Why Shouldn’t We Think that Cognition Has Proprietary Phenomenal Character?

By

M. A. PARKS
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DAVIS

Approved:

_____
Zoe Drayson, Chair

_____
Adam Sennet

_____
Rohan French

_____
Cody Gilmore

_____
Bénédicte Veillet

Committee in Charge

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Dedication

For everyone I call ‘family,’

biological, adopted, academic, or chosen,

those still living as well as those no longer with us[1],

human and otherwise:

Thank you for being in my life and helping me along this journey.

[1] Especially those I lost during graduate school, including my great-grandmother (Ruby), my grandmother (Sue), friends (Melissa, Carl, and Lorei), and canine companions (King and Stella).

Abbreviations and Key Terms

Cognitive phenomenology thesis (CPT): the view that a proprietary phenomenal character of thoughts (often considered necessary to think a given thought) exists

Thought: Unless otherwise specified, "thought" is understood as an occurrent cognitive or conceptual mental state that a person, or other thinking thing, is in. Similarly, unless otherwise specified, the phrase "being in a cognitive state" in this dissertation is used almost interchangeably with "having an occurrent thought".

Proprietary to thought: A mental state proprietary to thought is only possibly had when the subject is in a cognitive state; in other words, being in a cognitive state is necessary to be in that phenomenal state.[2] For example, if understanding was accompanied by a phenomenal state proprietary to thought, a subject could not be in that phenomenal state unless they were in some cognitive state.[3]

Phenomenal state: mental states for which there is something it is like to be in them. Phenomenal states have phenomenal character.

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[2] I assume that these claims are best understood as *de re*; anytime the term "proprietary" is used, it therefore refers to the *de re* reading. I assume that other individuals in the debate are also concerned with *de re* readings.

[3] Some in the cognitive phenomenology debate hold that such proprietary phenomenal character is necessary for a subject to be in at least some cognitive states. This is entailed by views according to which some distinct phenomenal state is necessary for each thought. Others in the debate hold that such proprietary phenomenal character does not exist, or is not necessary for thought.

Phenomenal cognitive phenomenology (phenomenal CP): the view that a proprietary phenomenal character is associated with thought

Moderate cognitive phenomenology (moderate CP): the view that a proprietary phenomenal character is required for thought

Strong cognitive phenomenology (strong CP): the view that a distinct phenomenal character is required for each thought token

Phenomenal intentionality thesis (PIT): the view that intentional states are grounded[4] in or identical to phenomenal character

Weak PIT: the view that some intentional states are phenomenal

Moderate PIT: the view that all intentional states are grounded in or identical to phenomenal states

Strong PIT: the view that all intentional states are phenomenal

[4] I take claims of the form X grounds Y to imply something along the following lines: X explains Y in some metaphysically important sense.

Symbolization Key

UD: mental states and things that have them

Ix: *x* is an intentional mental state; the mental state is *about* something

Hx: *x* is a phenomenal intentional state; the mental state has intentionality arising from[5] its phenomenal character

Tx: *x* is an occurrent thought; it is a conceptual or cognitive mental state being entertained by the subject in that state

Mxy: *x* is in mental state *y*

[5] This phrase can be cashed out in different ways and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Abstract

In this dissertation, I address the issue of whether there is any proprietary phenomenal character necessary for thought, concluding that we have no non-circular justification for holding such a view. After a brief introduction, in Chapter 2, I discuss the distinction between cognitive and noncognitive mental states, according to which cognitive mental states are conceptual and noncognitive mental states are not. I then provide an overview of the cognitive phenomenology debate, arguing that the debate should be understood based on the metaphysical nature of thought and its relationship with phenomenal character. Finally, I introduce views I call phenomenal cognitive phenomenology (phenomenal CP), moderate cognitive phenomenology (moderate CP), and strong cognitive phenomenology (strong CP). I then argue that the denial of any of these positive views offers a better explanation for any phenomenal character associated with thought.

In Chapter 3, I critically evaluate various arguments for and against the various views on cognitive phenomenology, including self-knowledge arguments, phenomenal contrast arguments, introspection-based arguments, and content-grounding arguments. I conclude that the arguments are seldom well-justified in the sense that they are circular, and that the simplest explanation—that proprietary cognitive phenomenology does not exist or is otherwise not necessary for thought—should be defaulted to.

In Chapter 4, I describe the debate on the phenomenal intentionality thesis (PIT) and arguments in favor of the PIT. Moreover, I argue that views on phenomenal intentionality entail views on cognitive phenomenology; however, given that such PIT views are not well-justified or even circular, at best, they offer no non-circular reason to endorse a positive view on cognitive phenomenology.

In Chapter 5, I assert that whether one endorses strong PIT or moderate PIT comes down to one's views on strong CP. I also discuss the implications of the other chapters, including that the PIT and cognitive phenomenology thesis (CPT) debates are not as independent as previously suggested. I then consider that the different views may amount to introspective differences, and while some may be right and some may be wrong concerning introspecting about the nature of certain mental states, that the metaphysical relationship between cognitive or intentional states on the one hand and phenomenal states on the other hand may simply not be accessible through introspection[6]. Such considerations do not entail that no view offers the best explanation of the relevant phenomena, and I conclude by defending the view on cognitive phenomenology that I endorse: there is no proprietary phenomenal character of thought necessary for cognition.

[6] Such considerations do not imply that other sorts of metaphysical facts are not knowable through introspection.

Several of the appendices contain original artwork[7] intended to help illustrate various thought experiments, different views, and more. Other appendices contain derivations in modal logic intended to support the claims made about entailment relations between different views.

[7] While I discussed the importance of using artwork to illustrate philosophical ideas in my 2021 Central APA Public Philosophy presentation, and apply this idea in my book 'My First Philosophy Book,' this topic is beyond the scope of the present paper.

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Appendices

Chapter 1. A Brief Introduction to Cognitive Phenomenology

> Does consciousness—that is, *phenomenal* consciousness—embrace both sensory experience and conceptual thought? We may feel embarrassed to ask such a question. Shouldn't it be introspectively obvious what's in consciousness? But surprisingly perhaps, simple reflection on our own mental lives leaves some stubborn disagreements. That will seem less astonishing if we find we lack a clear, shared interpretation of the issue, and approach it against a complicated background of varying, unarticulated influences. What underlies the lack of agreement here may, in fact, be so obscurely complex, or so entrenched, that a consensus will never be reached (Siewert 2011, 236).

Most people are familiar with several kinds of phenomenal states, including those related to taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing. There is something it is like to see the color red, which is distinct from what it is like to hear a dog bark. Other sensory phenomenal states, such as proprioception, and additional phenomenal states, including those related to emotions or affect, also exist. However, the relationship between phenomenal character and thought is a controversial issue at the center of the cognitive phenomenology debate, which concerns whether a distinct phenomenal character occurs—whether there is something distinct it is like—to think a thought or be in some cognitive state, over and above noncognitive phenomenal character.

I attempt to adopt simple terminology and refer to positive and negative views on cognitive phenomenology. According to positive views on cognitive phenomenology,

there is something it feels like to think a thought, over and above sensory phenomenal character, broadly construed. The existence of such states would provide reason to think that intentionality (which is a property that all cognitive states have) and phenomenality cannot be tackled separately. The thesis I defend is that arguments for views on the phenomenal intentionality thesis (PIT) and arguments for views on the cognitive phenomenology thesis (CPT) rely on intuitions about the metaphysical nature of thoughts that opponents do not share. Views on the PIT often entail positive views on the CPT, and the most controversial aspects of the PIT presuppose or otherwise rely on views on the CPT. Such considerations undermine claims that the debates are independent (for an example of such a view, see Bourget and Mendelovici 2019) and potentially inconsistent with the claim that arguments for cognitive phenomenology offer independent support for inseparatist accounts of phenomenality and intentionality such as the PIT (Bayne and Montague 2011).

More importantly, given that I take it to be the case that positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are equal in terms of their explanatory power, insofar as each provides an account of the phenomenal character associated with cognition, I suggest that we default to the ontologically simplest view, that is, that there is no proprietary phenomenal character necessary for thought. To support this thesis, I develop an overview of the possible views on what it is for a mental state to be cognitive, as opposed to noncognitive, that one might hold. I then defend a particular account of how these terms and the views in the debate should be understood and

explore differing implicit assumptions about the nature of thought or mental states more generally, as well as the relationship the cognitive phenomenology debate bears to other debates, especially the phenomenal intentionality debate.

I formulate my argument in four chapters. In Chapter 2, I develop an account of the cognitive phenomenology debate, while in Chapter 3, I provide a critical analysis of arguments for (and against) cognitive phenomenology. In Chapter 4, I offer an account of the phenomenal intentionality debate and explain the connection between the cognitive phenomenology and phenomenal intentionality debates. Finally, in Chapter 5, I argue that, given certain assumptions, the debate between moderate and strong PIT reduces to the debate concerning strong cognitive phenomenology (strong CP). I consider the implications of the conclusions of all of the chapters, concluding that the arguments for views on the CPT and strong versions of the PIT inevitably rely on similar intuitions about the metaphysical nature of thoughts that opponents do not share. However, this does not mean that no view offers the best explanation of the relevant phenomena, and I conclude by endorsing a particular view on cognitive phenomenology.

Chapter 2. What Is Cognitive Phenomenology?

In this chapter, I begin by evaluating the significance of claims about cognitive phenomenology regarding larger philosophical issues before establishing key distinctions important to the cognitive phenomenology debate that are often underappreciated or disregarded. I then provide an overview of the current cognitive phenomenology debate in the existing literature before providing precise formulations for some of the claims made in the debate, specifically those that I argue individuals should focus on, with rigorousness previously neglected in the cognitive phenomenology literature.

2.1 The Importance of the Debate on Cognitive Phenomenal Character

The cognitive phenomenology debate concerns whether thought requires any kind of cognitive phenomenal character over and above purely sensory (or otherwise noncognitive) phenomenal character. For example, one could ask whether any phenomenal character not possibly had in purely sensory states occurs when a person is deliberating about what kind of puppy to get[8], when they remember plans to call a

[8] For the author, the answer to this is always 'I should get a rottweiler.'

friend, or when thinking about the meaning of something their friend said. I propose that this debate is significant regarding larger philosophical issues for two related reasons: 1) prior commitments to claims about larger philosophical issues entail some views on cognitive phenomenology, and 2) prior commitments to views on cognitive phenomenology can restrict which views a person can coherently hold with some larger philosophical issues.

I maintain that the issues in the cognitive phenomenology debate have implications for a wide range of philosophical theses. An example of views on larger philosophical issues that entail commitments to claims about cognitive phenomenal character is that in some views, such cognitive phenomenal character is necessary to determine the content of thoughts or know what one is thinking.[9] However, others holding different views on the larger philosophical issues can instead maintain that sensory or otherwise noncognitive phenomenal character can play this role[10] and therefore need not be committed to any proprietary phenomenal character.[11]

Views on cognitive phenomenology also restrict which views on other philosophical issues a person can coherently hold; for example, commitments made in the cognitive phenomenology debate have implications for explanations of thoughts or

[9] See, for example, Horgan and Tienson (2002) and Pitt (2004).

[10] See Pautz (2013).

[11] Others such as Dennett (1995) argue that the indeterminacy problem is not a genuine problem at all.

phenomenal experience.[12] If such proprietary phenomenal states are necessary for thoughts, then alleged cases of artificial intelligence must be in cognitive phenomenal states to have thoughts. Cognitive phenomenology is sometimes considered a necessary element of agentive phenomenology, which is arguably necessary for acting freely; as a result, agentive and thus cognitive phenomenology is potentially relevant to the free will debate.[13] The cognitive phenomenology debate is also worth investigating to better understand the nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal (and other) mental states.

For these reasons, it is no trivial matter to clarify what the views in the cognitive phenomenology debate are and, more importantly, how they should be understood and whether individuals have sensible reasons to endorse any of the views in the cognitive phenomenology thesis (CPT) debate.

2.2 Cognitive and Noncognitive Occurrent Mental States: Preliminary Remarks

With all of the diverse terminology that has been adopted, it is unclear whether and to what extent the "opponents" engaged in the cognitive phenomenology debate are engaging with each other. As I suggest, various views seem to have emerged within

[12] See Siewert (2011, 238).

[13] See Horgan (2011, 69).

the cognitive phenomenology debate. For instance, what counts as a cognitive mental state and what the contrasting category of mental states are different for different authors. For example, Prinz assumes that being in a mental state involves tokening a concrete internal state that bears the content (vehicle); sensory vehicles represent some aspect(s) of experience (Prinz 2011, 175), and vehicles are nonsensory otherwise. However, others[14] are not committed to any such vehicles existing for cognitive and noncognitive mental states alike, and it is thus not clear to what extent those in the debate are engaging with the same topic(s). In this section, I explain why the focus should be on the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual states, as opposed to sensory and nonsensory states.

Given how one establishes the notion of "cognitive," what it is to have a thought or conceptual activity more generally might be understood in one of many different ways as well. One might understand cognitive states to be propositional, but it is not entirely obvious that the "conceptual activity" that everyone engaged in the cognitive phenomenology debate is concerned with is limited in this way.[15] Not all participants in the cognitive phenomenology debate are obviously drawing the same distinctions between conceptual and nonconceptual or sensory states or providing a principled method of distinguishing the two; they apply terminology as if they have a clear

[14]For examples, see Siewert (2011) and Montague (2011).

[15]Prinz, Siewert, and others from many different sides of the debate hold such a view.

distinction in mind without committing to the nature of the distinction.[16] For instance, one possible counterexample to the claim that cognitive states are propositional is that one could be in the (arguably cognitive) state of liking lattice structures without there necessarily being any associated proposition.[17] Similarly, Pitt refers to a thought as a cognitive state (Pitt 2011, 145) without explicitly requiring any associated proposition. Carruthers and Veillet (2011) are also concerned with conceptual activity more generally as they discussed how concept acquisition can affect a person's phenomenal states; nevertheless, they argued that it does so via changes in nonconceptual phenomenology.[18] While it may not be the case that what is included in conceptual activity or cognitive states is the same for all involved in the debate, one of my key aims in this chapter is to determine the contenders for the best account of a distinction between conceptual and sensory (or more generally, nonconceptual) states and then argue for one of these accounts over the others.

Given that I understand sensory or noncognitive phenomenal character broadly, it includes phenomenal character associated with mental imagery, inner speech, and more, not only typical cases of sensory phenomenal character such as visual phenomenal character, auditory phenomenal character, tactile phenomenal character,

[16] See Appendix 2 for more information.

[17] For examples of such views, see Crane (2009), Haugeland (1998), Peacocke (1987, 1992), and Sainsbury (2005).

[18] See Appendix 1.

olfactory phenomenal character, and phenomenal character associated with taste. While many in the CPT debate share this assumption,[19] advocates and deniers of cognitive phenomenology have different answers to the following question: what is the relationship between phenomenal character and cognitive states?

One possible way of demarcating noncognitive from cognitive mental states is by focusing on whether possessing a concept is necessary for having a particular mental state. If concepts are necessary, then the mental state is cognitive and noncognitive otherwise. Concepts are the ideal candidate for what makes a mental state cognitive, as opposed to merely sensory: concepts are fundamental to thought, and cognitive psychological processes depend on them.[20,21] However, other mental states,

[19] For example, see Bayne and Montague (2011).

[20] Margolis and Laurence 2019, Introduction.

[21] One alternative way to distinguish between sensory and cognitive states might involve the presence of external stimuli: paradigmatic cases of sensory states involve external stimuli, such as smelling a rose or hearing music, whereas paradigmatic cases of cognitive states are stimulus-free, such as contemplating the meaning of life or planning a vacation (see Quilty-Dunn 2020). However, the distinction between sensory and cognitive phenomenal character cannot hinge only on whether internal or external information or stimuli are involved. The reason for this is that some sensory modalities notice internal rather than external information. For example, proprioception notices internal information but counts as a sensory modality in many contemporary views. Four distinguishing characteristics of sense perceptions are commonly defended (individually by some and in various combinations by others): proximal stimulus, represented information, phenomenal character, and associated sense organ. In the case of proprioception, the relative locations of various body parts are detected, and this information is represented; knowing the relative locations of one's body parts seems to have a certain feel or qualitative character, and the sense organ may be understood as "receptors in the muscles, tendons, and joints" (Macpherson 2010). This sensory state is accessible even during meditation, when the agent is not in any cognitive states. Proprioception thus counts as a sensory modality distinct from vision, hearing, and so forth. Another reason to think that sensory phenomenal character cannot be limited to that caused by external stimuli is that hallucinations in any of the standard senses produce phenomenal states

such as pain, are not built from more fundamental concepts, as cognitive states are.[22] It is, I assume, metaphysically possible for one to experience any noncognitive sensory state without possessing a concept. Since concepts are necessary (and arguably sufficient) for cognitive states but not sensory or other noncognitive states, the best account of the distinction between cognitive and noncognitive states is thus that a mental state is cognitive only if it is conceptual, as concepts are metaphysically necessary to have such a mental state. Assuming that a being possessing a concept can combine that concept with others to form mental states expressible, either by the subject or a third party, in terms of propositional content (see Section 2.1), being able to express a being's mental state in terms of propositional content would also be a necessary condition for that mental state to be cognitive.

The idea that nonconceptual sensory states are distinct from cognitive states with conceptual content is an assumption that all participants in the cognitive phenomenology debate seem to share. While this assumption can be cashed out in slightly different ways than I have argued, such as in accounts that Fodor, Dretske, and Speaks have provided, each of the alternatives considered is subject to counterexamples that my account avoids.

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without a corresponding external stimulus. If such considerations are accurate and sensory states can occur without external stimuli, then sensory states do not require external stimuli.

[22] See Hardcastle 2015, 534.

Alternative 1: Fodor

Fodor (2008, 178) argued that some mental states are preconceptual or iconic and do not rely on conceptual representations, whereas others are conceptual or discursive. I assume that these are intended to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. However, counterexamples suggest that sensory (and more generally, noncognitive) states may constitute a broader class than preconceptual or iconic states; an example is the smell of a rose, which is sensory but not preconceptual or iconic. Talk of preconceptual states is therefore inadequate.

Alternative 2: Dretske

Dretske (1993) argued for a distinction between awareness of things and awareness of facts, where the former concerns perceptual states and the latter concerns conceptual states. Dretske's distinction focuses on the difference between perceiving and believing, where conceptual mental states are not beliefs (e.g., desires and imaginings). Awareness of facts is only a subset of conceptual states, which also include states such as contemplating the meaning of life, which does not necessarily involve awareness of a fact. This distinction is thus inadequate as well.

