

**SOOCHOW JOURNAL OF
PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES**

東吳哲學學報

NO. 16 / AUGUST 2007

第十六期 / 中華民國九十六年八月

**Published by Soochow University
Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China
東吳大學出版**

PUBLISHER

Chao-Shiuan Liu

President of Soochow University

EDITORIAL BOARD

Wan-Chuan Fang

Research Fellow, Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica

Chienkuo Mi

Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Soochow University

Cheng-Hung Lin

Visiting Professor, Department of Philosophy, Soochow University

Ting-Kuo Chang

Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, National Chengchi University

Rur-Bin Yang

Professor, Department of Chinese Literature, National Tsing Hua University

Chang-Yuan Liu

Professor, Department of Philosophy, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Shu-Hsien Liu

Adjunct Research Fellow, Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica

INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL ADVISORS

Ernest Sosa

Professor, Department of Philosophy, Rutgers University, U.S.A.

Elmar Holenstein

Professor, Department of Humanities, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland

Kwong-Loi Shun

Professor, Department of Philosophy, Chinese University of Hong Kong, H. K.

Gregory Landini

Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Iowa, U.S.A.

SPECIAL ISSUE COMMITTEE

Richard Fumerton

Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Iowa, U.S.A.

Gregory Landini

Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Iowa, U.S.A.

Danielle Macbeth

Professor, Department of Philosophy, Haverford College, U.S.A.

Graham Priest

Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Melbourne, Australia

Scott Soames

Professor, School of Philosophy, University of Southern California, U.S.A.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Chienkuo Mi

Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Soochow University

SOOCHOW JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

CONTENTS

Price and Hume on Our Idea of External Objects: Hylas's Alternative.....	Richard Fumerton.....	1
The Quine-Carnap Debate on Ontology and Analyticity	Scott Soames.....	17
The Problem of Predication and Quine's Solution.....	Chienkuo Mi.....	33
The Limits of the Relative A Priori.....	Christopher Pincock.....	51
Logicism <i>without</i> Peano 4.....	Gregory Landini.....	69
Carnap and Quine on Intuitionism	Charles McCarty.....	93
Meinongian Theories without <i>Ad Hoc</i> Restriction — Taking Two-Modes-of-Predication Approach as an Example.....	Wen-Fang Wang.....	111
Understanding the Goodness of Inference: Modality and Relevance in Frege's System of Logic.....	Danielle Macbeth.....	133
Reduction against the Irreducible — The Philosophy of Biology in the Logical Empiricist Program	Rueylin Chen.....	153
The Logic of Phenomenal Transparency	Kenneth Williford.....	181
How the Particular Quantifier Became Existentially Loaded Behind our Backs	Graham Priest.....	197
Russell's Logical Forms	Edwin D. Mares.....	215
Self-Reference and Self-Knowledge	Francesco Orilia.....	257
The Analytic/Continental Divide: Entities and Being.....	Nevia Dolcini.....	283
Papers Received and Rejected		303
Style Guide and Information for Authors		305

The Logic of Phenomenal Transparency*

Kenneth Williford**

I. Strong Transparency and Weak Transparency

The traditional view has been that if consciousness has a (non-relational) property it can seem to itself upon phenomenological reflection to have it.¹ Call this the thesis of Strong Transparency (ST):

$$(\forall P)(\forall c)(Pc \supset S(Pc))$$

Here the predicate variable ranges over all intrinsic properties of consciousness. The individual variable c is to be taken to range over all instances of consciousness, and the operator 'S' means, essentially, "it seems upon phenomenological reflection to one that."

