

## *Reply to Nes*

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Brentano (1874) described intentionality in a number of different ways: as ‘the intentional inexistence of an object’, ‘reference to a content’, ‘direction towards an object’, and ‘immanent objectivity’. All these phrases were intended to mean the same thing, but such elegant variation can give rise to confusion. In my *Elements of Mind* (2001) I tried to give a simpler description: intentional states all involve *directedness upon an object* and what I call (following Searle 1992) *aspectual shape*. My aim in doing this was to introduce an understanding of intentionality that (a) allows theorists of intentionality to agree on the fundamentals of the phenomenon, but disagree about the details; and (b) leaves the question open whether all mental states are intentional.

Anders Nes (2008) is unpersuaded. He thinks that describing intentionality in terms of directedness on an object and aspectual shape will not rule out certain paradigmatically non-mental phenomena (such as non-mental dispositions) from being intentional. Moreover, once appropriate steps are taken to rule out these phenomena, the resulting description of intentionality makes it very hard to see how conscious sensations might be intentional.

Clearly, the idea of directedness was not intended to apply to non-mental dispositions like magnetic attraction. But to explicitly restrict the idea to mental phenomena would, as Nes points out, render the thesis that all intentional states are mental a trivial consequence of the definition of 'intentionality'. It is not progress to say that non-mental dispositions are non-intentional simply because they are not mental. Instead I must show that 'the apparent parallels between thought about an object and [non-mental dispositions] are somehow misleading' (Nes 2008: 208).

Why are they misleading? Two distinctive features of intentionality are its directedness on things that do not exist, and its directedness on things under some aspect rather than others. Nes redescribes these two features in terms of the intensionality of reports of directedness, and asks whether this will help distinguish intentionality from the other relevant non-mental phenomena. He is quite right that it won't – even if intensionality is strengthened to hyperintensionality. For it is well-known that the intensionality of a report is not sufficient for it to report anything mental: modal, probabilistic, explanatory and (as Nes shows) dispositional reports are intensional, and sometimes hyperintensional too. The intensionality of a report is not sufficient for it to be a report of intentionality.

But nor is it necessary. As I emphasized in *Elements of Mind*, there are non-intensional reports of intentional states (Crane 2001: §§6 & 35). This raises the question: when intentional reports are intensional, why is this? My answer is that it is because these reports describe the way the subject is representing the world, and it is a clear connotation of the idea of representation that a representation can represent something that does not exist, and that when something is represented it is represented under some aspect or other.

It is the notion of representation, I think, that will distinguish intentionality from the other phenomena Nes talks about. For there is no plausible sense in which dispositions represent their manifestations: solubility does not represent dissolving, fragility does not represent breaking, and nor does gravitational attraction represent what is attracted. Although it is true that in any representation, something is represented, and it is represented in some ways rather than others, this does not make representation indistinguishable from attraction and other non-mental dispositions.

There are ways of linking the ideas of causation and representation, but they do not support Nes's position. For the manifestations of dispositions are among their effects, yet there is no plausible sense in which causes represent their effects. Even on those accounts which try to locate the basis of intentionality in a causal notion of 'information', it is effects which carry information about their causes, and not vice versa (see Dretske 1981).

I am indebted to Nes for making me realize that I should have introduced the idea of intentionality initially as representation, and then shown how directedness and aspectual shape are features of representation in the relevant sense. Once the issue is approached in this way, then it is clear how to answer Nes's second objection: that strengthening the notion of intentionality to rule out non-mental dispositions makes it hard to argue that sensations are intentional. For there are a number of ways of spelling out the idea that pains, say, are representations. One is to say that pains represent damage to the body (Tye 1995); another is to say that pains represent a bodily part or location as having a certain quality (Crane 2008). These views might not be true, but they seem to be coherent.

Nes objects that reports of pains will not all be 'trans-Russellian'. This may be so, but since I am not committed to all true reports of intentionality being trans-Russellian, this does not worry me. As noted above, I argued in *Elements of Mind* that reports of intentional states are intensional when they purport to capture the subject's perspective (Crane 2001: §6). But not all reports purport to do this. Hence not all reports are intensional and so it is not a necessary condition of a state's having aspectual shape that the state can only be described in an intensional, hyperintensional or trans-Russellian report. I therefore reject the options for strengthening the definition of intentionality offered to me by Nes. Appeal to the notion of representation is enough to rule out the non-mental dispositions as intentional.

For the same reason, I have no difficulty in denying that there is a distinctive mental state of 'non-epistemic seeing', despite what Nes suggests (2008: 209). Of course, there are true descriptions of visual states which have the features Dretske (1969) identified. But this does not mean that the states themselves are free of aspectual shape, any more than the fact that there are *de re* belief ascriptions means that there are beliefs which do not represent their objects in some particular way (see Crane 2001: §35). All visual experiences, veridical or not, exhibit aspectual shape, even though we may choose to describe them in ways which are indifferent to it.

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