Alternative 3: Speaks

Speaks offers the last alternative to my view that I consider (2005), which states that belief contents and perceptual contents have different structures or kinds of constituents (e.g., perceptual contents are limited to objects and properties). This view is closer to the view I previously argued for; nevertheless, mine has the advantage of being simpler insofar as it focuses more generally on noncognitive rather than perceptual states and similarly describes what is required for a state to be cognitive. Given the options considered, the best account of the basis of the distinction between cognitive and noncognitive states is that concepts are required for cognitive but not noncognitive states.[23]

One important constraint on concept possession that Evans (1982) originally defended is the generality constraint, and two main versions of the generality constraint are commonly defended. The strong version of the generality constraint

[23] While this section is intended to provide some guidance on the distinction between cognitive and noncognitive states within the debate, others' views on such matters, as well as prior commitments and influences, especially regarding the nature of thought and phenomenal consciousness, are seldom made explicit; when they are made explicit, their significance is rarely explicitly recognized.
For example, elsewhere (Parks 2019, and in Chapter 3), I argue that the self-knowledge argument for cognitive phenomenology (Pitt 2011) presupposes some version of phenomenal intentionality, which is inconsistent with the various versions of representationalism that others in the debate (Prinz 2011 and Levine 2011) endorse. Prior commitments to such views undoubtedly constrain which views on thought, conceptual activity, and its relation to phenomenal consciousness count as the best explanation for the relevant phenomena.

maintains that to possess a given concept, a creature must be capable of thinking thoughts that combine that concept with any other concept of appropriate logical form that the creature also possesses. More technically, "genuine thinkers must be capable of entertaining all syntactically permissible combinations of any concepts that they possess" (Carruthers, 2009). For example, a thinking thing has the concept circle if and only if they can entertain the thought that "a circle is square." If this constraint is a genuine constraint on concept possession, as I believe it is, then it would provide one way to distinguish between conceptual and nonconceptual states: if a person can be in such a state without satisfying the generality constraint, then the mental state is nonconceptual.

Some have argued, however, that the generality constraint is too strong and instead suggested that a weaker version of the generality constraint applies to concept possession: a creature can possess a concept only if they are capable of combining that concept with some other concepts of appropriate logical form that the creature possesses. Nevertheless, if concept possession is considered an approximation to the ideal, as a matter of degree rather than an all-or-nothing phenomenon, where only an ideally concept-possessing or concept-using creature would satisfy the generality constraint for all of their concepts, then there is no need to retreat to the weaker notion of the generality constraint.[24] If such is the case, this

[24] For example, see Carruthers (2009).

would also allow for nonhuman animals to approximate a thinking thing possessing concepts, albeit perhaps to a lesser extent than humans do.[25] Such considerations may bear some relevance to the debate on the moral status of nonhuman animals; nonetheless, this matter is outside the scope of the present paper.[26]

Before moving on, I wish to briefly defend the view—which is somewhat controversial in the cognitive phenomenology debate—that nonsensory but nonconceptual phenomenal characters may exist. Carruthers and Veillet (2019) defended a stronger view that nonsensory, nonconceptual phenomenal character occurs for mental states involving valence (positive or negative, e.g., pleasurable or unpleasurable), numerosity, or temporality; this list may also include states such as emotion or affect. Nevertheless, I do not wish to defend the strong claim that nonsensory, nonconceptual states exist. Instead, I wish to leave it open that some such mental states may occur, as they might actually exist. Carruthers and Veillet (2019) suggested that all nonconceptual states are phenomenally conscious (when access conscious, globally broadcast, or occurrent), but again, this claim is unnecessarily strong. Nonetheless, I assume that the debate on cognitive phenomenology concerns whether the phenomenology of thoughts and conceptual states is proprietary to thought or possibly had only when one is thinking. I thus focus on the distinction between

[25] See Appendix 3.

[26] While beyond the scope of the present paper, this topic is related to a separate project I have worked on (Parks 2021).

conceptual and nonconceptual states where possible since it captures the fundamental distinctions central to the cognitive phenomenology debate more adequately than talk of sensory and nonsensory states.

2.3 What Is Cognitive Phenomenal Character? The Current Debate

One attempt at a definition of cognitive phenomenology is as follows:

> Cognitive phenomenology can be defined as the experience that is associated with cognitive activities, such as thinking, reasoning, and understanding. An experience is phenomenally conscious in the sense that there is something it is like for the subject to have the experience and the phenomenal character of the experience is what it is like for the subject to have the experience. (Smithies 2013)

While this may suffice for an imprecise, first-pass definition of cognitive phenomenology, cognitive phenomenology is not only any feeling experienced while thinking; I therefore continue to narrow this definition throughout this chapter in favor of a more specific one. Cognitive phenomenology is proprietary to thought, which means that it cannot be had in noncognitive, purely sensory states. It is not simply sometimes associated with conceptual activity; conceptual activity is necessary for the cognitive phenomenal state.

Classifying what the cognitive phenomenology debate concerns can be achieved in various ways. For instance, the focus is sometimes on phenomenal character associated with conceptual activity;[27] whether there is something it is like to be in a cognitive state and if so, whether it differs from what it is like to be in a purely sensory state;[28] and whether occurrent thoughts have any distinctive conceptual phenomenal character.[29] I refer to positive and negative views on cognitive phenomenology, which are explicitly focused solely on proprietary cognitive phenomenal states, as opposed to any distinction between sensory and nonsensory phenomenal character, for the reasons provided in the previous section.

The nature of phenomenal consciousness itself, or "what-it's-likeness," is also a matter of some controversy, and views on what the nature of phenomenal consciousness is likely affect how those in the debate contemplate thought and its relationship to phenomenal character. For example, phenomenal consciousness can be understood as separating into multiple distinct types,[30] and whether an author has one or another of

[27] Siewert (2011, 237–238).

[28] Prinz (2011, 177).

[29] Bayne and Montague (2011, 2).

[30] For example, see Carruthers (2000), where he discusses transitive and intransitive properties.

these in mind affects whether thoughts require any distinctive cognitive phenomenal character.[31]

One possible view is that no such thing as cognitive phenomenology exists, and it is not required to be in any cognitive state. For instance, according to such negative views on cognitive phenomenology, the phenomenal character of propositional attitudes is similar to various cases of (nonconceptual) sensory phenomenal character insofar as it feels similar to emotions or affect.[32] The same might be said for the phenomenal character of an epiphany or tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon. The phenomenal character of thoughts in inner speech is similar, in some ways, to hearing a sentence spoken aloud and might accompany various sorts of mental imagery. However, determining whether the phenomenal character merely feels *similar* to sensory phenomenal character (e.g., whether it feels *similar* to having an emotion or mood) or whether it feels *similar* to hearing a sentence spoken aloud is insufficient for determining whether a phenomenal state qualifies as sensory. Cognitive phenomenal character could feel similar to sensory phenomenal character without the two overlapping. For example, just as there could be a state that is phenomenologically similar to seeing red but is nevertheless distinct from that state of seeing red, there

[31] As Bayne and Montague (2011) also indicated, Byrne (2004) has a helpful related paper on this topic titled "What Phenomenal Consciousness is Like," published in Gennaro's *Higher Order Theories of Consciousness: An Anthology.* 203–225.

[32] See Prinz (2011).

could be a cognitive state that feels similar to some sensory state F without actually being sensory.

When a phenomenal character is experienced only while having some sort of conceptual activity involving the application or other use of concepts, it is cognitive. According to positive views on cognitive phenomenology, this proprietary phenomenal character of thought is distinguishable from noncognitive phenomenal experience.

Positive views on cognitive phenomenology also presuppose that noncognitive phenomenal states include a more general class of mental states, sometimes including experiences of emotion and the states associated with inner speech; nonetheless, these cases are highly controversial and often at the core of arguments for or against cognitive phenomenology. Examples of experiences with obviously noncognitive phenomenal character include but are not limited to the following, which are arguably understood in terms of states that have objects and properties as their contents:[33]

- Closing one's eyes and visualizing seeing the color red
- Hearing a person say, "Hello" (Prinz 2011: 177)
- Being aware of the location of one's hand

[33] Here, I merely describe what others have suggested as examples of sensory and cognitive states; my own views on the proper way to distinguish between the two imply that some of the suggestions may be best placed in the other category (e.g., inner speech and the feeling of agency).

- Feeling pain
- Hearing a sentence in a language one does not understand
- Memories of such sensory phenomenal character

Additionally, other, less obvious suggestions have been proposed:

- Mental imagery (Bayne and Montague 2011)
- Inner speech (Levine 2011)
- The feeling of emotions (Bayne and Montague 2011) and propositional attitudes (Prinz 2011, Robinson 2005), which can be construed as concerning one's bodily states

According to positive views on cognitive phenomenology, a phenomenal character of thought that is not sensory or otherwise nonconceptual phenomenal character, "a kind of phenomenology over and above sensory [or perhaps more broadly, nonconceptual] phenomenology" exists (Bayne and Montague 2011). Opponents of cognitive phenomenology[34] deny the existence of such states. Examples of experiences with allegedly cognitive phenomenology include the following:

[34] Carruthers and Veillet (2011), Prinz (2010), and Tye and Wright (2011).

- Thinking, “That is a beautiful painting!”
- Thinking, “2 + 2 = 4”
- Hearing a sentence in a language one understands

Less obvious cases of phenomenal character distinct from sensory phenomenal character have also been suggested:

- Having an epiphany
- Realizing that one left their briefcase at home (Siewert 2011)
- Tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon (Smithies 2013a)
- A feeling of agency (Horgan 2011)[35]

Judging an object in one’s visual field to be a pine tree[36] presents a case of a cognitive state; such a case involves something similar to an implicit thought resembling “this is a pine tree,” which suggests that some high-level perceptual states have cognitive and sensory properties. For the purposes of the cognitive phenomenology debate, such states should be understood as cognitive; nevertheless, it is not clear that the phenomenal character of such a state is proprietary to thought.

[35] While the content of this mental state is not concepts or Fregean senses, Horgan (2011) suggests that beliefs and desires are necessary for agentive phenomenology; mental states having contents of concepts or Fregean senses are therefore necessary for agentive phenomenology in such a view.

[36] See Siegel (2010), although I am not claiming that she holds similar views on cognitive phenomenology.

While sensory phenomenal character may well be a necessary constituent of this mental state,[37] it is not clear that any phenomenal character that is possibly had only while one is thinking a thought occurs. For example, instead of some proprietary cognitive phenomenal character being associated with identifying a pine tree, the subject could simply be focusing on different aspects of the visual field, subvocally expressing "pine tree."

Anything resembling a positive view on cognitive phenomenology is distinguishable from claims that, for instance, some complex phenomenal state composed entirely of various simple sensory phenomenal states exists, and the complex phenomenal state happens to be had while thinking a thought. For example, if a zoologist were distinguishing between similar species and thinking, "That is an *x*," the expert may simply focus on different details than a non-expert, and the differences in phenomenal experiences can arguably be accounted for in terms of mental imagery, subvocal speech, and other noncognitive phenomenal states. That is, the differences between such phenomenal states might lie in differences between simpler phenomenal states metaphysically possible without thought, which means that there may be no reason to think that a distinct phenomenal character of cognitive states exists. Indeed, those who doubt the existence of proprietary cognitive phenomenal states maintain that the differences between the phenomenal states of the expert and non-expert are explainable in terms of sensory, or at least nonconceptual, differences, and the

[37] See Montague (2011).

phenomenal state(s) could be had in the absence of thought. It is thus possible to resist the conclusion of phenomenal contrast arguments for cognitive phenomenology, discussed in further detail in Chapter 3, by rejecting the claim that a phenomenal state that a subject can (metaphysically) possibly be in only if they are thinking occurs; in this view, all phenomenal states can also (metaphysically) possibly be had in purely sensory, noncognitive experiences.

To determine whether phenomenal character can be explained in terms of sensory or noncognitive phenomenal character, one can therefore ask the following question:[38] Is the phenomenal character one that a person can only possibly experience when thinking some thought (e.g., belief that *p*) and not in cases of pure sense perception, recollections or imaginings of past sense perceptions, or other noncognitive states?[39]

Only affirmative answers imply that the relevant phenomenal character is proprietary cognitive phenomenal character, something over and above sensory or otherwise noncognitive phenomenal character. If such views are correct, then the phenomenal character is experienced only when thinking. Moreover, insofar as the

[38] Robinson (2005) considered whether particular phenomenal states are required for cognitive states. However, some phenomenal character could be had in cases of nonconceptual, pure sense perceptions or imaginings and be present in the phenomenal character of a thought, and it is not clear that such phenomenal states should be labeled cognitive.

[39] This matter requires knowing how to adjudicate whether it is possible to experience phenomenal character *x* in the absence of belief that *p*. Potential problems with developing such an account indicate that the claims made in the cognitive phenomenology debate are problematic.

debate concerns the nature of thought, it hinges on not only whether phenomenal character exists but also whether that phenomenal character is necessary to be in an occurrent cognitive state.

This interpretation is apparent in negative views on cognitive phenomenology. For instance, Carruthers and Veillet (2011) argued against "the claim that cognitive content (that is, the kind of content possessed by our concepts and thoughts) makes a *constitutive* contribution to the phenomenal properties of our mental lives" (Carruthers and Veillet 2011, 35), where the rejected view would entail that thoughts are metaphysically necessary for the cognitive phenomenal character.[40]

I do not discuss what I assume are obvious cases of noncognitive, sensory phenomenal character in any further detail.[41] Instead, the candidates I discuss in the following subsections tend to be more controversial cases: 1) propositional attitudes, 2) certain cases of inner speech, and 3) other miscellaneous cases. Specifically, I clarify whether each candidate presents an obvious case where a cognitive state is necessary

[40] Similarly, Shields suggested that "in some cases, concepts are involved in the [phenomenal] states but they are not *essential* to the phenomenology" (Shields 2011, 329).

[41] Mental imagery, for instance, is generally an uncontroversial example and considered an example of a sensory rather than a cognitive state for obvious reasons: mental imagery is neither necessary nor sufficient for cognitive states. For example, one can think "Michigan is north of Ohio" without any particular mental imagery; inner speech may be accompanied by a feeling of being confident or a feeling that what one is thinking is correct. Moreover, one can mentally imagine a map of the United States, picturing Michigan situated just north of Ohio, without forming the thought that Michigan is north of Ohio. The mental imagery here is phenomenally identical to those experiences that one has when recollecting sense perceptions. Mental imagery is thus sensory, or at least noncognitive, as it is neither necessary nor sufficient for cognitive states.

for the phenomenal state; whether any such phenomenal state is necessary for thought remains to be seen. To the extent that arguments are discussed, Chapter 2 focuses on the conclusions that individuals arrive at, while Chapter 3 focuses on evaluating whether these conclusions are justified.

2.3.1 Propositional Attitudes

A simple phenomenal contrast argument might be presented as follows: doubting that *p* is true feels different from believing *p* or imagining *p*, and the difference is not attributable to sensory (or noncognitive) differences. If a phenomenal character is distinct to at least some particular propositional attitudes and felt only when a person is thinking a certain kind of thought, then some positive version of cognitive phenomenology is true. However, such propositional attitudes can be distinguished with felt emotions,[42] which are understood as a kind of body perception. If such considerations are correct, then propositional attitudes should be understood as noncognitive.[43]

[42] See Prinz (2011).

[43] In his similar defense of the claim that propositional attitudes do not have proprietary cognitive phenomenal character, Robinson (2005) considers only cases of strong and weak desire and argues that the difference is not cognitive. However, he does not consider cases of the different phenomenal character of different cognitive states (e.g., realizing that *p* is true compared to doubting that *p* is true). It is at least arguable that different phenomenal states are associated with

Nevertheless, it is not clear that a similar brain structure considered in isolation from differences in all other brain activity, or even *similarity* in phenomenal character between emotions and propositional attitudes, is sufficient to demonstrate that propositional attitudes do not have proprietary cognitive phenomenal character. To be proprietary to thought, the phenomenal state must only be possibly had when thinking a thought, regardless of whether any similarity in brain activity or mere similarity to sensory phenomenal character occurs. None of these claims about the phenomenal character of propositional attitudes thus provides a better explanation of the phenomena than the others; none of these accounts on propositional attitudes seems more likely to be true than the others.

2.3.2 Inner Speech

Inner speech is the experience of talking to oneself, the phenomenal experiences of words and sentences, but instead of this occurring aloud, it occurs entirely mentally. An episode of inner speech might be exemplified by reading a sentence with understanding or thinking of the proposition "I have to wake up at 7:00 a.m." Subvocalization, or mentally entertaining the sounds of the words one is reading, is a

each kind of thought (e.g., perhaps a certain species of anxiety that is felt only when one is in a certain kind of cognitive state).

crucial component of much inner speech.[44] An aspect of the phenomenal experience of having a thought expressed in inner speech, at least to some, appears entirely distinct from any phenomenology associated with any noncognitive phenomenal state, including talking.

However, some maintain that inner speech should be understood in isolation from any sort of meaning attached to the words.[45] For example, it is coherent to suggest that the expression of a proposition in inner speech is not necessary or sufficient for thinking that proposition.[46] The motivation for the view that subvocalizing *p* is insufficient for thinking that *p* involves the following sort of case: a person hears a sentence in a language they do not understand and repeats the sounds subvocally; they are subvocalizing *p* without thinking the corresponding thought. Robinson (2005) argues that such a case demonstrates that one can say a sentence subvocally without having the corresponding thought; the former is thus allegedly insufficient for the latter.

Nevertheless, Robinson also specifically says, "If I say to myself in the normal tone of inner voice that Smith is not to be trusted, that is what I think" (Robinson 2005: 547). Such commitments support the view that the typical expression of a proposition in

[44] Moreover, it uses the same physiological mechanisms as speaking aloud (Robinson 2005), which is only relevant to views that focus on the vehicles of these various mental states.

[45] See Montague (2016).

[46] Robinson (2005: 540).

inner speech *is* sufficient for one to think that *p*; for this to be consistent with Robinson's earlier claim that subvocalization of *p* is insufficient for the thought that *p*, inner speech would generally have to involve something other than subvocalization alone.

I assume that inner speech generally involves words and sentences that one understands (not *only* subvocally mimicking sounds); there may also be something similar to a feeling of understanding or familiarity that occurs with episodes of inner speech expressing propositions that the person thinks they understand. However, as Robinson (2011) argues, there is no reason to think that a nonsensory or otherwise noncognitive feeling of understanding occurs; such a case may involve experiencing confusion in one case but not the other or experiencing a sensory feeling of familiarity in one case but not the other. Moreover, it is not clear that a person or any other subject must always have such a proprietary feeling of understanding to understand or that having such a feeling guarantees that one understands anything. Again, the evidence is therefore inconclusive; it is not obvious whether expressing a proposition in inner speech is necessary or sufficient for thinking a thought. No obvious best explanation of the phenomenal character of inner speech has emerged.