Now, let us consider the converse of ST. Call it Weak Transparency (WT). According to this thesis, if consciousness seems to itself upon

* Proofreaders: Donald James Sturgeon, Ya-Ting Yang, Kuan-Jung Kao

** Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, St. Cloud State University, U.S.A.

¹ Husserl and Sartre both seem to have held this thesis. But it is not essential to phenomenology as such. In fact, the important early phenomenologist Max Scheler explicitly denied this thesis in his 1911 "Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis." See Scheler, 1973: 3-97.

phenomenological reflection to have an intrinsic property, then it does:

$$(\forall P)(\forall c)(S(Pc) \supset Pc)$$

WT leaves it perfectly open that consciousness may have intrinsic properties that it cannot seem to itself to have. WT and ST should be carefully distinguished. All ST theorists that I know of are also WT theorists. The truth of ST would matter little apart from the truth of WT because if only ST held, then one might not be able to tell the merely apparent intrinsic properties of consciousness from the apparent and real ones. But there is a point to holding WT and denying ST. We could call the biconditional that results from conjoining WT and ST Full Transparency (FT).² This is one way of interpreting the old formula according to which, with respect to consciousness, there is no distinction between appearing and being.

Let us develop some of the simple logical consequences of FT. Then we will look at the WT without ST. In the quasi-formalizations that follow I will drop the quantifiers, as they are not crucial for the exposition.

First, note the transposition of ST:

$$\sim S(Pc) \supset \sim Pc \qquad (STtr)$$

STtr says that if it does not seem that consciousness has some property, then consciousness does not have it. Most people would agree that

² Cf. Armstrong (1999: 16ff.) who uses 'transparency' in this way. WT has sometimes been associated with the thesis of incorrigibility according to which introspection cannot be mistaken about the properties it ascribes to consciousness. I have neither desire nor need to defend that thesis here. As long as introspection is largely accurate, it can provide a basis for phenomenological appeals in the construction of a theory of consciousness.

consciousness does not and cannot seem upon introspection to be, for example, a brain process. STtr and this phenomenological fact imply that consciousness is not one.

But is it the case that *not seeming* to have a property, in this context, is equivalent to *seeming not* to have that property, that not seeming to be P is indistinguishable from seeming to be non-P? For example, consciousness does not seem to be extended in space; does it follow from this that consciousness positively seems to be unextended, and vice versa?

FT yields an affirmative answer:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| (1) $\sim S(Pc) \supset \sim Pc$ | (STtr) |
| (2) $\sim Pc \supset S(\sim Pc)$ | (ST) |
| (3) $\sim S(Pc) \supset S(\sim Pc)$ | (1-2) |

Now going the other direction:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| (4) $S(\sim Pc) \supset \sim Pc$ | (WT) |
| (5) $\sim Pc \supset \sim S(Pc)$ | (WTtr) |
| (6) $S(\sim Pc) \supset \sim S(Pc)$ | (4-5) |

Conclusion:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| (7) $S(\sim Pc) \equiv \sim S(Pc)$ | (3, 6) |
|------------------------------------|--------|

This rules out the possibility that for some property consciousness neither seems to itself to have it nor does not seem to itself to have it, that is, for every P, it rules out ($\sim S(Pc) \ \& \ \sim S(\sim Pc)$). In other words, introspection, according to FT, can yield up the full ontology of consciousness with respect to its intrinsic

properties. On this view, in effect, the phenomenology of consciousness *just is* the ontology of consciousness.

Are there any reasons for thinking that ST is either true or false? ST, again, is fundamentally a claim about an introspective *capacity*. If ST is true of consciousness, then consciousness has this capacity in virtue of some property. That property is either intrinsic or extrinsic. If one opts for a relational, extrinsic construal of capacities, then presumably one will hold that there is some *nomological connection* between properties of consciousness and the introspection of those properties *such that* (given some conditions) if consciousness has a property, then one reflects phenomenologically (and veridically) on that fact. If one is Humean enough, one will be content to think of this relation as simply a brute fact. But then note that if the capacity is grounded in a relational property of consciousness, the truth of ST cannot be determined by introspective means alone. Moreover, no considerations about the intrinsic properties of consciousness would tell us whether or not ST holds. To believe in it in this case is to adopt an article of faith.

