translucent non-de re* respectively: a translucent *de re* intentional state (e.g., visual factive seeing) is existentially transparent but referentially opaque, whereas a translucent *non-de re* intentional state (e.g., (perhaps) certain cases of visual hallucination) is existentially opaque but referentially transparent. Hereafter, whenever I use the expression "translucent" in this paper it will be in the sense of "translucent *de re*" unless otherwise specified, and when discussing intentional translucency, my focus will be on translucent *de re* intentional states. I intend to more fully discuss translucent *non-de re* states elsewhere.

11. In the objectual sense, "to know" is equivalent to the French "connaître" and to the German "kennen." In the factive sense, "to know" is equivalent to the French "savoir" and to the German "wissen." For an account of factive knowledge and other factive attitudes, see Williamson (2000).

12. See Russell (1997).

13. If we take propositions to be Russellian, however, belief *de dicto* cannot supervene solely on contemporaneous bodily states when extra-bodily physical objects act as constituents of the proposition.

14. Of course, Quine (1977) rejected the very ascriptions of transparent intentional states he explored and accepted in Quine (1966). I thank an anonymous referee for this journal for reminding me of this point. Howbeit, the account in Quine (1966) is interesting in its own right. In this connection, see Crawford (2002).

15. Though we have only covered one kind of propositional attitude, namely belief, the points made above may be extended *mutatis mutandis* to other propositional attitudes.

16. See, for instance, chapter 11 of Chisholm (1957) for a classic discussion of these theses. Cf. the discussion of these theses in Crane (1998b) and in Bealer (1993).

17. As Crane points out, Brentano's claim that intentionality is what distinguishes mental from physical phenomena is a distinction "among the data of consciousness, not among entities in



the world: among these data, mental phenomena are those which exhibit intentionality, and physical phenomena are those which do not" (1998a, 817). Crane also notes, however, that "in analytic philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century, Brentano's distinction came to be interpreted as a distinction between entities in the world. This was chiefly because of this period's prevailing realism" (ibid., 817–818). An anonymous referee for this journal alerted me to the excellent discussion of this point in chapter 1 of Bell (1991).

18. Cf. Bealer (1993).

19. For an interesting discussion and criticism of Sellars's conception of intentionality, see McDowell (1998). Note that I do not dispute that Sellars, for instance in Sellars (1963b, 1964), also held that intentionality is nonrelational because, as an anonymous referee for this journal puts it, "a relational construal doesn't capture the connection between the individual that's in the intentional state and that state's content." In response, let me make two points. First, this second kind of argument suggested by the referee seems to presuppose an internalism which, from the point of view of an externalist, is question-begging. Second, this second argument is not consistent with the first, if it posits the sort of contents that the first rejects.

20. In this connection, an anonymous referee of this journal asked how there can be a phenomenon in this world some of which is relational and some of which is not. By "relational" I presume the referee has in mind the notion of existential transparency. Answering this question would take us well beyond the scope of this paper, which is not primarily concerned with *how* this is possible but with the philosophical consequences that ensue *if* this is possible. Let me, however, make the following two points. First, that intentionality is sometimes relational and sometimes not is arguably what makes it a unique phenomenon; if so, one shouldn't expect to find non-intentionality-involving analogies that will illuminate this phenomenon. Second, if one cannot accept that intentionality is sometimes relational and sometimes not, two options are available: (i) accept the traditional identification of intentionality with opaque intentionality and thereby hold that intentionality is never relational, or (ii) accept a strong externalism that rejects opaque intentionality and thereby hold that genuine intentionality is always relational. One of the goals of this paper is to explore a middle course between (i) and (ii).

21. An anonymous referee for this journal (i) asks why I attribute to Quine the view that mental states supervene solely on bodily states, and (ii) claims that it seems entirely within the spirit of Quine's views to accept a global or broad supervenience thesis. With regard to (i), I attribute this view to him because Quine (1998) clearly holds it. His claim that "one's command of language, one's understanding of language, one's dispositions to respond, indeed one's very thoughts, cannot differ from one moment to another without some difference, however undetectable, in the states of one's physical organism" clearly articulates a commitment to local supervenience, not to broad or global supervenience. For on a broad or global supervenience thesis, one's thoughts (etc.) *could* "differ from one moment to another without some difference, however undetectable, in the states of one's physical organism." With regard to (ii), I must strongly beg to differ, for not only is his response to Alston predicated on a commitment to internalism (and hence local supervenience), but so too are his well-known commitments to methodological behaviorism and token physicalism (among other things). See for instance, chapters 3 and 4 of Quine (1990), and chapter 8 of Quine (1995).

22. The Theory of Appearing is an account of the perceptual experience of objects or concrete particulars, not of facts or states of affairs.
23. Alston has indicated to me in personal communication that he endorses the three-fold distinction drawn in this paper.
24. Prominent examples include Kim (1993), Fodor (1981, 1987), Stich (1983), and the Churchlands (1983).
25. See, for instance, Van Gulick (1989, 1993), Stalnaker (1989), Burge (1986, 1989, 1993), and Yablo (1997).
26. As Burge (*ibid.*) notes: “Few would advance the view that atomic or quantum processes are where the “real” causation goes on in physiology. Is there any strong ground for thinking that the “true nature” of causation involving psychological events is better revealed in physiology than in psychology?”
27. See Van Gulick (1989, 1993) and Burge (1989, 1993) for useful discussions of these issues.

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