2.3.3 Other Miscellaneous Cases

Some "non-sensory experiences,"[47] including tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon, epiphanies, a sense of feeling right, and a sense of seeming familiar, may occur. The feeling or sense of agency might be added to this list. While the existence of such states would not entail strong versions of cognitive phenomenology, according to which cognitive states are identical to phenomenal states, some might consider such considerations to offer some support for more moderate versions, according to which phenomenal character is specific to different kinds of thoughts, such as doubting that *p*, believing that *p*, and realizing that *p*. If this is the case, then there is phenomenal character such that one is in it only when in a cognitive state, which is a case of proprietary phenomenal character of thought. Nevertheless, it is just as plausible that the phenomenal character is that of an emotion or any other sensory state or any noncognitive phenomenal state rather than a proprietary phenomenal character of a thought; it is thus the case again that the evidence does not support one view more than the others.

However, even if these considerations are insufficient to establish whether a particular phenomenal character is sensory or some proprietary phenomenal character of thought, an argument might still establish that proprietary phenomenal character is necessary for thought.

[47] See Mangan (2001).

2.4 Metaphysical Necessity in the Cognitive Phenomenology Debate

One focus of the cognitive phenomenology debate is metaphysical necessity, specifically, whether phenomenal character of thought (proprietary or otherwise) is metaphysically necessary for a person to have a thought.[48,49] This focus, I propose, provides the best account of what is at the heart of the cognitive phenomenology debate. Claims that phenomenal character is constitutive of thought, essential to thought, fundamental to thought, or any other claim that entails that the metaphysical nature of thought requires phenomenal character fall in this category. For instance, the following claims (emphasis added) should be considered:

[48] Conceptual necessity is not the type of necessity that the cognitive phenomenology debate is concerned with. Nothing about the concept of "thought" appears to necessitate nonsensory phenomenal character. Mendelovici (2018) argued that intentional states and phenomenal states are "conceptually distinct" (Mendelovici 2018, 19). I am therefore not concerned with discussing this option in any further detail. Nomological necessity may be what some philosophers consider this aspect of the cognitive phenomenology debate to concern. For example, Robinson argued that whether subvocalization is necessary for thought is a "nontrivial empirical" issue (Robinson 2005, 541). If advocates of moderate or strong CP cannot prove that proprietary or individuative phenomenal character is metaphysically necessary for occurrent thoughts due to the metaphysical nature of thoughts, then the next best option is to prove that phenomenal character is nomologically necessary for thought. However, this would require some sort of nomological connection between phenomenal character and occurrent thoughts, and it is not clear that any argument for this conclusion could avoid the issues of question-begging discussed later in this paper. Moreover, this kind of necessity would fail to address the essential nature of any of the relevant mental states.

[49] See Appendix 4.

- "The disagreement surrounding conscious thought . . . concerns its *fundamental* nature" (Bayne and Montague 2011, 1).

- "The intentional content of a conscious thought is like the sensational content of a conscious pain—they are the states they are not because of their relational properties, but because of their *intrinsic* phenomenal nature" (Pitt 2011, 141).

- "Conscious thought is an *essentially* phenomenological or experiential phenomenon, just as perceptual experience and emotional experience are essentially phenomenological-experiential phenomena" (Montague 2016, 174).

All of these excerpts focus on the metaphysical nature of thought and the metaphysical relationship between phenomenal character and thoughts. This interpretation of the debate is, I propose, the best account of what is going on, as the focus is not just on some contingent relationship between phenomenal states and thoughts, which would be too weak, nor is the focus on the logical or conceptual relationship between phenomenal states and thought, which would be too strong. Rather, the best account of the cognitive phenomenology debate is that the focus is on the metaphysical relationship between phenomenal and cognitive states.

Various arguments in favor of various views on cognitive phenomenology have been developed and are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. For now, it will suffice to say that arguments based on introspection could be used to argue for any of the possible views on cognitive phenomenology, specifically, any of the various possible relationships between phenomenal character and cognitive states, and for the positive views on cognitive phenomenology, I provide the following formulations.[50]

I rely on the following symbolization key:

· UD: mental states and things that are in them

· Px: *x* is a phenomenal state

· Tx: *x* is an occurrent thought

· Mxy: *x* is in mental state *y*

· Phenomenal CP: Some phenomenal state is such that anyone in that state is necessarily thinking a thought.

$$\exists x \, \Box \, (Px \, \& \, \forall y \, (Myx \rightarrow \exists z \, (Tz \, \& \, Myz)))$$[51,52]

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[50] The formulations developed for this paper assume a modal rather than hyperintensional reading of the claims made in the cognitive phenomenology and phenomenal intentionality debates.

[51] Alternatively, phenomenal CP can be formulated as $\exists z \exists F \; [(z \in F \, \& \, \forall w \, (w \in F \rightarrow (Pw \, \& \, \forall v(Mvw \rightarrow \exists x \, (Tx \& \, Mvx)))]]$.

[52] Additional necessity operators may also be inserted in stronger variations.

A person would be in such a phenomenal state if they could be in that state only if they were thinking a thought. Such would be the case if a subject *S* could be in a phenomenal state *P* (such as a feeling of understanding) only if they were thinking some thought. While this formulation (and those to follow) could also be indexed to particular times, I do not think it is crucial. However, insofar as the cognitive phenomenology debate concerns the fundamental nature of thought, something other than phenomenal CP is at issue since phenomenal CP concerns the fundamental nature of phenomenality rather than the fundamental nature of thought.

· Moderate CP: A proprietary phenomenal character is required to think at least some thought.[53]

$$\exists x \Box [Tx \,\&\, \forall y\,(Myx \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v\,(Mvz \rightarrow \exists w\,(Tw \,\&\, Mvw))))]$$[54]

[55]Such a case might involve a person thinking a thought that requires a proprietary phenomenal character (such as a feeling of understanding), phenomenal character that could be had only when thinking a thought. If a person can think a

[53] This might be cashed out in different ways, e.g., grounding relations or constitutive relations, but I take it that this way of articulating moderate CP is at the heart of the issue.

[54]Moderate CP can also be expressed as $\exists x \Box [Tx \,\&\, \forall y\,(Myx \rightarrow \exists z\ \exists F\,[(z \in F \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall w\,(w \in F \rightarrow (Pw \,\&\, \forall v(Mvw \rightarrow \exists z_1\,(Tz_1 \,\&\, Mvz_1)))]]$.

[55]A stronger version could be proposed, $\exists x \Box [Tx \,\&\, \forall y\,(Myx \rightarrow \exists z\Box((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v\,(Mvz \rightarrow \exists w\,(Tw \,\&\, Mvw))))]$. However, the issue of whether the phenomenal character necessarily has the relevant properties is not at issue in the debate, and whatever principle one appeals to to justify the inclusion of the extra necessity operator should in theory apply to other related claims as well (so the entailment relationships should hold), so I will set this issue aside.

thought *T* only if in phenomenal state *P* (and phenomenal state *P* requires thinking some thought), then moderate CP is true.

Other characterizations of 'proprietary' in the cognitive phenomenology literature may vary to some extent from my interpretation, and others such as Chudnoff (2015) may focus instead on a different fundamental feature such as 'irreducibility' or, for others, 'sui generis' phenomenal character or grounding relations, but the notion of proprietariness as I understand it here is at the heart of at least a significant subset of the cognitive phenomenology debate. To the extent that some folks are concerned with other formulations of claims within the cognitive phenomenology debate, some of the arguments contained in this dissertation may not apply to them, but I take it that such arguments fail to get at what is at the heart of the debate as I understand it: the fundamental, intrinsic, essential metaphysical nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal states, and whether any such phenomenal states are proprietary to and required for cognition.

· Strong CP: A distinct phenomenal character is required to think at least some thought.

$$\exists x \, \Box \, [Tx \, \& \forall y \, (Myx \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \, \& \, Myz) \, \& \forall v \, (Mvz \rightarrow Mvx)))]$$[56]

[56] Alternatively, strong CP can be formulated as $\exists x \, \Box \, [Tx \, \& \forall y \, (Myx \rightarrow \exists z \, \exists F \, [(z \in F \, \& \, Myz) \, \& \, \forall w \, (w \in F \rightarrow (Pw \, \& \, \forall v \, (Mvw \rightarrow Mvx))]$.

Such a case might involve a person thinking a thought that requires a proprietary phenomenal character (such as a feeling of understanding "life has meaning"), phenomenal character that could be had only when thinking that particular thought (e.g., if the thought or its content is grounded in the phenomenal state). For example, strong CP is true if a thought *T* can be entertained only when one is in phenomenal state *P*, which can be had only when thinking *T*.

These formulations leave open the possibility that only some thoughts have the relevant features; nevertheless, if one assumes that all thoughts share the relevant fundamental feature(s) (i.e., the stated relationship to phenomenal states), then universal formulations can also be adopted for moderate and strong CP.

The denial of such claims, universal or otherwise, are the negative views within the CPT debate, so according to such negative views, any phenomenal character necessary for or otherwise accompanying thought can possibly be had in non-cognitive mental states. Some phenomenal character experienced while thinking, e.g., phenomenal character *P*, might feel different than phenomenal character had in non-cognitive states, at least to some folks, but this does not mean that all instances of *P* can only be experienced while in a cognitive state, or more importantly, that any such proprietary phenomenal character of thought is necessary for cognition.

There may be some alternative formulations of some of the claims made in the cognitive phenomenology debate. However, my project will focus specifically on these

relatively strong metaphysical claims, and so I will set aside any variant view which does not fit into this system of categorizing claims about the phenomenal character associated with thought. Importantly, however, it seems that any motivation for moving the necessity operator within the various claims should be applied consistently, so entailment relations examined throughout this dissertation should be maintained for views which change the location of the necessity operator.

2.5 Which View about Cognitive Phenomenology Should We Endorse?

Now that my account of the cognitive phenomenology debate has been laid out, I can clearly state the view about cognitive phenomenology which I endorse: the best account of the phenomenal character associated with thought[57], [58] is that which denies the necessity of any proprietary phenomenal character for cognition, or the existence of

[57] Some proponents of positive views about CPT might argue that the phenomenal character to be explained is actually the proprietary or sui generis phenomenal character of thought. However, not everyone in the debate agrees that such entities exist (or that any such entities have said properties), so in order to get the debate off of the ground and for opponents to even engage with each other, I propose we take the phenomenal character associated with thought as the phenomenon to be explained: all folks in the cognitive phenomenology debate at least agree that there is phenomenal character associated with cognition, with the possible exception of strong negative views not currently defended in the literature which say there is no phenomenal character associated with thought at all.

[58] I take it that the issue isn't just about whether a particular person's experience of the thought has some particular relationship with the phenomenal character, which would allow for Jane's thought 'T' to have proprietary phenomenal character while John's same thought does not have that proprietary phenomenal character. Rather, the issue is about whether the thought itself, for anyone thinking it, has the phenomenal character (or relationship to it) in question.

proprietary phenomenal character of thought at all. The reason for this is that deductive arguments within the debate, as I will argue in Ch. 3, are largely circular, so the best basis on which to form a view about cognitive phenomenology is on the basis of arguments to the best explanation.

Positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are largely equivalent when it comes to their explanatory virtues, such as evidential, diachronic, and coherential virtues[59]. Evidential virtues are those which have to do with whether a theory fits the empirical and non-empirical evidence well, and explanatory depth, which is concerned with the range of counterfactual questions about the explanandum answered by the theory. Coherential virtues, on the other hand, are those involving internal consistency (non-self-contradictory) and coherence, both internal and universal, where internal coherence addresses the intuitive plausibility of a theory as a whole, and universal coherence deals with the intuitive plausibility of a theory given justified background assumptions. The last category of explanatory virtue for which I will argue negative and positive views about cognitive phenomenology are roughly equal is diachronic virtues, which are concerned with a theory's durability (whether it has so far survived testing of its predictions and given new data) and its fruitfulness

[59] Michael Keas (2018) defends such an account of explanatory virtues, as does Lipton (1991). While these do not exhaust the possible explanatory virtues a theory might hold, I take it that those selected for discussion are crucial for evaluating which competing theory is best within the context of the cognitive phenomenology debate. I take it that similar considerations apply to other relevant explanatory virtues as well.

(whether it leads to subsequent discoveries through original predictions and unifies other theories). Positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are largely equivalent when it comes to these explanatory virtues.

But, as I will show, one notable exception to the equivalence of the explanatory virtues of the theories is that negative views about cognitive phenomenology posit the existence of fewer metaphysically necessary relationships, and is thus simpler and therefore explanatorily preferable.

My argument that negative views about cognitive phenomenology ought to be endorsed goes as follows:

1) Positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are largely equivalent when it comes to their explanatory virtues, including evidential, diachronic, and coherential virtues.

2) Positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are not equivalent when it comes to their ontological commitments; negative views about cognitive phenomenology are at an advantage here.

3) If two theories are equivalent with respect to their evidential, diachronic, and coherential virtues but one fares better with respect to metaphysical commitments, we ought to endorse that view.

4) We ought to endorse a negative view about cognitive phenomenology.

Premise 1, that positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are roughly equal in terms of most relevant explanatory virtues, is supported by the following considerations:

Both positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are on equal footing with respect to evidential virtues, which again, are those which have to do with whether a theory fits the evidence well and the range of counterfactual questions about the explanandum answered by the theory. Both theories are consistent with current empirical[60] and non-empirical[61] data, however these are distinguished, and the causal effects of both cognitive and noncognitive phenomenal states equally explain the phenomenal character associated with cognition. Moreover, any law-like generalizations stemming from either theory leaves them in more or less the same position as well; although they may generate different generalizations, each seems equally consistent with the empirical and indeed non-empirical data to which we

[60] The views might be a better explanation for different pieces of empirical data; for example, negative views might be a better fit with studies such as those which show that impairment of sensory processing negatively affects processing of words related to that particular sensory modality. Positive views might be a better fit with other studies. Nonetheless, I take it that both positive and negative views are a better fit than the other for a not-insignificant set of empirical data.

[61] An example of such non-empirical data might be introspective reports. But as I will discuss in 3.2.1, introspection is not a good guide to the metaphysical relationship between mental states, and thus the data it generates is perhaps irrelevant to the cognitive phenomenology debate. However, both positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology have steadfast proponents among epistemic peers, and thus these competing views are on equal footing with respect to such data.

currently have access. Both offer views of the nature of cognition equal in terms of evidential virtues.

Both positive and negative views about CPT share the same coherential virtues, which again, are those involving internal consistency (non-self-contradictory) and coherence, both internal and universal, where internal coherence addresses the intuitive plausibility of a theory as a whole, and universal coherence deals with the intuitive plausibility of a theory given justified background assumptions. Again, negative and positive views about cognitive phenomenology seem on equal ground with respect to such explanatory virtues, in that neither are self-contradictory, neither are obviously ad hoc, and both are intuitively plausible wholes, coherent with a not-insignificant set of justified background philosophical commitments.

Positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are also equally matched when it comes to their diachronic virtues, which again, are concerned with a theory's durability (whether it has so far survived testing of its predictions and given new data) and its fruitfulness (whether it leads to subsequent discoveries through original predictions and unifies other theories). While it is not obviously the case that both are equally as durable, in the sense that future conceptual developments or insight about the nature of cognitive or phenomenal states may lead us to reject one or more of the views about CPT, we don't yet know how that will play out. For now, we must leave this issue open and note that thus far, they seem to have survived testing to the extent

possible (e.g., in thought experiments) equally well. Similarly, both positive and negative views about CPT are at least *prima facie* equally as fruitful or promising with respect to future conceptual developments and insights into the nature of our mental lives. As it stands, there is no reason to think that psychology will uncover features of our mental life that will be more fruitfully explained or better described in the language of CPT rather than opposing views, or vice versa.

Thus, positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology are largely equivalent when it comes to their explanatory virtues, including evidential, diachronic, and coherential virtues.

Premise 2, that negative views about cognitive phenomenology are committed to fewer metaphysically necessary relationships and thus fare better in terms of being ontologically simpler, is supported by the following considerations:

On the other hand, positive and negative views about CPT do differ with respect to the virtue of ontological simplicity. In this regard, it seems that negative views about cognitive phenomenology are ontologically simpler in that they do not require that thoughts and phenomenal character share some metaphysically necessary relationship. Specifically, they do not require a proprietary phenomenal character of thought, as according to such views, non-cognitive phenomenal character can account for the phenomenal character experienced with thought, the metaphysical nature of which is the thing-to-be-explained by these opposing views. Since such views allow the

phenomenal character associated with thought to be explained in terms of phenomenal character possibly had in other, noncognitive states, and because cognitive phenomenology is a 'different kind of beast', so to speak, than the phenomenal character of other aspects of mental life, negative views are ontologically simpler and less importantly, aesthetically more elegant. I propose that this is the only significant difference in terms of explanatory virtues of positive and negative views about cognitive phenomenology.

Premise 3, that we ought to endorse the view which has some advantage in terms of its explanatory virtues, is supported by the following considerations:

If competing theories are equal in terms of their explanatory virtues with the exception that one fares better in terms of having fewer ontological commitments, we ought to default to that theory. When one theory is simpler, for example, it has fewer ontological commitments (e.g., not positing the existence of a special kind of proprietary cognitive phenomenology necessary for thought), and fewer ontological commitments might imply that a theory is more likely to be true.

For example, when presented with evidence of a robbery including missing items and a single set of footprints in the house, it is reasonable to favor the hypothesis that one person committed a crime rather than supposing that a series of different robbers broke in and stepped in exactly the same footprints while there, leaving no additional evidence. Similarly, when presented with evidence of a robbery including missing items

and a single set of footprints in the house, it is reasonable to favor the hypothesis that a person committed a crime rather than supposing that a new type of alien entity left the footprints and took the missing items. For these and perhaps other reasons, favoring simpler views and not multiplying entities (or types of entities) beyond necessity has a longstanding tradition in philosophical works. In the context of the cognitive phenomenology debate, we are presented with evidence of phenomenal states, but no reason to make the jump to the conclusion that there is, in addition to non-cognitive phenomenal character, some other type of proprietary phenomenal character necessary for thought. Non-cognitive phenomenal character can adequately account for the evidence, and positing the existence of proprietary cognitive phenomenology and its necessity for cognition is an unnecessary additional ontological commitment.

The conclusion that we ought to endorse a negative view about cognitive phenomenology follows. Since *ceteris paribus* we should favor simpler ontological views in general, we ought to default to the simpler ontological view(s) about cognitive phenomenology. That is, barring overriding considerations to the contrary, we should default to the view that cognitive phenomenology does not exist or is otherwise not necessary for thought. Perhaps a future argument for cognitive phenomenology might show that a positive view about cognitive phenomenology has some explanatory virtue not shared by its competitors, which 'overrides' the explanatory virtue of being a simpler ontological theory. However, as the debate currently stands, the account which boasts the most explanatory virtues is that which is ontologically simplest, that is, the

negative views about cognitive phenomenology according to which there is no proprietary phenomenal character of thought necessary for cognition.