Thinking of the ST-grounding property of consciousness as such a relational, extrinsic property seems to leave us epistemically unsatisfied. But the alternative faces another sort of problem. Suppose it is an intrinsic property, G, of consciousness that grounds ST. Then, by the FT theory itself, we get the following: S(Gc). This would mean, then, that one could determine the truth of ST simply by introspection. However, it is not phenomenologically obvious that ST is either true or false. But if that is a correct phenomenological description, *then ST cannot be true*. The ST proponent could hold that more strenuous introspection will yield up G. But the phenomenological search for G

would seem to be quite different from less arcane phenomenological investigations. The search for G would be search for a property that is, at once, not really hidden (though very hard to attend to) and a deep ontological property of consciousness. If one is committed to ST and to the idea that G is intrinsic, then it must be ascertainable by phenomenological investigations. One will only think these investigations are necessary and will eventually succeed if one is antecedently convinced that ST is true. But if G genuinely does not seem to be a property of consciousness (that is, $\sim S(Gc)$ is true), then ST is false and can be known to be so by introspection. If ST is false, then consciousness has some intrinsic property that cannot be introspectively revealed.

If ST is true, then one must be able to tell phenomenologically that it is (given the monadic-intrinsic construal of G). We have then, three possibilities: either (1) ST is false, and the fact that consciousness does not seem to have G shows this; or (2) G is an extrinsic, relational property and thus is not phenomenologically accessible; or (3) G could be found, but we simply have not done the right sort of phenomenological investigations. (2) and (3) seem to be rather implausible, but of course such suspicions are not absolutely decisive.³

³ Note that one cannot infer that the thesis is true from the fact that there do not *seem* to be any intrinsic properties of consciousness that are not phenomenologically given without begging the question. The putative derivation would go as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) $\sim S(Pc \ \& \ \sim S(Pc))$ | (assumption) |
| (2) $\sim(Pc \ \& \ \sim S(Pc))$ | (1, STtr) |
| (3) $\sim Pc \ \vee \ S(Pc)$ | (2, De Morgan's Law) |
| (4) $Pc \ \supset \ S(Pc)$ | (3, and Implication) |
- (4) is ST, but the argument uses ST (i.e., STtr) in getting to (4). So the argument is question begging if construed as a justification for ST.

What about WT by itself? I indicated that we need not grant WT an absolutely unrestricted sway. All we need hold for phenomenology to be of aid in the theory of consciousness is that introspection is largely accurate. But there are some special qualifications that need to be made concerning WT. In particular, while we can allow that if consciousness does not have a monadic property, then it cannot phenomenologically seem to have it, we need to be careful about how we understand the claim that if consciousness seems to *not* have a property, then it does not have it. The first is just the transposition of WT:

$$\sim Pc \supset \sim S(Pc) \quad (WTtr)$$

The second follows from WT only for those properties that positively seem not to belong to consciousness, where this means that consciousness seems to have some positively specifiable property that is incompatible with the property it seems to not have.

It was a consequence of FT that $\sim S(Pc) \equiv S(\sim Pc)$. In WT without ST this does not hold. Instead we get only the following:

$$S(\sim Pc) \supset \sim S(Pc) \quad (S\sim S)$$

We have already seen a simple derivation of this above.

$S\sim S$ is certainly plausible. If consciousness positively seems to not be something, then it will not seem to be it either. To revert to the old example, if consciousness positively seems to be unextended, then it certainly does not seem to be extended. But one cannot derive the *equivalence* of "seeming not"

and “not seeming” without the assumption of ST.⁴ So, instead of eliminating all reference to negatively specified properties, we make the following restriction: something of the form $S(\sim Pc)$ will be considered true if and only if there is some positively specifiable property Q such that $S(Qc)$ and Q is incompatible with P .

Note that we are placing a restriction on when to consider something of the form $S(\sim Pc)$ to be true. But what is the difference between *not seeming* to have some property and *seeming to not* have it? In the former case it is not apparent that the thing concerned has the property in question; in the latter case, it would seem that the thing has some positively specifiable property that is incompatible with having the property it seems to not have. For example, if one says, “He doesn’t seem to be angry” one probably means that the person has not displayed any properties that would indicate the presence of anger,

⁴ With the assumption of the equivalence plus WT, one can derive ST. Consider:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| (1) $\sim S(\sim Pc) \equiv S(Pc)$ | (This follows from the equivalence plus substitution of $\sim P$ for P) |
| (2) $\sim S(\sim Pc) \supset S(Pc)$ | (1, biconditional elimination) |
| (3) $\sim S(Pc) \supset S(\sim Pc)$ | (2, transposition) |
| (4) $S(\sim Pc) \supset \sim Pc$ | (WT) |
| (5) $\sim S(Pc) \supset \sim Pc$ | (3,4, hypothetical syllogism) |
| (6) $Pc \supset S(Pc)$ | (5, transposition; this is ST) |

The assumption of the equivalence of $\sim S(Pc)$ and $S(\sim Pc)$ implies ST, but, in fact, the assumption of the implication of the latter by the former is sufficient. Consider:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) $\sim S(Pc) \supset S(\sim Pc)$ | (assumption) |
| (2)* Pc | (assumption for conditional proof) |
| (3)** $\sim S(Pc)$ | (assumption for indirect proof) |
| (4)** $S(\sim Pc)$ | (from 1 and 3, modus ponens) |
| (5)** $\sim Pc$ | (from 4 and WT) |
| (6)* $S(Pc)$ | (3-5, indirect proof) |
| (7) $Pc \supset S(Pc)$ | (2-6, conditional proof) This is ST. |

even though he might in fact be angry. If one says "He seems to not be angry," one probably means that the person has displayed some properties that are incompatible or apparently incompatible with being angry.

It is very important that we be able to make sense of the idea that with respect to certain properties consciousness may not seem to have them and, at the same time, not positively seem to not have them. That is, we want some propositions of the form $\sim S(Pc)$ & $\sim S(\sim Pc)$ to be consistent with our theory of consciousness and its self-knowledge. We saw earlier that propositions of this type are not consistent with ST; this was so because of the equivalence of $\sim S(Pc)$ and $S(\sim Pc)$ in that theory. We can plainly allow propositions of the type $\sim S(Pc)$, but we want to block the inference from $\sim S(Pc)$ to $S(\sim Pc)$ (because from the latter and WT we can infer $\sim Pc$). Our restriction on the truth conditions for formulae of the type $S(\sim Pc)$ in connection with WT also provides us with a clue for understanding propositions of the type $\sim S(\sim Pc)$. As just noted, propositions of the latter type will be true when there is no positively specifiable property Q such that $S(Qc)$ where Q is incompatible with P.

Suppose now that we have something of the form $\sim S(Pc)$. For example, take the worn out claim that it is not the case that consciousness seems to be extended in space. Given that we cannot infer $S(\sim Pc)$ from $\sim S(Pc)$ assuming WT alone, we will not be able to infer that consciousness positively seems unextended from the claim that consciousness does not seem to be extended. Moreover, given the absence of any phenomenologically positive property that is incompatible with being unextended, we will also be able to infer, on the basis of the last specified principle, that consciousness does not seem to be

unextended. In other words, as far as the phenomenology goes, consciousness does not seem to be extended in space nor does it seem to be unextended in space.⁵ Introspection is simply silent with regard to this property. As required, propositions of the type $\sim S(Pc)$ & $\sim S(\sim Pc)$ are consistent with WT.⁶

This conclusion is important because if WT is true and there are properties of consciousness that cannot become phenomenologically manifest (i.e., if ST is false), then of those properties it will be true that $\sim S(Pc)$ & $\sim S(\sim Pc)$. In other words, this construal of WT allows us to make sense of the idea that there are many properties of consciousness, including the property of “being identical to x” for some value of x, about which consciousness is phenomenologically silent. This, in turn, will be of crucial importance in our brief analysis of the neo-dualistic modal arguments. First, however, we must use these developments in our analysis of the thesis of Phenomenological Diaphaneity.