There may be pushback from proponents of positive views about cognitive phenomenology, who might think that their views are simpler in that, for example, strong CP views might suggest that cognitive states are actually identical with phenomenal states, thus positing fewer types of ontological entities in this respect. However, given the explanatory gap between phenomenal and cognitive mental states, making such a move would be done at the expense of other explanatory virtues, such as non-ad hocness and evidential virtues. Thus, I take it that negative views about cognitive phenomenology fare better overall with respect to their explanatory virtues than positive views about cognitive phenomenology. If there were non-circular, sound deductive arguments available for a particular view about cognitive phenomenology, that would be preferable to an inference to the best explanation. However, I argue in a separate chapter of my dissertation that no such deductive arguments are non-circular, so inference to the best explanation is the best way for us to approximate our beliefs to the truth, or at the very least, provide a principled basis for breaking the argumentative impasse or deadlock in debates, like the cognitive phenomenology debate, in which there is a fundamental disagreement between epistemic peers about the nature of some phenomenon.

As I see it, proponents of positive views about cognitive phenomenology have two classes of objections available to them: one is to reject my move of relying on inference to the best explanation in the cognitive phenomenology debate, and the other is to say that inference to the best explanation does not support negative views. I will address the first class of objections in some detail in chapter 3, but for now, I will say that inference to the best explanation arguments are the best available in the CPT debate because deductive arguments for any position are circular in that they rely on introspective reports which are only true if one's position regarding the nature of the phenomenal character associated with thought is presupposed.[62] It is possible to argue that we ought to refrain from passing judgment at all rather than relying on inference to the best explanation, but to the extent that we ought to endorse any views at all in the cognitive phenomenology debate, inference to the best explanation is the best guide we have available.

For the remainder of this section, I will focus on potential claims that inference to the best explanation does not support a negative view about cognitive phenomenology.

[62] Relatedly, a proponent of positive views about cognitive phenomenology might argue that the target phenomenon is not phenomenal character associated with thought, but rather, the proprietary phenomenal character of thought (or phenomenal character irreducible, or sui generis, etc). However, to suppose that the target phenomenon has such a property or nature is an unjustified circular assumption. In order for those in the debate to actually engage with each other, the target phenomenon has to be common ground to all.

PIT proponents, for example, might say that I was too hasty to say that the negative views about cognitive phenomenology are ontologically simpler– for example, a strong PIT theorist might say that intentional states (including cognitive states) are identical to phenomenal states, thus arguably reducing the number of ontological entities committed to. But then, we are committed to more metaphysical claims about the nature of and relationships between such entities, whether under the guise of phenomenal or intentional states, and moreover, this identity claim seems potentially ad hoc, and not coherent with justified background assumptions that these two things (intentional states on the one hand, and phenomenal states on the other hand) are mental states with fundamentally different kinds of content. Thus, negative views about cognitive phenomenology seem to fare better.

Similarly, other objections might focus on other ways in which positive views about cognitive phenomenology have certain evidential virtues not shared by negative views. However, I propose that no such considerations override the virtue of the ontological simplicity of the negative views in this particular case. The view that a proprietary phenomenal character of thought is metaphysically necessary for cognition is unnecessarily ontologically complicated, and a negative view is preferable for this reason.

Chapter 3. A Critical Analysis of Arguments for Cognitive Phenomenology

As discussed in Chapter 2, the debate on cognitive phenomenology, about the phenomenal experience a person has while thinking a thought, concerns the metaphysical relationship between cognitive and phenomenal states. I endorse a negative account of cognitive phenomenology, namely, that there is no proprietary phenomenal character of cognition necessary for thinking. In this chapter, I explain where arguments for proprietary cognitive phenomenology go wrong, or otherwise offer some reason to generally oppose arguments for positive views about cognitive phenomenology. I focus initially on arguments for the necessity of a proprietary phenomenal character of thought for thinking a thought; if such an argument were successful, it would demonstrate the existence of a strong form of cognitive phenomenology. However, I suggest that some of the best arguments for cognitive phenomenology, including Pitt's (2011) self-knowledge argument, rely on circular assumptions that leave opponents at an argumentative impasse. I then address other arguments for and against cognitive phenomenology, some of which are perhaps most charitably interpreted as arguments to the best explanation. As I argue, we should default to the view that no proprietary phenomenal character of thought exists or is necessary for cognition. Given that noncognitive phenomenal states can plausibly

account for the phenomenal character associated with thought, this view is preferable insofar as it is at least on some views ontologically simpler, and there is no non-circular reason to complicate our ontological commitments.

3.1 The Self-Knowledge Argument

Many deny the existence of cognitive phenomenology in its various forms described in Chapter 2; Non-phenomenal functional representationalism (NPFR) advocates, for example, hold that thinking involves tokening and processing sentences in "mentalese" and that even such occurrent thoughts have no proprietary phenomenal character.[63] This section addresses self-knowledge arguments for strong CP, focusing particularly on Pitt's (2011) argument and his response to the NPFR view as Levine (2011) defended. I argue that Pitt's argument presupposes that individuals make voluntary judgments about their beliefs based on recognizing a distinctive phenomenology of thought, the way a person recognizes what they see, hear, or smell. Nevertheless, deniers of cognitive phenomenology (e.g., those who endorse NPFR) would deny this assumption. Pitt's arguments are thus circular and do not indicate that strong CP is the best account of our knowledge of our thoughts, unless one presupposes some version of strong CP to begin with.

[63] Levine (2011, 105).

3.1.1 Pitt, Levine, and the Self-Knowledge Argument

The original formulation of the self-knowledge argument is that a person has 'Immediate' knowledge of what they're thinking, in the sense that they can "consciously, introspectively, and non-inferentially" identify each of their thoughts as the particular thought it is, in addition to distinguishing between their occurrent thoughts and 1) their other occurrent mental states and 2) their other occurrent thoughts (Pitt 2004: 7-8). Levine argues that as it is presented, the self-knowledge argument, that cognitive phenomenology is necessary for a person to know what they are thinking, does not support any strong version of cognitive phenomenology as NPFR can also account for a person's self-knowledge of their thoughts. However, Pitt offers a variation of the self-knowledge argument that he believes is immune to Levine's criticisms: a person has "Immediate" knowledge of what they are thinking in the sense that they can 1) consciously, 2) introspectively, and 3) non-inferentially identify each of their thoughts as the particular thought it is, in addition to distinguishing between occurrent thoughts, other occurrent mental states, and other occurrent thoughts. Pitt argues that the only way a person can have such knowledge is if their thoughts have a kind of cognitive phenomenology that is individuative, proprietary, and distinct (Pitt 2004, 2011). Levine considers an alternative mentalese-based account (MBA) of how a person can have self-knowledge of what they are thinking, which is consistent with the NPFR.

A person's knowing what they are thinking (e.g., a thought *T*) involves tokening a sentence in mentalese that the person is thinking a particular thought (Levine 2011, 106–107). Since the tokening of the mentalese sentence is an immediate result of the thought state, along with an internal monitoring process rather than an inferential process, it counts as "Immediate" knowledge.

Levine moves on to Pitt's (2004) objections to the MBA, arguing that they ultimately fail. Pitt's first objection is that, in order for a person to have direct knowledge of their thoughts, the thought must appear to them in some determinate way, which requires cognitive phenomenology. Levine argues that this response begs the question insofar as it allegedly builds phenomenal character into the kind of knowledge intended to be explained. However, if one refrains from requiring these phenomenal features for the self-knowledge of thoughts, Pitt's objection is undermined. Noncognitive phenomenal character can account for the experience associated with thought.

Pitt's second objection is that metacognition requires a phenomenal character of thought, so the MBA cannot account for how a person knows what they are thinking. Levine responds to this objection by appealing to a distinction between explicit self-knowledge and implicit self-knowledge, where the former involves formulating metacognitive thoughts such as "I believe that *P*" (Levine 2011, 108), while the latter does not. Implicit self-knowledge of one's thoughts comes from a person thinking in

mentalese. In contrast, explicit knowledge of one's thoughts involves a distinct cognitive state, "to token the right representation in the appropriate circumstances. To explicitly know thought *t*'s content is to think another thought, *t'* whose content is that the content of *t* is *p* and is itself implicitly known" (Levine 2011, 109). In response, Pitt (2011) argued that implicit self-knowledge does not adequately explain how a person knows what they are thinking.[64] He suggests that because consciousness requires phenomenology, a person cannot have implicit, conscious knowledge of their thoughts purely in virtue of an unconscious representation, although this claim is only justified if one presupposes the nature of cognitive phenomenology intended to be proven. Pitt offered a further argument that sometimes individuals form beliefs voluntarily, as opposed to automatically, by attending to aspects of their experience and forming beliefs about it, which he suggests Levine's theory cannot account for.

3.1.2 Evaluating Pitt's Appeal to "Voluntary Formation of Thoughts"

The argument reflected in the preceding section seems to resemble the following:

[64] Levine also argues that the indubitability of self-knowledge of content would support a very weak variation of cognitive phenomenology, "though whether we have such self-knowledge of content is itself dubitable" (Levine 2011, 119).

(1) If Levine's NPFR/MBA account is correct, then an automatic belief-forming mechanism forms all individuals' beliefs.

(2) If individuals make voluntary judgments based on recognizing the distinctive phenomenologies of thoughts, then an automatic belief-forming mechanism does not form their beliefs.

(3) Individuals make voluntary judgments about their beliefs based on recognizing their distinctive phenomenologies, the way they recognize what they see, hear, or smell.

(4) An automatic belief-forming mechanism therefore does not form individuals' beliefs.

(5) Levine's NPFR/MBA account therefore cannot be correct.

Contrary to what Pitt suggests, NPFR does not necessarily presuppose that belief formation automatically occurs in some necessarily nonvoluntary way. While Pitt argues that any MBA automatic mechanism for forming beliefs is distinct from the process of voluntary belief formation, this functionally characterizable internal monitoring process is consistent with presupposing that belief formation is not always automatic; a person may study a painting for some time before thinking, "This painting is beautiful" (and something similar to a feeling of voluntariness may sometimes occur, which may be explained in terms of noncognitive phenomenology). Short of

presupposing that intentionality is grounded in phenomenality, there is no reason to think that Levine's account cannot explain voluntary belief formation in this sense.

Moreover, whereas Pitt assumes something similar to (3) is true, (3) is inconsistent with the NPFR view that Levine defended, as Levine's NPFR view does not allow for there to be any proprietary phenomenal character of thought; this aspect of the view is the same reason for the 'non-phenomenal' part of the view's label. Insofar as Pitt endorses (3), he presupposes the existence of cognitive phenomenology, and since he does not consider his argument circular, he seems to hold that there is independent reason for thinking that (3) is true. Such would be the case if Pitt endorsed some version of phenomenal intentionality or the PIT. Believing in the PIT is one possible motivating factor for believing in Premise 3 of the argument, which is described as follows:[65]

> While many contemporary theories of intentionality attempt to account for intentionality in terms of causal relations, informational relations, functional roles, or other "naturalistic" ingredients, PIT aims to account for it in terms of phenomenal consciousness, the felt, subjective, or "what it's like" (Nagel 1974) aspect of mental life. According to PIT, the key ingredient giving rise to intentional states is phenomenal consciousness. (Bourget and Mendelovici 2017, Section I)

[65] Levine suggests that this might be due to differences between how he and Pitt use the term "conscious."

Given this characterization of the PIT, the PIT provides some support for Pitt's controversial premises, such as Premise 3 in the argument developed above. If intentional states such as occurrent thoughts are considered grounded in phenomenal states, then phenomenal states are required for occurrent thoughts; nevertheless, unfortunately for Pitt, endorsing the PIT is arguably based on circular assumptions within the context of the cognitive phenomenology debate, and is inconsistent with views such as NFPR.[66] Whatever Pitt's motivation for assuming (3), others such as reductive representationalists would not grant this assumption and therefore have reason to reject the conclusion of Pitt's argument. Pitt's argument will hence not convince as wide of an audience as may have been intended; instead, only those who have independent reasons for thinking that (3) is true will agree that Pitt's argument is sound

An advocate of a positive view on cognitive phenomenology might argue that Levine is in no better position than Pitt insofar as NPFR is ultimately defended by principles his opponents would not accept; for instance, Pitt rejects the claim that one can simply know what they are thinking without any cognitive phenomenology. However, this reflects a deeper disagreement between opponents in the cognitive phenomenology debate: those who are committed to the PIT are committed to intentional states being grounded in phenomenal states, which is consistent with Pitt's

[66] See Chapter 4 for a more detailed account of the PIT.

claim that "we make judgments about our beliefs based on recognizing their distinctive phenomenologies, the way we recognize what we see, hear, or smell." Nonetheless, this claim is far from obvious and needs further non-circular justification; more work must be done to clarify the significance of prior commitments to views such as the PIT (or NPFR), noncircular justification for such views, and any relationships these bear to arguments presented in the cognitive phenomenology debate. To be clear, I am not suggesting that the argument is obviously unsound, but rather, that the self-knowledge argument gives no non-circular reason to adopt cognitive phenomenal character as an ontological commitment.[67] Given the argument in chapter 2.4, we ought to default to the ontologically simpler view that there is no proprietary phenomenal character necessary for cognition.

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[67] A defender of Pitt's argument might respond by mentioning a related problem with Levine's view that Pitt attributes to Byrne (Pitt 2011, 159). Byrne (2005) attempted to explain how a person comes to know what they believe via the application (or attempted application) of some transparent epistemic rule, such as "If p, then believe that you think that p." Pitt argues that "application of [this epistemic rule, BEL,] presupposes the knowledge it's supposed to generate: the theory is viciously circular" (Pitt 2011, 157).
Pitt also considered (and dismissed) the following possible response on Byrne's behalf:
It might be objected that one need not recognize that one is in proper circumstances for application of BEL in order to apply it and come to know what one believes, because its application is automatic: whenever you're in the right circumstances of recognizing that p, some mechanism that implements BEL is activated, and forthwith you believe that you believe that p. Simply being in the proper circumstances is sufficient to trigger the relevant mechanisms. (Pitt 2011, 157)
Pitt rejects this possible line of response as he suggests that Byrne is not attempting to explain automatic processes but rather voluntary ones and that this response allegedly cannot explain how one voluntarily forms the thought that they are hoping or desiring, for instance, regarding p without having knowledge of said mental state (Pitt 2011, 157–158). Similarly, one might argue that Levine's account of how a person has knowledge of their thoughts (sometimes voluntarily) would require the person to have the knowledge that is supposed to be generated.
However, the NPFR account can appeal to the "functionally characterizable internal monitoring process" (Levine 2011, 107), and other states involved in mentalese sentence tokening might account for the content of a person's thought and whether it is hoped, believed, doubted, and so forth. For example, CPT deniers can understand the phenomenology of such propositional attitudes as sensory (such as Prinze, 2011) or noncognitive. Insofar as that is the case, Pitt's (2011) criticism of Byrne (2005) does not apply to Levine's (2011) view; the NPFR view is not viciously circular.

3.1.3 Concluding Remarks

Pitt (2011) responded to Levine (2011) by arguing that cognitive phenomenology is required to explain knowledge of one's thoughts, particularly the voluntary formation of thoughts. Nevertheless, advocates of NPFR would not agree with all the assumptions that underlie Pitt's argument, as the assumption that individuals make voluntary judgments about their beliefs based on recognizing their distinctive phenomenologies, the way they recognize what they see, hear, or smell, is inconsistent with NPFR. While Pitt's argument reveals that cognitive phenomenology may be required if one endorses some version of the PIT, it thus offers no reason for Levine or other NPFR advocates to believe in cognitive phenomenology; in that sense, the argument is circular.

Again, a possible reply is that Levine is in no better position than Pitt insofar as Levine's view is ultimately defended by principles his opponents would not accept; for instance, Pitt rejects Levine's position that one can simply know what they are thinking without any cognitive phenomenology.

However, there is no sensible reason to expand the number of different types of phenomenology beyond noncognitive phenomenology. As Prinz (2011) argued, "cognitive phenomenology can be exhaustively accommodated by the phenomenology

of inner speech and sensory simulations of what our thoughts represent" (Prinz 2011, 190). That is, every purported case of nonsensory cognitive phenomenology is such that it can potentially be explained in terms of a noncognitive or sensory-based phenomenology, and no clear case of so-called cognitive phenomenology is obviously distinguishable from phenomenal character had in noncognitive states. Moreover, it is just as plausible that noncognitive phenomenal character can account for the phenomenal states associated with thought. *Ceteris paribus*, it seems that positive and negative views on cognitive phenomenology have roughly the same amount of explanatory power, and the primary and perhaps only significant difference in their explanatory virtues is that negative views on cognitive phenomenology are ontologically simpler. As argued in Chapter 2, if I am correct that this is the only significant difference in the explanatory virtues had between the negative and positive accounts of cognitive phenomenology, the onus is on advocates of positive views on the CPT to provide stronger arguments in favor of the existence of cognitive phenomenology or explain why their account is otherwise preferable, and as it stands, the self-knowledge argument fails to do so. In the remainder of this chapter, I suggest that other arguments also fail to offer any reason to expand the current ontological commitments to include proprietary phenomenal character.

3.2 Other Arguments for Cognitive Phenomenology

3.2.1 Introspection-Based Arguments

Just because PIT views support CPT views (discussed in further detail in Chapter 4), that does not mean that all arguments for CPT views necessarily rely on PIT claims. For instance, arguments from introspection appeal directly to introspection to support positive (Horgan and Tienson 2002) or negative (Wilson 2003) claims about cognitive phenomenology.[68] The former camp suggests that cognitive phenomenology is just obviously there, but opponents argue the exact opposite, that is, that their introspections do not reveal any proprietary phenomenal character of thought. An example of an argument for cognitive phenomenology is as follows: "attentive introspection reveals that both the phenomenology of intentional content and the phenomenology of attitude type are phenomenal aspects of experience [which] you cannot miss if you simply pay attention" (Horgan and Tienson 2002, 522-523). Robert Wilson (2003), on the other hand, argues that upon introspecting in the way Horgan and Tienson describe, he finds that there is no such cognitive phenomenal character. Importantly, all such arguments seem to rely at least implicitly on the premise that

[68] Mendelovici (2018) based her entire project on an introspection-based account of intentionality. Kriegel suggested that introspection can allow a person to recognize grounding relations such as the relationship between intentional/cognitive states and phenomenal states, "under a simpler guise," and one can 'conceptualize' the presented phenomenon as grounding (Kriegel 2011a, 7). As is suggested for other introspection-based arguments in this section, these arguments seem to each present an example of circular arguments for cognitive phenomenology.

introspection about the nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character is a good guide to the actual nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character as laid out in Chapter 2.[69]

Thus, arguments from introspection for cognitive phenomenology might take the following form:

1) Introspection seems to show that there is a proprietary[70] phenomenal character of thought.
2) Introspection about the nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character is a good guide to the actual nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character. (implicit premise)
3) Therefore, there is a proprietary phenomenal character of thought.

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[69] Thus, premise 2 is a crucial premise which I take it all arguments from introspection in the cognitive phenomenology debate will depend upon, and the criticisms I pose in this section are intended to apply to all such arguments from introspection generally.

[70] The way that some people are using the term 'proprietary', as a sui generis phenomenology of thought, may entail that introspection can be used to pick out cognitive phenomenology. I argued for a slightly different characterization of 'proprietary' in Chapter 2. To some, the modal conditions I attribute to 'proprietary' CP might sound more like irreducibility than proprietariness, and Chudnoff, for example, thinks that it is irreducibility that is at the core of the CP debate. However, I stand by my interpretation of ‘proprietary’ and that this characterization is the fundamental notion at the heart of the cognitive phenomenology debate. Some who disagree with my characterization of the debate or the fundamental relevant notions like ‘proprietary’ might think arguments from introspection are successful, but regardless of one’s interpretation of whatever the fundamental feature of the debate is, arguments based on introspection for such claims are also circular in the way described in this section, for the interpretation of the views in the cognitive phenomenology debate introduced in Chapter 2.

Arguments from introspection against cognitive phenomenology might take the following form:

1) Introspection seems to show that there is no proprietary phenomenal character of thought.
2) Introspection about the nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character is a good guide to the actual nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character. (implicit premise)
3) Therefore, there is no proprietary phenomenal character of thought.

There is precedent for taking 2 to be false. Such deductive arguments from introspection could be used in favor of or against cognitive phenomenology, i.e., (1) in each argument or its negation, (2). In light of such disagreements between epistemic peers about what introspection tells us about cognitive phenomenology, and since there is no basis for "high rational confidence in its general reliability" Spener 2011, 280), and no reason to think our own intuitions are more likely to be correct than others', we should at the very least reduce our confidence in the accuracy of our own introspection-based claims, if not suspend judgment entirely. As Eric Schwitzgebel says about introspection-based considerations generally, "The introspection of current conscious experience...is faulty, untrustworthy, and misleading, not just sometimes a little mistaken, but frequently and massively mistaken" (Schwitzgebel 2011, 129). Given the widespread disagreement between epistemic peers regarding what introspection entails about the nature of cognitive phenomenology, we have to reject

variations of (2) in the context of the cognitive phenomenology debate, and perhaps also variations in wider contexts which also have widespread disagreement between epistemic peers. Thus, there is precedent for taking premise 2 to be false.

However, I will take a different line of argument in rejecting the variations of premise 2 on which introspection-based arguments rely. I propose that introspection might be able to provide us with knowledge about the *content* of our mental states, such as whether my experience is of seeing red, but it is not clear that introspection can tell us about the *metaphysical relationship* between thoughts and phenomenal states; in fact, there is absolutely no reason for thinking introspection is capable of providing such insight. It is my own position that using introspection to determine the metaphysical nature of the relationship between thoughts and phenomenal states is actually a category mistake[71]; thoughts, intentional states more generally, and phenomenal states are not the sorts of entities that can have their metaphysical relationships determined by simply introspecting on the matter. Just as cases of synaesthesia seem to indicate that phenomenal character 'seeming' to be strongly associated with or necessary for, in some way, some particular perceptual modality does not entail that such phenomenal character is proprietary to or necessary for such modalities, it is my own view that 'seemings' or introspective reports about such metaphysical relationships are not good guides to the truth about such matters.

[71] Thank you to Dr. Aderemi Artis at the University of Michigan, Flint, for suggesting this phrase.

I propose that perhaps given limitations in human understanding and introspection, some issues, such as the true metaphysical relationship between thoughts and phenomenal states, are simply not knowable through introspection. This is in line with Carruthers and Veillet's position that "whether cognition is implicated in phenomenal consciousness constitutively or just causally…isn't a difference that should always be accessible to introspection" (2011, 35). Even if one happens to form a true belief about the metaphysical relationship between phenomenal and cognitive states, or a belief shared by all of their epistemic peers, it would not be justified if based only on introspection.

The issue may come down to whether the same phenomenal state can be had in the absence of a thought, or what even counts as a cognitive state (e.g., if some proposition must be consciously entertained, and to what extent typical inner speech is truly noncognitive, etc.). However, the claims in the debate as I understand it are about the metaphysical nature of thought and cognitive phenomenal states, which simply doesn't seem accessible by introspection alone. The most one can get would be something like, 'Any time I am thinking a certain thought, I am in a phenomenal state which might be proprietary to thought'. However, I propose that the phenomenal state being proprietary to thought or necessary for it is not accessible to introspection. At most, such arguments might establish that some version of CPT is *possible*, but are a far cry from providing support for any particular view about cognitive phenomenology.

Arguments for any of the views in the cognitive phenomenology debate which rely on introspection are entirely misguided and presuppose the very matter at issue.

One might suggest that the existence of proprietary cognitive phenomenology provides the best explanation of their introspections-- but opponents could (and often do) report that these claims are inconsistent with their own introspective experiences. All introspection-based arguments appear to be based on intuitions that opponents do not share and which are in no obvious way preferable to those of their opposition about matters which introspection cannot be a guide to truth anyway.

An opponent could argue that claims about the nature of time are often justified based on introspection, such as something similar to the following:

(1) It seems that time flows.

(2) The best explanation for (1) is that time flows.

(3) Time therefore flows.

The opponent could argue that, similarly, because it seems that thought and phenomenal character have a certain metaphysical relationship and that thought and phenomenal character having that relationship is the best explanation for this seeming, one should endorse the conclusion that thought and phenomenal character have a certain metaphysical relationship.

However, there is reason to think premise 2 is false; just as in the case of the metaphysical relationship between thoughts and phenomenal character, it is far from clear that the best explanation of some aspect of one's experience (e.g., of time or of phenomenal character associated with thought) is that some metaphysical relationship or nature is had by the thing to be explained. I take it that such things being merely a feature of human perception and experience is just as good of an explanation as time (or cognitive states) having a certain metaphysical nature. Thus, premise 2 is false, and the case is the same for both time and cognitive phenomenology: introspection is not in general a good guide to metaphysical natures nor relationships among mental states, or how aspects of experience map on to such relationships. This undermines any argument from introspection which relies even implicitly on the premise that introspection about the nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character is a good guide to the actual nature of thought and its relationship to phenomenal character.

3.2.2 Phenomenal Contrast Arguments

Phenomenal contrast arguments present a case in which two subjects differ in their phenomenal states, and the difference is allegedly only explainable in terms of cognitive phenomenology, or such a positive view otherwise provides the best account of the difference in the phenomenal states between the two subjects. Chudnoff (2015)

divided phenomenal contrast arguments into different types, where each presents "a pair of cases that differ with respect to what phenomenal states their subjects are in" (Chudnoff 2015, 45). He acknowledged that two types fail to establish positive views on cognitive phenomenology[72] but suggested that the third is successful. I will briefly give an account of this view, before arguing that it also fails.

Chudnoff ultimately endorsed a version of phenomenal contrast arguments which rely on descriptions of the phenomenal differences between two cases (Chudnoff 2015, 56):

[72] The first kind of phenomenal contrast case Chudnoff considered is pure phenomenal contrast arguments, understood as "an argument that purports to establish such a thesis by reasoning about the mere existence of a phenomenal contrast" (Chudnoff 2015, 45). An example of such a case might involve a person listening to a sentence with understanding and another person listening to the same sentence without understanding it (e.g., if the sentence is in a language only the first listener understands). According to such arguments, the sensory states are the same; the only explanation for the phenomenal difference between the two is thus their cognitive states, and such considerations are intended to support positive claims about cognitive phenomenology, specifically, that a phenomenal character of understanding exists. Nevertheless, opponents of cognitive phenomenology are free to maintain that "there are explanatorily sufficient sensory differences" (Chudnoff 2015, 47) and that these offer the best account for the phenomenal differences between the two listeners. Others, such as Carruthers and Veillet (2019), have suggested that the differences might be not only nonsensory but also nonconceptual. Pure phenomenal contrast arguments therefore fail to demonstrate the existence of cognitive phenomenology.

The second kind of phenomenal contrast case Chudnoff considered is hypothetical phenomenal contrast cases, "in which it is guaranteed that there is no change in sensory phenomenal state[s] whatsoever" (Chudnoff 2015, 49–50), such as a hypothetical person whose mental states do not have sensory phenomenal character, only cognitive phenomenal character. Horgan (2011) offered similar arguments. However, opponents might argue that such a person would lack phenomenal character; similar to pure phenomenal contrast arguments, hypothetical phenomenal contrast arguments therefore also fail to support any particular view on cognitive phenomenology more than the others.

· Case 1: A person entertains an abstract thought without recognizing why or that it is true.

· Case 2: A person entertains an abstract thought while recognizing that, and perhaps why, it is true.

His deductive 'glossed phenomenal contrast argument' is formulated as follows:

(1) Case 1 and Case 2 contain different phenomenal states.

(2) The difference consists, at least in part, in this: in Case 2 but not in Case 1, one is in a phenomenal state *P* that makes them seem to be aware of an abstract state of affairs.

(3) No possible combination of wholly sensory states puts one in *P*.

(4) Some cognitive state (e.g., the state of intuiting that occurs in Case 2) puts one in *P*.

(5) Some cognitive states put one in a phenomenal state for which no wholly sensory state suffices (i.e., cognitive phenomenology exists; Chudnoff 2015, 55).

Chudnoff argued that Premise 2 in this deductive argument contains a gloss that best explains the phenomenal contrast between the two cases, and in Premise 3, he claims that sensory phenomenal character is inadequate for explaining the difference between Case 1 and Case 2 described in Premise 2. However, Chudnoff is focused on

sensory states focused on one's spatiotemporal vicinity (Chudnoff 2015, 59). This is a fairly strong claim that restricts sensory states in such a way that excludes mental states typically considered sensory in the cognitive phenomenology debate, such as those associated with inner speech and imaginings of possible sensory states. Moreover, moving away from talk of purely sensory states in favor of noncognitive states, I maintain that it is at least as plausible that a phenomenal state possible in a wholly noncognitive mental state could make one aware of an abstract state of affairs (e.g., by imagining instantiations of "if $a < 1$, then $2 - 2a > 0$."), which is truly at issue. As I argued at the end of Chapter 2, I actually believe that this ontologically simpler view is preferable. Thus, this phenomenal contrast argument does not show anything about the existence of proprietary phenomenal character, as it, like many other phenomenal contrast arguments, relies on the largely irrelevant sensory/nonsensory distinction as opposed to the cognitive/noncognitive distinction.

One last important note is that phenomenal contrast arguments seem to hinge to some extent on introspection, the credibility of which was called into doubt in the previous section. There is a noticable difference between the experience of understanding and that of not understanding the meaning of a sentence, and according to the introspections of advocates of positive views about cognitive phenomenology, it is because the former is a case of cognitive phenomenology and the latter is not.[73]

[73] See for example Horgan (2011, 57).

Opponents simply deny that the differences in phenomenal character cannot be accounted for in terms of sensory phenomenal character; it is not clear than anything other than introspection-based considerations support either side of the debate, and if any other considerations exist, it is up to proponents of such arguments to make it clear what they are.

To the extent that proprietary cognitive phenomenal character of thought is taken to be the best explanation of the phenomenal contrast cases, opposing views on cognitive phenomenology are equally able to account for the cases of phenomenal contrast. I maintain that the only significant difference in their explanatory virtues is their simplicity, and in this regard, a negative view about proprietary cognitive phenomenology is preferable.

3.2.3 Content-Grounding Arguments

Content-grounding arguments for cognitive phenomenology often explicitly, but at least implicitly, rely on the premise that cognitive states metaphysically depend on

phenomenal states. For example, after offering an argument for interpretivism[74], Kriegel offered the following deductive argument (Kriegel 2011b, 94):

[P1] Interpretivism entails that all unconscious content is ultimately grounded in conscious interpretation.

[P2] The content of all conscious interpretation is grounded in the phenomenal character of conscious interpretation.

[P3] The phenomenal character of all conscious interpretation is a kind of cognitive phenomenology; and

· [C] Interpretivism therefore entails that all unconscious content is ultimately grounded in a kind of cognitive phenomenology.

Kriegel's support for P2 relies on the assumption that "it is plausible, though not uncontestable, that there is some phenomenal commonality among [interpretive states]" (Kriegel 2011b, 95); however, this claim is common ground only to those who endorse a view such as the PIT, which presupposes the metaphysical dependence of intentional states on phenomenal states. Such views are not standard and are unjustified in the

[74] Kriegel is relying on Dennett's interpretivist theory according to which intentional concepts are used to produce an approximate interpretation of objects, where the objects themselves are interpreted as intentional systems. According to interpretivism, we use a "web of intentional concepts" (Kriegel 2011, 82), e.g., desires and beliefs, that allows one to produce interpretations of objects, which are conceived of as intentional systems. If one is not on board with this project, such content-grounding arguments will do little to motivate the adoption of a more complicated ontological theory positing the existence of cognitive phenomenology.

context of the cognitive phenomenology debate, as they are only true when the conclusion of such arguments is presupposed, that is, they are circular. Such considerations apply more generally to other content-grounding arguments for cognitive phenomenology, as there is no independent, non-circular reason to think that the content of cognitive states is metaphysically dependent on phenomenal character.

Similarly, an argument for the claim that thoughts necessarily have phenomenal character might also take the form of transcendental arguments,[75] in which a faculty is taken for granted, and then one considers what would be required for us to have that faculty. Pitt's (2004, 2011) self-knowledge argument might be taken as an instance of such an argument, where the 'necessary condition on the obtaining of the uncontested starting point' appears to be *a priori* true only when controversial background assumptions (such as PIT) about the faculty in question (our thoughts), are assumed. For a more general example, consider the following:

1) We have knowledge of what we are thinking.

2) In order for us to have knowledge of what we are thinking, our thoughts must have proprietary, distinct phenomenal character.

3) Our thoughts have proprietary, distinct phenomenal character.

[75]Transcendental arguments are arguments which set out to uncover the a priori or non-empirical necessary conditions on certain activities or states of affairs. In their standard form, they start with something which every party to the debate takes as uncontested. (This can differ from debate to debate.) They then identify something which is a broadly a priori necessary condition on the obtaining of the uncontested starting point. (Gomes 2017)

Framed in such a way to make the at least sometimes implicit premise P2 in such transcendental arguments explicit, P2 appears to presuppose that the way we come to have knowledge of our thoughts is through their phenomenal character; but whether or not thoughts have such phenomenal character is the heart of the issue of the cognitive phenomenology debate; whether or not thoughts must have distinct phenomenal character is simply whether Strong CPT is true. From the context of the cognitive phenomenology debate, the only justification for P2 is circular, as a person need not be in touch with any proprietary phenomenal character of thought - which may not even exist! - for them to know what they are thinking. It seems that similar remarks may be made of any transcendental argument for cognitive phenomenology, namely, that their premises rely on presuppositions about the nature of cognitive phenomenology intended to be demonstrated. Differences here may boil down to differences in intuitions about the nature of knowledge and the relationship between cognitive and phenomenal states (where some of these contradictory intuitions do not map on to the way the world actually is).

3.2.4 Free Will and Cognitive Phenomenology

Acting freely in the sense of being able to act differently if the agent wants to (and perhaps also in the metaphysical libertarian sense) might require some sort of

agentive phenomenology, and if this is the case, then the existence of such 'free will' would entail the existence of cognitive phenomenology. For example, Horgan (2011, 64) argued that proprietary cognitive phenomenology is a necessary element of agentive phenomenology, by arguing that zombies lacking agentive phenomenology (but otherwise the same as their counterparts) are conceivable, and the only difference between them is agentive phenomenology. Moreover, "agentive phenomenology is itself a species of cognitive phenomenology, by virtue of its purposive aspects" (Horgan 2011, 71), so Horgan takes himself to have shown that not just agentive but also cognitive phenomenal character more generally exists.

If this argument is sound, then the cognitive phenomenology debate is related to the free will debate. For instance, consider the following deductive argument:

1) Agentive phenomenology is a species of cognitive phenomenology (Horgan, 2011).
2) Agentive phenomenology is necessary for acting freely (supposition).
3) If cognitive phenomenology does not exist, then agentive phenomenology does not exist, and no one acts freely (by 1 and 2).
4) Individuals do act freely in the relevant sense (supported by, for example, metaphysical libertarian views, and perhaps also some compatibilist views).
5) Cognitive phenomenology exists.

One can resist this connection between cognitive phenomenology and the free will debate by denying Horgan's claim that cognitive phenomenology is a necessary element of agentive phenomenology or denying that agentive phenomenology is necessary for free actions (e.g., by appealing to possible worlds where agents lack phenomenal states but still have beliefs and desires and act freely). Such issues are still open, and it is not clear which arguments are sound.

Moreover, arguments in other sections of this paper suggest that introspecting mental states does not allow one to understand their metaphysical relationships to other mental states, which is especially obvious when different parties have different views on what such introspection reveals about the same states; contradictory views about the nature of these relationships cannot simultaneously be correct. Contrary to what Descartes may have believed, when one thinks about a thought, they can (as Descartes suggested) know what its content is, but they cannot know what the metaphysical nature of the thought is, or the nature of the relationship of the thought to phenomenal character, based on introspection alone; for example, a metaphysically necessary relationship could appear to exist without it actually being the case. If this is the case, then arguments for or against metaphysical libertarianism should perhaps not hinge solely on introspection since the true metaphysical nature of such mental states or actions, and their relationship to other mental states and events, are not obviously accessible through introspection.

3.2.5 The Alleged Inadequacy of Sensory Phenomenal Character

Michelle Montague (2016) argued that sensory phenomenology cannot fully account for the fact that thoughts are conscious because the sensory phenomenal character accompanying thoughts is—according to her—arbitrary. She made the following case:

> Since it doesn't seem to matter whether it's a green patch image, or an image of green grass, or an image of a lawnmower, not to mention any one of a huge variety of word tokens, that makes [someone's] thought that grass is green count as a conscious thought, the *relationship* between the phenomenology and the thoughts seem not to matter. If one instance of sensory phenomenology is potentially as good as any other, if an instance of sensory phenomenology is potentially replaceable with any other, what kind of connection can there be between the sensory phenomenology instanced and the thought's being the thought that grass is green? (Montague 2016, 195)

In other words, no necessary relationship between sensory phenomenal character and thought exists as any phenomenal state associated with a thought is only contingently connected to it and could be replaced by other phenomenal states. The following is my interpretation of Montague's deductive argument:

1) There is no significant relationship between sensory phenomenology and cognitive states associated with them; the sensory phenomenal states are arbitrary.