⁵ The logic here is a bit like the logic of belief. It is a silly logic of belief that stipulates that for every proposition p, one either believes that p or believes that not p. There are agnostics as well as atheists and the faithful.

⁶ This can also be seen in the following way. The WT theory is like the modal logic T in which, in addition to the distribution axiom characteristic of normal modal systems, the so-called axiom of necessity holds, viz., $Lp \supset p$. (If we added $S(Pc) \supset SS(Pc)$ to WT, then the resulting system would be analogous to S4, which is T plus the axiom $Lp \supset LLp$.) In T no inconsistency is introduced if we assume something of the form $\sim L\sim p$ & $\sim Lp$. Given the standard semantics for T, this will come out consistent with the axioms of T. It says, in effect, that there is some world in which $\sim p$ is true and some world in which p is true. This suffices to show that propositions of this type are formally consistent with WT. See Hughes and Cresswell, 1996: 41-43, 172-175.

II. Phenomenological Diaphaneity

Despite the ordinary meanings of the words 'transparent' and 'diaphanous,' they are here taken to indicate quite different things. By 'diaphaneity' (etc.) I intend to pick out the phenomenological fact, noted famously by both Moore and Sartre, that consciousness seems to itself like an emptiness or nothingness—an empty revealing of objects. By 'transparency' (etc.) as should be clear from the above, I mean the capacity of consciousness to ascertain some of its properties introspectively. The set of positively specified properties W with respect to which consciousness is transparent is the set of properties such that $S(Pc)$. Given WT , this will mean that for each of the properties in the set Pc also holds. The set of negatively specified properties N with respect to which consciousness is transparent will be those that are incompatible with the properties in W ; of the properties in N it will be true that $S(\sim Pc)$. The set D is the set of properties with respect to which consciousness is diaphanous; D is the set of all properties neither in W nor in N . Of all properties in D , the following will hold $\sim S(Pc) \ \& \ \sim S(\sim Pc)$. What properties are in D ?

In order to determine this, we need to determine what properties are in W and N , and in that order. To know what properties are in W , we need to introspect. We grant that intentional and qualitative properties are in W . We might thus also agree that consciousness is given to itself as temporal, unified, and self-aware.

All of these general properties are in W . But what else? We grant, for

example, that consciousness does not seem to be extended. But unless we assume ST, we cannot infer from this that consciousness is unextended or that it seems unextended. Moreover, there would seem to be no positive property that we are aware of that is incompatible with being extended. So we cannot conclude that consciousness seems to be unextended on that basis either. Finally, there would also seem to be no phenomenologically positive property that is incompatible with being unextended. Thus we *can* conclude that consciousness does not seem unextended. We have it then that consciousness does not seem extended and does not seem unextended either. The property of being extended is thus in D.

Similar reasoning will apply to other properties. Most importantly, it will apply to the property of "being identical with x" where x takes as value something specified in non-phenomenological terms. Take the property of *being identical to a brain process*. Consciousness does not seem to be a brain process. One cannot infer from this that consciousness seems to not be a brain-process without assuming ST. Are there any phenomenologically ascertainable positive properties of consciousness that are incompatible with its being a brain process? For my part, I cannot find any phenomenologically positive properties that are incompatible with my consciousness being literally identical to some brain process. So, it does not seem that consciousness is not a brain process. Thus it neither seems that consciousness is a brain process, nor does it seem that it is not one. Thus, the property of being identical to a certain sort of brain process is in D. The same sort of argument will apply in myriad cases where the metaphysics of consciousness is at issue.