2) The fact that thoughts are conscious means that there must be some significant relationship between some phenomenal state and the relevant cognitive state(s). It cannot be arbitrary. (implicit premise)
3) Since the relationship between sensory phenomenal character and cognitive states cannot account for cognitive states being conscious, there must be some nonsensory, cognitive phenomenal state that plays this role. This is cognitive phenomenology.

Nonetheless, contrary to what Montague suggested, it is not the case that one instance of sensory phenomenology is as good as any other, because certain phenomenal characters would not typically, or more importantly, ideally, be associated with the thought that grass is green. For example, if one experienced mental imagery of blue water accompanying the experience of the imagined sounds of “grass is green” “with no meaning attached to those sounds" (Montague 2016, 178), it is not the case that one is thinking that grass is green; one instance of sensory phenomenology is hence not as good as any other to think a thought. Such considerations provide reason to think that cognitive phenomenology need not be necessary to explain how a thought is consciously experienced. As Montague herself suggested, “one cannot take oneself to be thinking about the number two, and thus have ‘two-ish’ . . . phenomenal properties and really have a chair as external content” (Montague 2016, 207). Moreover, it is not obvious that all noncognitive phenomenal states are sensory, and other noncognitive states may hence account for differences in phenomenal character without the cause

being due to sensory phenomenal character. This leaves us in the same position as with phenomenal contrast cases: there is no reason given to complicate our ontological commitments to include proprietary phenomenal character of thought.

3.3 Arguments Against the Cognitive Phenomenology Thesis

Most arguments against the existence of cognitive phenomenology seem to explain away alleged cases of cognitive phenomenology in terms of sensory phenomenology. For instance, Prinz (2011) argued that propositional attitudes "can be distinguished [by] felt emotions, which . . . can be characterized as perceptions of bodily states" (Prinz 2010, 191).[76] Contrary to what Pitt (2011) claimed, Levine argued that one is simply aware of their thoughts and that there is no need to appeal to any cognitive phenomenology to explain how individuals know what they are thinking. Such arguments might be said to assume the following form:

> (1) If alleged cases of cognitive phenomenology can be explained in terms of sensory phenomenology, then there is no sensible reason to posit the existence of cognitive phenomenology.

[76] This argument relies on Prinz's theory of emotions, on which they are perceptions of bodily states. Other theories of emotion would deny this.

(2) Alleged cases of cognitive phenomenology can be explained in terms of sensory phenomenology.

(3) There is no sensible reason to posit the existence of cognitive phenomenology.

Proponents of the CPT can resist this argument by rejecting (1), for example, on the grounds that cognitive phenomenology offers a better explanation of the cases, or (2), by holding that sensory phenomenal character cannot account for cognitive phenomenology. However, noncognitive phenomenal character is just as capable of accounting for the relevant phenomenal experiences.

Carruthers and Veillet (2011) offered a different line of argument: they defended a negative view on cognitive phenomenology by arguing that while cognitive states do affect one's phenomenal states, they do so not by introducing some new distinctive kind of phenomenology but rather through affecting sensory phenomenology. That is, in this view, occurrent thoughts make a causal rather than constitutive contribution to phenomenal states (Carruthers and Veillet 2011), and they went on to claim that no cognitive phenomenology can exist because no explanatory gap for thoughts exists.

As discussed in Chapter 2, an even simpler argument for a negative view on the CPT is that positing the existence of cognitive phenomenal character unnecessarily expands and complicates theories about the metaphysical relationships of cognitive or

phenomenal states, and since positive and negative views are roughly equal concerning their explanatory power, the view with fewer unnecessary commitments to metaphysical relationships is preferable.

3.4 What is the Best Explanation for the Phenomenology Experienced with Thought?

Most, if not all, arguments about cognitive phenomenology ultimately rely, in some sense, on introspective considerations, such as claims about the relationship between cognitive states (or, more generally, intentional states) and phenomenal states. However, there is reason to think that the nature of the relationship between cognitive and phenomenal states is simply not accessible through introspection. Given that phenomenal states have an explanatory gap from the physical sciences underlying many current views on cognitive states and that the current physical theories are far from complete, one should be wary of forming conclusions about these issues based on introspection. Nothing in the introspection-based cognitive phenomenology literature provides more evidential weight to one view over the others.

Despite the difficulties for introspection-based arguments and the other arguments considered, there may be reason to favor one view above the others, as suggested in the previous chapter. Individuals who have previous commitments to views on phenomenality and intentionality, for instance, might favor a positive view on

cognitive phenomenology because it has the benefit of being consistent with or perhaps even entailed by their views. Others who do not share such prior commitments might think that the best explanation for the data is the simplest view, and ontologically, this is the view that no proprietary phenomenal character of thought exists or is necessary for cognition, as this view is committed to fewer metaphysically necessary relationships. As suggested in Chapter 2, the competing theories seem to be roughly equivalent when it comes to explanatory power given background assumptions common within the cognitive phenomenology debate, with the key difference between their explanatory virtues being their simplicity. I personally (though weakly) endorse this "simpler" view ultimately for this reason: it is the simplest ontological view, and this is a desirable virtue that opposing views do not share.

Chapter 4. The Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis

In this chapter, I provide an account of the phenomenal intentionality debate and explain how various (arguably circular) views in the PIT debate entail views on cognitive phenomenology. I argue that claims about the necessity of phenomenal states for cognitive states rely on claims that are problematic for other reasons, specifically because they rely on background assumptions, such as a strong variation of the phenomenal intentionality thesis, that are at the very least circular. The conclusions of such circular arguments are unjustified, and without any overriding considerations to the contrary, we ought to default to the ontologically simplest explanation of the phenomenal character associated with thought and intentional states more generally.

4.1 Alternatives to the Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis

Intentional mental states are mental states about properties, objects, and states of affairs. Conversely, non-intentional mental states are not about anything; some hold that mental states such as emotions are not about anything, and if that is the case, such mental states are non-intentional. Intentional mental states include cognitive states, which are about properties, objects, and states of affairs. Theories on intentional states

are thus relevant to the cognitive phenomenology debate; anything attributed to intentional states applies to cognitive states, which indicates that any theory on the relationship between phenomenal states and intentionality will restrict what views on cognitive phenomenology one can hold.

According to the PIT, intentional states (including cognitive states) are grounded in, identical to, or otherwise metaphysically dependent on phenomenal states.[77] Positive views on cognitive phenomenology, according to which a relationship between thoughts and phenomenal states holds by metaphysical necessity, are inconsistent with all separatist projects that address intentionality (including thoughts) and phenomenality independently, such as the Naturalist-Externalist Research Program (NERP), which Dretske (1981), Fodor (1990), Millikan (1989), and others have defended.[78] The NERP is an "attempt to naturalize intentionality by identifying a natural relation that holds between internal states of the brain and external states of the world when and only when the former represent the latter" (Kriegel 2013, 1). Instead of identifying the "source" of intentionality as phenomenal character as the PIT does, such alternative theories suggest that it is found in the relationship between representations on one hand and the environment or other representations on the other hand.[79] In many

[77] The PIT presupposes a narrow view on content.

[78] I understand naturalism to be the view that the only forces and laws at work in the universe are natural.

[79] Mendelovici 2018, 83.

such views, a divide-and-conquer strategy can be employed, providing a separate account of intentionality and a separate account of phenomenality.[80] Nevertheless, if positive views on cognitive phenomenology are true, then intentional states such as cognitive states and phenomenal character cannot be addressed separately.

Positive views on cognitive phenomenology also seem inconsistent with all other projects where intentional states are more fundamental if the reason the phenomenal states are required for the intentional states is that the former grounds or is more fundamental than the latter. In contrast, projects that endorse something similar to the PIT, according to which phenomenality grounds or is identical to intentionality, are consistent with moderate or strong views on cognitive phenomenology.

4.2 Different Versions of the Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis

I adopt a modified version of Bourget and Mendelovici's (2019) system for classifying different possible variations of the PIT:

Strong PIT: All intentional states are[81] phenomenal intentional states.

[80] This statement is not true of all such views; for example, see the views that Michael Tye endorsed.

[81] I assume this is a matter of necessity, not a contingent matter.

Moderate PIT: All intentional states either are phenomenal intentional states or are . . . [82] grounded in phenomenal intentional states.

Weak PIT: Some intentional states are phenomenal intentional states.

4.2.1 Strong PIT

According to strong PIT, all intentional states, including all cognitive states, are phenomenal intentional states, where each is "an intentional state that is constituted by a subject's phenomenal states" (Bourget and Mendelovici 2019). I propose that this is best symbolized as follows:

- UD: mental states and things that have them
- Ix: *x* is an intentional state
- Hx: *x* is a phenomenal intentional state
- Mxy: *x* is in mental state *y*

$$\forall x \, \Box \, (Ix \rightarrow Hx)$$

[82] In Bourget and Mendelovici's version, they include "at least partly" here. I strengthen the claim to include only full grounding.

Strong PIT implies that a phenomenal state is identical to each thought, distinct from any other phenomenal state. Various versions of this view have been developed.[83] For example, Mendelovici suggested that "intentionality is identical to phenomenal consciousness" (Mendelovici 2018, 83), which implies that all intentional states are phenomenal, and thus this counts as a version of strong PIT.

4.2.2 Moderate PIT

According to moderate PIT, all intentional states, including cognitive states, are identical to or grounded in phenomenal intentional states. I propose that Moderate PIT be symbolized as follows:

$$\forall x \, \Box \, [Ix \rightarrow \forall y \, (Myx \rightarrow \exists z \, (Hz \, \& \, Myz))]$$

Moderate PIT implies that a person thinking a thought must also be in a phenomenal state, but the phenomenal state need not be unique to that particular thought type. Various such views, including Kriegel's (2011a, 2011b), Siewert's (1998), and Montague's (2016), have been defended. For example, Pautz (2008) says "experiences play a role in grounding the intentionality of other mental states, especially perceptual beliefs [... and] the best account of how experiences can play this

[83] See Pitt (2004), Farkas (2008), and Mendelovici (2018).

explanatory role is that they are themselves intentional states of a kind more basic than belief." (Pautz 2008, 250). Such views count as versions of moderate PIT because each entails that every intentional state is either identical to or grounded in some phenomenal intentional state.

4.2.3 Weak PIT

According to weak PIT, some intentional states are necessarily phenomenal intentional states; I propose that weak PIT is symbolized as follows:

$$\exists x \, \Box \, (Ix \, \& \, Hx)$$

Weak PIT implies that some intentional states are such that having a phenomenal state is metaphysically necessary for having the intentional state. However, these need not be cognitive states because, at least in some views (e.g., representationalism), noncognitive sense perceptions can be intentional, and it is not controversial to claim that phenomenal character is required for such states. Horgan and Tienson endorse a version of weak PIT in their (2002) work, arguing that "[t]here is a kind of intentionality, pervasive in human mental life, that is constitutively determined by phenomenology alone" (Horgan and Tienson 2002, 520). However, Bourget and

Mendelovici (2019) suggest that this is not a genuine form of the PIT, presumably since it does not capture the fundamental features of all intentional states.

4.3 Arguments for the Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis

In this section, I evaluate arguments for the PIT, covering arguments from introspection, thought experiments, and the alleged inadequacy of alternatives to the PIT. I argue that they fail to demonstrate a necessary relationship between phenomenality and intentionality as their assumptions are circular; insofar as their premises presuppose the truth of the conclusion, the arguments are informally fallacious and their conclusions are insufficiently justified. Since we are responsible for the formation of justified beliefs to make the best possible decisions for ourselves and those around us, and we ought not endorse insufficiently justified premises or conclusions, such considerations undermine positive claims about cognitive phenomenology.

4.3.1 Arguments From Introspection

One line of argument that PIT proponents consider to support some PIT views "is the idea that phenomenal intentionality is simply introspectively manifest: attending to

one's stream of consciousness in the right way brings out that some conscious episodes are intentional, and intentional because phenomenal" (Kriegel 2011a, 7). Kriegel assumes that introspection can recognize grounding relations in some sense; one can conceptualize the relationship presented to introspection as a grounding relation (Kriegel 2011a, 7), but it is not clear that introspection is in fact a practical guide to grounding; without presupposing his intended conclusion about cognitive phenomenology, this underlying assumption is unjustified. As argued in the previous chapter, introspection is an unreliable guide to the metaphysical nature of relationships between mental states, which implies that grounding relations between such mental states are not accessible through introspection.

4.3.2 Thought Experiments

PIT proponents sometimes appeal to thought experiments involving a brain in a vat[84] that is physically identical to some actual brain, with identical inputs resulting in an intentionally identical experience; they argue that this identical intentional experience would occur because the brain would have a phenomenally identical experience to its actual counterpart (Horgan, Tienson, and Graham 2004). Nevertheless, such an argument relies on a potentially false and, at best, a circular assumption: PIT

[84] See Appendix 6.

opponents could simply disagree that phenomenality is the underlying basis for the identity of intentional states or deny the identity of the intentional states by appealing to an externalist view. The assumption is only entailed when the conclusion is presupposed in the premises, that is, if it is assumed that intentionality is grounded in or identical to phenomenal character. As argued in 3.2.1, I do not believe that such metaphysical relationships between mental states are knowable through avenues such as introspection. However, I propose that like views about cognitive phenomenology as discussed at the end of Chapter 2, positive and negative views about PIT are more or less equal in terms of their explanatory virtues, with the most notable exception being that negative views about PIT seem simpler in that they do not posit the existence of any metaphysical relationship between the relevant mental states. Thus, all things considered, we ought to default to negative views about PIT, which undermines PIT-based arguments for cognitive phenomenology.

4.3.3 The Inadequacy of Alternatives to the Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis

Mendelovici argued “that there are mismatch cases for tracking and functional role theories [in which a representation’s content does not match the content it is predicted to have by the theory]” (Mendelovici 2018, 87), as they have different superficial characters. However, the “theory-independent methods” Mendelovici relies

on include introspection, which is crucial to her theory of intentionality, and introspection leads to different intuitions; because such conflicting intuitions cannot simultaneously be true, introspection is unreliable in many circumstances, and moreover, seems unlikely to lead to any knowledge about the metaphysical relationship between intentional and phenomenal states[85]. Since the metaphysical relationship between the mental states in question is not clearly something that can be known through introspection, those in the debate should rely on other, non-introspection based considerations, such as which view is preferable all-things-considered. As I argued at the end of Chapter 2, the view we ought to default to is the simplest, and thus, a negative view about the existence of such metaphysical relationships.

Mendelovici suggested that the "Real Problem" for the best PIT alternative is that tracking relations cannot make the relevant items available to any representational systems (Mendelovici 2018, 79). However, it is not clear that tracking relations cannot make those items available to representational systems; as Millikan (1989) suggested, "the part of the system which consumes representations must understand the representations proffered to it" (Millikan 1989, 286), which indicates that perhaps all the part that produces the representations must do is track some relevant external stimulus. The "Real Problem" for tracking and functional role theories may thus not be a genuine problem at all. There is therefore no strong reason to think that a necessary connection between phenomenal and intentional states must exist. Alternatives to the

[85] See 3.2.1 on Introspection-Based Arguments for more information.

PIT such as tracking views are just as plausible, and have the added explanatory virtue of being simpler.

4.4 On the Entailment Relations from the Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis to the Cognitive Phenomenology Thesis[86]

Commitments to various claims in the phenomenal intentionality debate entail commitments to various claims in the cognitive phenomenology debate. Different positive views on cognitive phenomenology appear to be implications of different (relatively strong) views on phenomenal intentionality, specifically, which kinds of mental states thoughts are grounded in (or whether they are identical to phenomenal states). Strong PIT views entail moderate CP and strong CP. Moderate CP is the claim that proprietary phenomenal character is required for thought. On the reading that some thought is necessarily such that a person can have it only when in a particular phenomenal state, this is inconsistent with alternatives to the PIT, such as the NERP. According to strong CP, a distinct phenomenal character is required for thought. Strong CP reflects an understanding of thoughts, according to which thoughts bear a

[86] This section focuses on the entailment from PIT to views about cognitive phenomenology. In Chapter 5, I go on to discuss how cognitive phenomenology has been used to support PIT. Thanks to the Spring 2019 MENTaL reading group for suggesting I break down these discussions into two distinct parts.

relationship similar to grounding to more fundamental phenomenal states, which is inconsistent with separatist projects.

Only phenomenal CP is also consistent with rival theories to the PIT. What I call "phenomenal CP" is the claim that having a thought is necessary to be in some phenomenal state; this claim is consistent with either the NERP or the PIT but irrelevant to the cognitive phenomenology debate understood as focused on the metaphysical nature of thoughts. Strong positive views on cognitive phenomenology are thus inconsistent with separatist projects but consistent with positive views on phenomenal intentionality.

4.4.1 Assumptions

The inferences made in this section often rely on the assumption that all thoughts are necessarily intentional states. Furthermore, the inferences depend on the assumption that if a mental state occurs, something is necessarily in that state (to find support for such a claim, see Descartes's *Meditations*). I also rely on the assumption that some mental states are necessarily thoughts. Lastly, I assume that all phenomenal intentional states are necessarily phenomenal and that their phenomenality is more fundamental than the intentionality (and may even ground the intentional properties). All four assumptions are presupposed in all discussions of entailment relations between views

on cognitive phenomenal character and phenomenal intentionality; nevertheless, alternatives to achieve the same results (e.g., with a weaker set of initial assumptions and stronger claims within the CPT and PIT debates than those mentioned in Chapter 2 and previous sections of Chapter 4) are available.

Assumptions:

(A1) $\Box\forall x\,(Tx \rightarrow Ix)$

(A2) $\Box\ \forall x\,(Sx \rightarrow \exists y\,(Myx))$, where *S* is a mental state predicate

(A3) $\exists x \Box\, Tx$

(A4) $\Box\forall x\,(Hx \rightarrow Px)$

4.4.2 Preliminary Remarks

Regarding the cognitive phenomenology debate, to my understanding, just as weak PIT does not count as a genuine form of phenomenal intentionality, presumably because it is not about the fundamental nature of all intentional states, phenomenal CP—the claim that a proprietary phenomenal character is associated with some thought—does not count as a genuine form of cognitive phenomenology since it is not about the fundamental nature of any thoughts but the fundamental nature of

phenomenal states. Insofar as an opponent may want to reject this interpretation of the CP debate, they must reject the suggestion that genuine views on cognitive phenomenology, properly understood, are about the fundamental nature of thoughts. Moreover, many arguments (other than introspection-based arguments) for moderate CP may appear to extend to arguments for strong CP, as several reasons offered for thinking that a proprietary phenomenal character of thought exists could presumably also be provided in favor of individuative phenomenal character of thought. If this is the case—and if the debate does reduce to a debate about the fundamental nature of thought and the rejection of such claims—then views on strong PIT largely determine views on cognitive phenomenology.

4.4.3 Moderate PIT and the Cognitive Phenomenology Thesis

If someone endorses a modest version of moderate PIT, according to which phenomenal character grounds intentional states, then one can hold that all phenomenal character is noncognitive phenomenal character, which means that a proponent of moderate PIT can reject moderate CP and strong CP; it is therefore logically possible for a PIT proponent to deny the existence of cognitive phenomenology. For example, Pautz (2013) and Montague (2010) appear to offer such an account. However, many proponents of moderate PIT hold that at least some intentional states are phenomenal

states, which, if the intentional states are thoughts, entails strong CP. One might also hold that the phenomenal states that intentional states are grounded in are proprietary to the kind of intentional states they are (e.g., thoughts), in which case moderate CP is entailed.[87]

4.4.4 PIT and Strong CP

If someone holds strong PIT (i.e., that all intentional states are identical to phenomenal states), then strong CP and moderate CP are entailed (see Appendix 5 and Appendix 8 for derivations demonstrating these entailments).

Commitments to various claims in the phenomenal intentionality debate thus entail commitments to various claims in the cognitive phenomenology debate. Furthermore, different positive views on cognitive phenomenology seem to be implications of different (relatively strong) views on phenomenal intentionality, specifically, whether strong PIT is true, a weaker variation of the PIT is true, or the PIT is false. Such considerations provide strong reason to doubt Bourget and Mendelovici's (2019) claim that cognitive phenomenology and phenomenal intentionality are entirely distinct projects.

[87] Pautz (2013) confirms that one can endorse moderate PIT without endorsing strong CP, moderate CP, or strong PIT, which is consistent with my claims.

More importantly, since conclusions that favor PIT views rely on insufficiently justified or circular assumptions, arguments for positive views on the CPT that rely on PIT background assumptions are undermined. The alternative proposed in previous chapters (i.e., the ontologically simpler view that no proprietary phenomenal character of thought exists or is otherwise necessary for cognition) best explains the phenomenal character associated with thought. Such considerations can be generalized to apply to the phenomenal intentionality debate: the ontologically simplest view is that there is no such metaphysical relationship between the mental states, and since introspection does not allow one to detect the nature of such thoughts, and without any overriding, non-circular considerations to the contrary, we ought to default to the ontologically simplest view, i.e., that no such metaphysically necessary relationship exists between intentional and phenomenal states.

Chapter 5. Strong CP and the Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis Debate, and Implications of Chapters 2–4

5.1 Cognitive Phenomenology

As I argue in Chapter 2, the cognitive phenomenology debate concerns the metaphysical nature of thought. The following claims (emphasis added) are prime examples:

· "The disagreement surrounding conscious thought . . . concerns its *fundamental* nature" (Bayne and Montague 2011, 1).

· "The intentional content of a conscious thought is like the sensational content of a conscious pain- they are the states they are not because of their relational properties, but because of their *intrinsic* phenomenal nature" (Pitt 2011, 141).

If positive views on cognitive phenomenology are true, then at least some thoughts have some proprietary phenomenal character that is impossible in purely sensory, noncognitive states, which means that for a person to experience any such proprietary phenomenal character, they must necessarily be thinking a thought.

The claim that some proprietary phenomenal state is associated with some thought, which I call Phenomenal CP, can be symbolized as follows:

$$\exists x \Box (Px \ \& \ \forall y \ (Myx \rightarrow \exists z \ (Tz \ \& \ Myz)))$$

However, the cognitive phenomenology debate is not merely about whether such a phenomenal state exists; such an interpretation would imply nothing about the fundamental nature of any thought. Instead, the debate concerns whether any such proprietary phenomenal state is constitutive of or otherwise required to have some thought. Considered to concern the fundamental nature of thought, the most basic positive view on cognitive phenomenology seems to be moderate CP.

· Moderate CP: A proprietary phenomenal character is required to think at least some thought.

$$\exists x \Box [Tx \ \& \forall y \ (Myx \rightarrow \exists z \ ((Pz \ \& \ Myz) \ \& \forall v \ (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w \ (Tw \ \& \ Myw))))]$$

According to a stronger view on cognitive phenomenology, a *distinct* phenomenal character is necessarily required for anyone to think some thought that is not had unless one is thinking that particular thought. Strong CP is formulated as follows:

· Strong CP: A distinct phenomenal character is required to think at least some thought.

$$\exists x \Box [Tx \ \& \forall y \ (Myx \rightarrow \exists z \ ((Pz \ \& \ Myz) \ \& \forall v \ (Mvz \rightarrow Mvx)))))]$$

Moderate CP and strong CP entail the claim that being in some phenomenal state is required for some thought. I call this claim *R*[88]:

Claim R: Being in some phenomenal state is required for some thought.

$$\exists x \, \Box \, (Tx \, \& \, \forall y \, (Myx \rightarrow \exists z \, (Pz \, \& \, Myz)))$$

To avoid circularity issues regarding assumptions that involve the nature of thoughts and phenomenal character, one might argue that the alleged relationship between thoughts and phenomenal character holds more generally for all intentional states. For instance, content-grounding arguments (e.g., see Kriegel 2011) rely on premises that assume that intentional states are grounded in phenomenal states, and Pitt's (2011) self-knowledge argument does so as well (Parks 2019; see also Section 4.2).

5.2 Phenomenal Intentionality and Cognitive Phenomenology

To argue that thoughts (or phenomenal states associated with thoughts) have any of the aforementioned properties, one may need to appeal to some feature of the mental states in virtue of which they have the alleged properties, and the intentionality of thoughts is a possible contender. Perhaps fortunately for advocates of the CPT, as

[88] I stop short of calling this a weak version of cognitive phenomenology, because the phenomenal character it entails could be entirely noncognitive.

discussed in the previous chapter, the PIT debate is on whether intentional states such as thoughts are grounded in or identical to phenomenal states (e.g., see Horgan and Tienson 2002, 520; Bourget and Mendelovici 2019). The PIT is therefore also understood in terms of metaphysical claims about mental states, and various PIT claims entail various claims about the CPT.

· Weak PIT: "Some intentional states are phenomenal intentional states" (Bourget and Mendelovici 2019).

$$\exists x \, \Box \, (Ix \, \& \, Hx)$$

Weak PIT does not logically imply anything about thoughts (only some intentional state, which may or may not be a thought). Weak PIT thus entails nothing about cognitive phenomenology unless the view specifically states that some subject's *cognitive* states are such that they are *necessarily* phenomenal states (in which case strong CP and moderate CP are entailed).

Some proponents of weak PIT may not consider themselves to be defending any such metaphysical claims. If that is the case, then the view entails nothing about cognitive phenomenology. However, weak PIT is not generally considered a genuine case of the PIT regardless (Bourget and Mendelovici 2019).

· Moderate PIT: "All intentional states . . . are at least partly grounded in phenomenal intentional states" (Bourget and Mendelovici 2019).

The portion omitted is “are phenomenal intentional states or.” However, I assume that the view is intended to be “Weak PIT & Moderate PIT” combined or “each intentional state is either identical to phenomenal intentional states or…grounded in them,” either of which entails that all intentional states require phenomenal states; this PIT variation can be approximately symbolized as follows:

$$\forall x \Box [Ix \rightarrow \forall y (Myx \rightarrow \exists z (Hz \,\&\, Myz))]$$

This PIT variation entails *R*. If a particular variation holds that the phenomenal state grounding a subject’s thought is proprietary to thought, then moderate CP is entailed. If it is added that some of a subject’s thoughts are identical to phenomenal intentional states, then strong CP is also entailed.

· Strong PIT: “All intentional states are phenomenal intentional states” (Bourget and Mendelovici 2019).

$$\forall x \Box [Ix \rightarrow Hx]$$

This claim entails strong CP and moderate CP.

If advocates of cognitive phenomenology are not appealing to any such theses on phenomenal intentionality to support their metaphysical views on thoughts specifically, then it is not clear what (non-circular) justification they are relying on.

Moreover, it appears that arguments for phenomenal intentionality based on views on cognitive phenomenology would be circular.[89]

Again, regarding the cognitive phenomenology debate, just as weak PIT does not count as a genuine form of phenomenal intentionality because it is not about the fundamental nature of all intentional states, the claim that a proprietary phenomenal character is associated with some thought does not count as a genuine form of cognitive phenomenology because it is not about the fundamental nature of any thoughts. Insofar as an opponent may want to reject this interpretation of the debate, they must reject the suggestion that genuine views on cognitive phenomenology, properly understood, include only moderate CP and strong CP (and rejections of such claims). However, if the debate does reduce to these two views on the fundamental nature of thought and the rejection of such claims, then views on the PIT determine views on cognitive phenomenology, along with the claim that for some thought, it is necessary to be in some phenomenal state.

If someone endorses a modest version of moderate PIT, according to which phenomenal character grounds all intentional states, then one can consistently hold that all phenomenal character is noncognitive phenomenal character. This variation entails a view according to which *R* is true but moderate CP is not, which means that a proponent of moderate PIT can reject moderate CP and strong CP while endorsing *R*; it is thus

[89] For an example of such an argument, see Bayne and Montague 2010, 29–30.

logically possible for a PIT proponent to deny the existence of cognitive phenomenology. For example, Montague (2010) appears to have offered such an account. Nevertheless, many proponents of moderate PIT hold that at least some thoughts are necessarily phenomenal states, which entails strong CP.

If one maintains that all intentional states can be grounded in some phenomenal states that are not had in noncognitive experiences (a stronger variation of moderate PIT), then moderate CP is entailed.

A case can be made for *R* independently of the cognitive phenomenology debate given that one can think a thought about a particular phenomenal state and that a subject must have been in a particular phenomenal state at some time to have a thought with some phenomenal state as part of its content. However, as Robinson (2005) suggested, the cognitive phenomenology debate is not focused on such cases (though moderate CP and strong CP entail *R*; if someone rejects *R*, then they must therefore reject moderate CP and strong CP, as well as the PIT).

If someone holds strong PIT (i.e., that all intentional states are identical to phenomenal states), then strong CP is entailed.

Commitments to various claims in the phenomenal intentionality debate thus require commitments to various claims in the cognitive phenomenology debate.[90]

[90] See Section 5.3 for more information.

Different positive views on cognitive phenomenology appear to be implications of different (relatively strong) views on phenomenal intentionality, specifically, which kinds of phenomenal states thoughts can be grounded in (or whether they are identical). Moreover, the claim that intentional states that are not thoughts are grounded in or identical to phenomenal states is less controversial, and depending on what is considered an intentional state, in some views, it may even be obviously true. If so, and if one assumes that *all* intentional states share the relevant aspect of their metaphysical nature (which is inconsistent with endorsing weak PIT while rejecting stronger PIT variations), then the difference between various positive and negative views on cognitive phenomenology, in addition to *R*, entail various views on phenomenal intentionality[91].

Given the stated additional assumptions, i.e., that all non-cognitive intentional states are grounded in or identical to phenomenal states, and that *all* intentional states share the relevant aspect of their metaphysical nature, the following entailment relationships hold:

If R is rejected, then one cannot endorse any form of the PIT, as *R* says that some phenomenal character is necessary for thought, and the various PIT views make stronger claims about the nature of this relationship.

[91] These proofs will be left as an exercise for the reader, but the author hopes that the entailment claims made here are adequately explained and defended in English for the purposes of this section.

If moderate CP is rejected but the view is endorsed that cognitive states are grounded in (or identical to) phenomenal character, entailing R, then a modest version of moderate PIT is entailed, as moderate PIT simply says intentional states (including cognitive states) are all grounded in or identical to phenomenal states.

If the view is endorsed that cognitive states are grounded in phenomenal character proprietary to the kinds of mental states (e.g., thoughts) they are, entailing moderate CP, then a stronger variation of moderate PIT is entailed, according to which the phenomenal states grounding the intentional (specifically, cognitive) states are proprietary to thought.

If the view is endorsed that cognitive states are identical to phenomenal states, entailing strong CP, and additionally, this same identity relationship is said to hold between noncognitive intentional and phenomenal states, then strong PIT is entailed, as strong PIT simply says intentional states (including cognitive states) are all identical to phenomenal states.

Given these relationships, and the entailments from PIT to CP claims, the cognitive phenomenology debate should therefore not be considered “a widely debated topic independently of any connection to PIT” (Bourget and Mendelovici 2019).

5.3 Cognitive Phenomenology in the Phenomenal Intentionality Debate

5.3.1 Perceptual States

If any intentional states are grounded in or identical to any phenomenal intentional states, then noncognitive intentional states are grounded in or identical to phenomenal intentional states. These perceptual intentional states are more obviously of a distinct natural kind than cognitive intentional states; the latter seem to possibly have their intentionality derived from the intentionality of the former. As Mendelovici suggested, the "PIT is most plausible and best motivated in the case of introspectively accessible perceptual states" (Mendelovici 2018, 101).

5.3.2 Varieties of Phenomenal Intentionality

If someone endorses the claim that all intentional states share the same metaphysical character and that noncognitive intentional states are or are grounded in phenomenal states (rejecting the NERP), then they are open to the phenomenal intentionality project. If so, then the particular view they hold depends on whether they think 1) thoughts are also understood to be grounded in, if not identical to, such states (moderate PIT, which is a common-sense view if one accepts that noncognitive intentional states are identical to or grounded in such states and that cognitive intentional states are grounded in the noncognitive intentional states); 2) thoughts are

grounded in proprietary phenomenal intentional states (moderate CP, a stronger variation of moderate PIT); or 3) thoughts are identical to phenomenal intentional states (strong PIT and strong CP).

5.3.3 Reduction of the Phenomenal Intentionality Debate to the Cognitive Phenomenology Debate

To demonstrate that the PIT debate reduces to the CPT debate given certain assumptions, I rely on the claim that all non-perceptual intentional states are cognitive intentional states. If any intentional state that is not a perceptual state, sensory state, or cognitive state (all broadly construed) exists, then I am not sure what kind of state it might be, and I doubt that any such state exists. Elijah Chudnoff appears to have made a similar claim when he stated, "every mental state is either sensory or cognitive" (Chudnoff 2015, 10).

If all occurrent perceptual states are necessarily phenomenal, as they seem to be, then perceptual states that are necessarily intentional, broadly construed, are necessarily phenomenal states and intentional states.[92] Any sympathetic to the PIT will hold that the intentional state is at least grounded in, if not identical to, the phenomenal

[92] It may be argued that perceptual states that are not conscious cannot be necessarily phenomenal. However, to the extent that they are unconscious, perceptual states are not obviously about anything; they are therefore not intentional.

state. Anyone who believes that this relationship also holds for cognitive states will endorse moderate PIT. Anyone who holds that this relation is one of identity rather than grounding will endorse weak PIT, and anyone who believes that this identity relation also holds for cognitive states will endorse strong PIT.

5.3.4 Argument for Moderate PIT

An argument for moderate PIT might be formulated as follows:

1) All sensory or perceptual intentional states are grounded in or identical to phenomenal intentional states.
2) All intentional states are either sensory, perceptual, or cognitive.
3) All cognitive states are grounded in or identical to phenomenal intentional states.
4) All intentional states are either grounded in or identical to phenomenal intentional states (by 1, 2, and 3).

If one is committed to the PIT, then they must endorse P1. P2 is intended to reflect a common interpretation of intentional states. P3 is thus the most controversial claim required to argue for moderate PIT; nevertheless, if one considers all mental states to at least be grounded in states such as sensations and perceptions and such states are or are grounded in necessarily phenomenal intentional states, then P3 is also true.

5.3.5 Argument for Strong PIT

Any argument for a stronger PIT view will have to assume or argue for a stronger premise than P1 and P3. Such an argument might be formulated as follows:

· [1*] All perceptual intentional states are identical to phenomenal intentional states.

· [P2] All intentional states are either sensory, perceptual, or cognitive.

· [P3*] All cognitive states are identical to phenomenal intentional states.

· [C2] All intentional states are identical to phenomenal intentional states.

Justification for holding P3* (as opposed to 3 from 5.3.4) requires holding something similar to strong CP. If P1* and P2 are granted, then the difference between various positive and negative views on cognitive phenomenology entails various views on phenomenal intentionality. Endorsing premise 3 from 5.3.4 entails moderate PIT, while endorsing the stronger version P3* entails strong PIT, and rejecting both (or P1 and P1*) entails rejecting all forms of the PIT.

At least in some views (e.g., when something similar to P1* is endorsed), the PIT debate therefore reduces to the CPT debate. Such considerations provide even more evidence for the claim that the PIT and CPT debates are not independent.

5.4 Objections and Replies

It is possible to argue that there are better formulations of the CPT and PIT views than discussed in this paper. While the present paper is not concerned with such alternatives, I suspect that alternatives would maintain the entailment relations. One could argue that the cognitive phenomenology debate is not about the fundamental character of thoughts but the fundamental nature of some phenomenal states (those possible only when thinking a thought but not necessarily required for thoughts). However, it is unclear what motivation there would be for thinking such a proprietary phenomenal state exists unless it is considered necessary for some thought. The debate is thus centered around the existence of moderate CP and strong CP.

It is possible to maintain that either the CPT debate or the PIT debate (or both) is not an issue of metaphysical necessity or some other kind of necessity, but such moves do not threaten the entailments between the different views in the debates. For example, it is possible to resist the claim that the cognitive phenomenology and phenomenal intentionality debates concern the metaphysical nature of thoughts and intentional

states, respectively. Nonetheless, if the debates are still considered issues of some other kind of necessity, then the entailments still hold. If the debates are not considered issues of necessity, then the entailments still hold. If the phenomenal intentionality debate is an issue of necessity but the cognitive phenomenology debate is not, then the entailments still hold. If the cognitive phenomenology debate is an issue of necessity but the phenomenal intentionality debate is not, then the entailments do not hold; nonetheless, it is not clear what would motivate such a view. It is not clear that the phenomenal intentionality debate can be properly understood as not being an issue of necessity since it hinges on issues of grounding and identity. It thus seems that even if one denies that the CPT or both the CPT and the PIT are issues of necessity, all of the entailment relations discussed in the previous sections are maintained.

It is possible to resist the placement of the necessity operator in the formulations of the various CPT and PIT views proposed in this paper, but whatever principle one relies on for changing the scope of the operator would appear to apply to other relevant views as well, and the entailment relations would be maintained. One exception to this might be if one considers the scope of the necessity operator to be wider in the phenomenal intentionality debate (e.g., given an argument for the conclusion that all intentional states are necessarily phenomenal intentional states). If this is the case, then the entailment from strong PIT to strong CP still holds, though the difference between strong PIT and moderate PIT comes down to something stronger than a universal version of strong CP. However, the universal version of strong CP would still be a

necessary condition for strong PIT and is therefore relevant to the PIT debate; if one denies strong CP, then one denies strong PIT.