III. An Important Application of PD

These considerations pose problems for neo-dualist conceivability arguments for mind-brain distinctness.⁷ We derive our concept of consciousness from the phenomenology of consciousness. But consciousness is phenomenologically diaphanous with respect to its metaphysical status. Thus, our concept of consciousness, insofar as the metaphysics of consciousness is concerned, is quite uninformative. This is what allows one, in every case, to *imagine* consciousness in the absence of a brain, a computer program, a immaterial substance, and so on. If consciousness seems like an emptiness, then of course it does not seem like a brain process, etc. But apart from ST, these exercises in imagination cannot be straightforwardly supposed to have ontological import. One can only conclude from the fact that consciousness does not seem to be a brain process that it is not one if one embraces ST. ST legitimates the move from not seeming to not being a brain process. What is overlooked here is that PD also legitimates the claim that consciousness does not seem to *not* be a brain process either.

Consistency would demand that one hold that some ontology of consciousness or other is phenomenologically given and thus that PD with respect to the metaphysical status of consciousness is false. For example, one might hold that consciousness can introspectively tell that it is an immaterial substance. But after denying that consciousness could be a brain process (again,

⁷ See, esp., Chalmers, 1996.

guided simultaneously by the phenomenological fact of PD and the illegitimate assumption of ST), some go on to speculate about what consciousness might *be* not realizing that the very same conceivability arguments can be applied to their favored ontological posits. The upshot is that if consciousness is phenomenologically silent with respect to its metaphysical status (if PD holds), then that status must be determined empirically. And, last time I checked, all the empirical evidence points to brain processes.⁸

⁸ Special thanks to Greg Landini for all his comments and criticisms of this work. Special thanks to Michael Mi for organizing the conference at which this work was presented. Thanks also to Nevla Dolcini, Uriah Kriegel, Richard Fumerton, Leopold Stubenberg, Mike Shaffer, Allen Habib, Omar Mirza, Tanya Hall, Francesco Orilia, Jean Petitot, Alexei Grinbaum, Olivia Breyse, David Rudrauf, David McCarty and Chris Pincock for very useful comments or criticisms.

References and Some Relevant Literature

- Armstrong, D.M. (1999). *The Mind-Body Problem: An Opinionated Introduction*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Chalmers, David J. (1996). *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dainton, Barry (2000). *Stream of Consciousness: Unity and Continuity in Conscious Experience*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Harman, Gilbert (1990). The Intrinsic Quality of Experience. In Tobmerlin (Ed.). (pp. 31-52)
- Hughes, G. E. & M. J. Cresswell (1996). *A New Introduction to Modal Logic*. New York: Routledge.
- Leeds, Stephen (2002). Perception, Transparency, and the Language of Thought. *Nous*, 36, 1, 104-129.
- Metzinger, Thomas (2000). The Subjectivity of Subjective Experience. In Metzinger (Ed.). (pp. 285-306)
- Metzinger, Thomas (2003). *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Metzinger, Thomas (Ed.) (2000). *Neural Correlates of Consciousness: Empirical and Conceptual Questions*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Moore, G.E. (1965). *Philosophical Studies*. Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Company.
- Rosenthal, David M. (1986). Two Concepts of Consciousness. *Philosophical*

Studies, 94, 3, 329-359.

Sartre, Jean-Paul (1970). Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology. *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1, 4-5.

Scheler, Max (1973). *Selected Philosophical Essays* (Lachterman, Trans.). Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Shoemaker, Sydney (1996). *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Shoemaker, Sydney (2002). Reply to Leeds. *Nous*, 36, 1, 130-136.

Tomberlin, James E. (Ed.) (1990). *Philosophical Perspectives, 4 Action Theory and Philosophy of Mind*. Atascadero, California: Ridgeview Publishing Company.

Tye, Michael (1995). *Ten Problems of Consciousness: A Representational Theory of the Phenomenal Mind*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Tye, Michael (2000). *Consciousness, Color, and Content*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Tye, Michael (2002). Representationalism and the Transparency of Experience. *Nous*, 36, 1, 137-151.