It is possible to deny that the reason for maintaining that some thoughts have proprietary or distinct phenomenal character is motivated by any view on phenomenal intentionality. Nevertheless, if this reason is not motivated by such a general view on intentional mental states, it is not clear what non-circular argument about thoughts specifically having such a metaphysical nature a person could present (unless it were based on introspection, which produces conflicting conclusions and more importantly should not be used to form conclusions about the relationship between cognitive and phenomenal states). The cognitive phenomenology and phenomenal intentionality debates therefore seem to be more closely related than previously recognized.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

Many arguments in the cognitive phenomenology and phenomenal intentionality debates rely on introspection-based considerations; some maintain that introspection supports the existence of cognitive phenomenology, whereas others maintain the opposite. At most, given their contradictory conclusions, the introspection-based arguments offer reason to be less confident in one's beliefs about the relevant metaphysical relationship. Moreover, introspection reflects only one person's intuitions

about the metaphysical relationship between cognitive or intentional states and phenomenal states, which their prior theoretical commitments will influence, especially about the metaphysical nature of mental states and their relationships, as different entailment relations will be maintained. Furthermore, appearances concerning matters such as the relationship between phenomenal character and thought may reflect some feature of, for example, human experience rather than any metaphysical facts about the relationship between phenomenal character and thought, which indicates that neurotypicality or neurodivergence may also affect one's views on cognitive phenomenology. Lastly, as argued in 3.2.1, the metaphysical relationship between these different mental states is not obviously something knowable through introspection at all. Introspection is therefore not necessarily a practical guide to the actual nature of the metaphysical relationship between phenomenal and cognitive or intentional states, which means at the very least that the soundness of such arguments cannot be established, and to the extent that we are motivated to adopt and defend any view about cognitive phenomenology, we ought to resort to relying on explanatory virtues such as simplicity.

Importantly, in contexts outside the cognitive phenomenology debate where such issues are not applicable (e.g., human reports on the perception of time vary far less than claims about cognitive phenomenology), introspection may be a more reliable

guide. The arguments presented here are thus not intended to apply to other philosophical problems more generally unless such debates face similar issues.

While there may be reason to doubt how accurate introspection on the nature of the relationship between phenomenal and cognitive or intentional states is, one must still, to some extent, use them in their reasoning about the issues, even if resulting arguments do not rely on all true premises, or even those concerned with the same version of cognitive phenomenology or phenomenal intentionality. Nonetheless, as argued in Chapter 2, if the alternatives have no other overriding explanatory virtues, one has the simplest view to default to: no ontologically distinct proprietary phenomenal character of thought exists or is necessary for cognition.

However, new conceptual developments, connections, and progress toward closing the explanatory gap may someday provide some reasons to endorse a different view on the nature of the relationship between phenomenal character and thought and intentional states more generally. But until then, I will default to the simplest explanation, that there is no proprietary phenomenal character necessary for thought.

Thus, I endorse the following argument:

1. We cannot rely on introspection to determine our views about cognitive phenomenology.

2. Deductive arguments in the cognitive phenomenology debate are circular or otherwise rely on misguided introspective reports.
3. When deductive arguments fail, we are justified in relying on inference to the best explanation.
4. Inference to the best explanation supports negative views about cognitive phenomenology.
5. We are justified in endorsing a negative view about cognitive phenomenology.

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I hope to pay the kindness I've received forward to others.

[93] For an example of the kind of material shared in some of these online groups, see Appendix 9.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Duck-Rabbit Image, Phenomenal Character Affected by Concepts

Figure 1 *Duck-Rabbit Season* by M. A. Parks. 2018. Characters property of Warner Bros.

Concerning whether acquiring and possessing the concept “rabbit” affects the phenomenal character of the duck-rabbit image, while deniers of cognitive phenomenology believe that the differences in phenomenal character can be accounted for in terms of nonconceptual phenomenal character, proponents of cognitive phenomenology believe the differences in phenomenal character involve a distinctive conceptual or cognitive phenomenal character.

Appendix 2: Cognitive and Noncognitive Phenomenal Character

Figure 2 *Cognitive Phenomenology?* by M. A. Parks. 2020.

One common assumption of those engaging in the cognitive phenomenology debate is that a clear distinction between cognitive and noncognitive mental states exists. An alternative view to that which underlies the cognitive phenomenology debate is that no principled distinction between cognitive and noncognitive mental states, or more specifically, phenomenal character, exists.

Appendix 3: Animal Cognition and Cognitive Phenomenology:

Cognitive Mental States Without Language

Davidson argued that having a belief and concepts is related to having a concept of belief. He also argued that linguistic abilities are necessary for having a concept of belief, which in turn is necessary for having other concepts (Davidson 1975); however, this may be true only of metacognitive states. While much of the cognitive phenomenology debate focuses on cognitive mental states in humans, despite views such as Davidson's, this need not be—and indeed, should not be—the case. Scientific research in developmental psychology and cognitive ethology supports the view that nonlinguistic creatures can still think. The following quote from Bermudez (2003) is a prime example:

> Can creatures who do not have a language think? . . . many types of nonlinguistic creatures behave in ways that seem to require treating the creatures in question as thinkers. The evidence is not simply anecdotal. Much of the most exciting and influential recent research in developmental psychology, cognitive archeology, and cognitive ethology explicitly assumes that the capacity for thought is not in any way tied to language possession. (Bermudez 2003, vii)

Evidence suggests that non-language-speaking animals have mental representations. Some external stimuli or signals, rather than bringing about a reflexive response, affect internal representations of the animals in question (Andrews and Beck

2018, 326). If some of these states count as cognitive, then their natures or accompanying phenomenologies are relevant to the cognitive phenomenology debate. An example that suggests that some of these states are arguably cognitive is found in birds: at least some birds can remember caches of food and which ones are more perishable than others. Some corvids have demonstrated that they can recognize faces, remember people who threatened them in the past, and share this information with other corvids (Marzluff and Angell, 2012). Recent evidence also suggests that crows can possess the concept of zero (Kirschhock, Ditz, and Neider 2021). Possessing concepts is arguably the best explanation for such behavior.

An argument that animals possess concepts is formulated as follows:

· Humans are capable of thinking.

· Some nonhuman animals are sufficiently similar to humans so that one can attribute the mental states they attribute to humans to non-human animals as well.

· Some nonhuman animals are capable of thinking.

If animals can possess concepts and thoughts, then arguments for positive views on cognitive phenomenology (i.e., phenomenal CP, moderate CP, or strong CP) would also apply to animals with cognitive states. For instance, if an argument for moderate or strong CP suggested that being in a certain phenomenal state is necessary to be in a

certain cognitive state, it would follow that animals must also be in such a phenomenal state to experience that cognitive state.

One could attempt to object to the view of animals having concepts and cognitive mental states by claiming that they are incapable of metacognition and that metacognitive states form a crucial subset of cognitive states, perhaps those for which there is a proprietary phenomenal character of thought. For example, one might hold that crucial differences between linguistic and nonlinguistic thought occur insofar as the latter is not conducive to metacognition (Bermudez 2003, Chapter 8). However, given various tasks that can generate metacognitive evaluations in nonhuman animals, including "tasks requiring the animals to see information before acting," "tasks allowing the animals to choose to perform or reject cognitive tasks as a function of their difficulty," and "tasks requiring the animals to wager on their own cognitive decisions right after having made it" (Andrews and Beck 2018, 142–143), non-human animals such as rats and rhesus monkeys seem to have the ability to make such metacognitive evaluations.

However, even if a marked difference between linguistic and non-linguistic thought exists, there is no sensible reason to hold that non-linguistic thought does not count as a genuine form of thought; it therefore appears that such non-linguistic thought is also potentially relevant to the cognitive phenomenology debate.

One last potential problem with attributing thoughts to nonhuman animals is that it is debatable whether the content of a nonhuman animal's cognitive state can be specified in terms of propositional content, as human thoughts commonly are. Such considerations lead some to conclude that animals do not have thoughts or that such nonhuman animal thoughts are significantly different from humans' (e.g., see Davidson 1975). Nevertheless, even if nonhuman animals cannot specify their cognitive states in terms of propositional content, it does not follow that language-speaking animals such as humans cannot specify these cognitive states in terms of propositional content. For instance, the rottweiler Stella might be in a cognitive state that humans can identify as "Zoe is on the other side of this door" without Stella being able to identify the thought in this way. Such a mental state would, I assume, still be a cognitive state.

Nonhuman animal thought may differ from human thought, and nonhuman animals may be able to only entertain a subset of possible thoughts, but attributing thoughts to them explains their behavior in a way that cannot be accomplished without attributing thoughts to them. Arguments for or against cognitive phenomenology thus apply to not only human cognition but also nonhuman animal cognition.

Appendix 4: Metaphysical Necessity

Figure 3 *Metaphysical Necessity* by M. A. Parks. 2020.

If Proposition A is metaphysically necessary, then A is true in every metaphysically possible world (including the actual world). In the image, each of the circles is intended to represent a different metaphysically possible world (but not all metaphysically possible worlds).

Appendix 5: Derivation from Strong CP to Moderate CP

1.	$\exists x \Box [Tx \,\&\, \forall y (Myx \rightarrow \exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow Mvx)))]$	Assumption
2.	$\Box [Ta \,\&\, \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow Mva)))]$	A/ $\exists$ E
3.	$\Box$	A / $\Box$ I
4.	$[Ta \,\&\, \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow Mva)))]$	2, 3 $\Box$ E
5.	Ta	4 & E
6.	$\forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow Mva)))$	4 & E
7.	$(Mba \rightarrow \exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Mbz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow Mva)))$	6 $\forall$ E
8.	Mba	A / $\rightarrow$ I
9.	$\exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Mbz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow Mva))$	7 , 8 $\rightarrow$ E
10.	$((Pc \,\&\, Mbc) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvc \rightarrow Mva))$	A/ $\exists$ E
11.	$((Pc \,\&\, Mbc)$	10 & E
12.	$\forall v (Mvc \rightarrow Mva)$	10 & E
13.	$(Mdc \rightarrow Mda)$	12 $\forall$E
14.	Mdc	A / $\rightarrow$ I
15.	Mda	13 , 14 $\rightarrow$ E
16.	$Ta \,\&\, Mda$	5 , 15 & I
17.	$\exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mdw)$	16 $\exists$ I
18.	$Mdc \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mdw)$	14 - 17 $\rightarrow$ I
19.	$\forall v (Mvc \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw)))$	18 $\forall$ I
20.	$((Pc \,\&\, Mbc) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvc \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw)))$	11 , 19 & I
21.	$((Pc \,\&\, Mbc) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvc \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw)))$	9, 10-20 $\exists$ E
22.	$\exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Mbz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw)))$	21 E I
23.	$Mba \rightarrow \exists z ((Pz \,\&\, Mbz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw)))$	8 - 22 $\rightarrow$ I
24.	$\forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw)))$	23 $\forall$ I
25.	$Ta \,\&\, \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw))))]$	5 , 24 & I
26.	$\Box [Ta \,\&\, \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw))))]$	3 - 25 $\Box$ I
27.	$\exists x \Box [Tx \,\&\, \forall y (Myx \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw))))]$	26 $\exists$ I
28.	$\exists x \Box [Tx \,\&\, \forall y (Myx \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \,\&\, Myz) \,\&\, \forall v (Mvz \rightarrow \exists w (Tw \,\&\, Mvw))))]$	1, 2-27 $\exists$ E

Appendix 6. The Nature of Time

Figure 4 *Spacetime* by M. A. Parks. 2020.

It is not obvious that "time is actually [or metaphysically] a certain way" is the best explanation for time appearing to be a certain way to humans—it might instead be a result of human perception, which may not track the way time actually (or metaphysically) is. Similarly, the way the relationship between phenomenal character and thought seems to humans may not track the actual nature of the relationship between them; instead, this appearance may merely be the result of human perception. It is not obvious that one explanation is better than the other.

Appendix 7. Brain in a Vat

Figure 5 *Brain in a Vat Resin and Clay Sculpture* by M. A. Parks. 2021.

PIT proponents sometimes appeal to thought experiments that involve a brain in a vat. Such brains are supposed to be physically identical to some actual brain, with identical inputs resulting in an allegedly identical intentional experience. PIT proponents argue that the identical intentional states would occur because the brain would have a phenomenally identical experience to its actual counterpart (see Horgan, Tienson, and Graham 2004). Opponents disagree.

Appendix 8: Strong PIT to Strong CP Derivation[94]

1.	$\forall x \Box (Ix \rightarrow Hx)$	PIT
2.	$\Box \forall x \quad (Tx \rightarrow Ix)$	A1
3.	$\exists x \Box Tx$	A3
4.	$\Box \forall x (Hx \rightarrow Px)$	A4
5.	$\Box Ta$	
6.	$\Box$	
7.	Ta	$\Box$ E 5
8.	$Ta \rightarrow Ia$	$\Box$ E, $\forall$E2
9.	Ia	$\rightarrow$ E 8,7
10.	$Ia \rightarrow Ha$	$\forall$ E, $\Box$ E I
11.	Ha	$\rightarrow$ E, 10,9
12.	$Ha \rightarrow Pa$	$\Box$ E, $\forall$ E 4
13.	Pa	$\rightarrow$E 12,11
14.	Mya	
15.	$Pa \& Mya$	&I 13, 14
16.	Mba	
17.	Mba	R 16
18.	$Mba \rightarrow Mba$	$\rightarrow$ I 16-17
19.	$\forall v(Mva \rightarrow Mva)$	$\forall$ I 18
20.	$(Pa \& Mya) \& \forall v(Mva \rightarrow Mva)$	&I 18,19
21.	$\exists z((Pz \& Myz) \& \forall v(Mvz \rightarrow Mvz))$	$\exists$I 20
22.	$Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \& Myz) \& \forall v(Mvz \rightarrow Mvz))$	$\rightarrow$I 14-21
23.	$\forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z(Pz \& Myz) \& \forall v(Mvz \rightarrow Mvz)))$	$\forall$I 22
24.	$Ta \& \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \& Myz) \& \forall v(Mvz \rightarrow Mvz)))$	$\rightarrow$ 17, 23
25.	$\Box Ta \& \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \& Myz) \& \forall v(Mvz \rightarrow Mvz)))$	$\Box$I 6-24
26.	$\exists x \Box Ta \& \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \& Myz) \& \forall v(Mvz \rightarrow Mvz)))$	$\exists$I 25
27.	$\exists x \Box Ta \& \forall y (Mya \rightarrow \exists z((Pz \& Myz) \& \forall v(Mvz \rightarrow Mvz)))$	$\exists$E 3, 5-26

[94]As things stand (without adding additional necessity operators into the formulas), this derivation only works if we assume a constant domain of quantification across all possible worlds, which validates the Barcan Formulas such as $\forall x \Box A \rightarrow \Box \forall x A$. Thanks to Rohan French for bringing this to my attention, and assisting me with this derivation.

Appendix 9: Humor

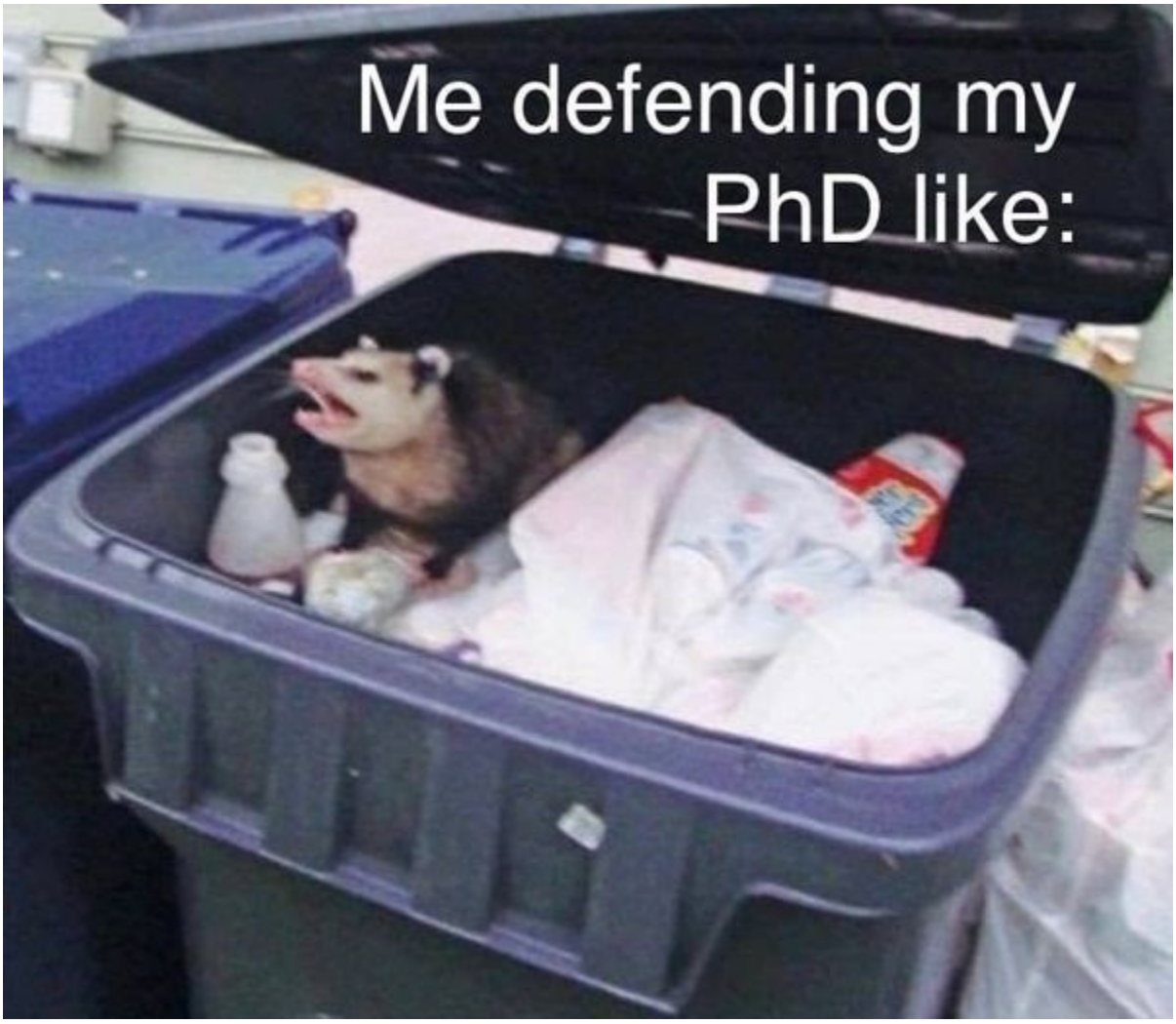

Figure 6 ‘Defending Trash’, Author Unknown. From a private online support group for graduate students.