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INTRODUCTION

This volume collects the papers presented at the “Mind, Language, and the First-Person Perspective” International Conference and School of Philosophy held at the Faculty of Philosophy, San Raffaele University, from 28th to 30th September 2021. The Conference was organized by the San Raffaele PRIN Research Unit within the “Mark of the Mental” (MOM) Research Project, with the collaboration of the San Raffaele Research Centre in Experimental and Applied Epistemology and the San Raffaele Research Centre in Phenomenology and Sciences of the Person.

MOM is an interdisciplinary research project funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, and focused on whether the mental is a homogeneous domain of phenomena unified under some properties that all and only mental entities (events, states, properties) possess. The quest for what is called the “mark of the mental” characterizes both metaphysical and conceptual approaches as well as more scientifically oriented strands of research, in an effort to circumscribe the “mental realm” by distinguishing what is genuinely mental from what is not.

MOM’s core research questions – Do mental phenomena have an intrinsic nature? What makes it the case that mental events, states, and properties are *mental*? – have long been debated in philosophy. The phenomenological tradition, pioneered by Brentano and Husserl, has taken two different (albeit connected) properties of the mental to play the mark-role. For Brentano, such a role is played by *intentionality*, i.e. the property of being about something or having a content, which he notoriously characterized by using the label “*intentionale Inexistenz*”. By contrast, for Husserl (as for Descartes before him), the mark-role is played by *consciousness*, i.e. the property of having a phenomenal character. In contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, both theories have been revived. Scholars have moved either in an intentionalist direction, holding that all mental states – even those that are paradigmatically phenomenal such as moods or bodily feelings – are ultimately intentional, since their phenomenal character is either identical or supervenient on their intentionality. Or they have moved in the opposite, conscientalist direction, holding that consciousness (in particular phenomenal consciousness) takes pride of place, either by reducing intentionality itself to a conscious property – phenomenal intentionality – or by taking all mental states as qualified by phenomenology, be it sensory (affecting sensations, emotions, and moods) or cognitive (affecting beliefs, expectations, and desires).

Notably, no shared consensus has yet been reached on what, if anything, plays the role of the mark of the mental. A comprehensive investigation of the pros and cons of both the

intentionalist and conscientalist approaches, and of possible alternative options – as pursued by MOM – is thus worthwhile and potentially insightful.

The San Raffaele 2021 School of Philosophy and International Conference contributed to the general goal of the project by fostering a reflection on the boundaries of the mental from within the analytic and the phenomenological traditions. Contributors have dealt with the main challenges posed by the most prominent contemporary accounts of consciousness and intentionality, the overt and covert links between the two, and the possible explanatory role that traditional theories keep playing in the ongoing debate. Particular emphasis was placed on the advantages and disadvantages of applying a first-person, qualitative methodology to the study of the mental, and on the question whether the adoption of a first-person perspective can do without the *lived body* or should rather be considered as necessarily *embedded* and *embodied*. Finally, the School has looked into evaluative and perspectival linguistic expressions, overall drawing a rich theoretical picture of the relations between language and the first person.

The volume gathers fifteen contributions, and opens with Galen Strawson's on mental content. In "Internal and External Content: A New Alignment", Strawson criticizes the way in which the debate on content has been traditionally framed, namely, in terms of a contraposition between externalism and internalism, and argues for a novel way of characterizing the notions of both internal and external content. By opposing the characterization of internal content as something that can be shared among different individuals, Strawson claims that internal mental content ("I-content", in his terminology) just is phenomenological content *considered as a concretely existing phenomenon*, while everything else that experience can correctly be said to be of falls within the category of external content ("E-content"). In this perspective, E-content turns out to encompass I-content. Although this may seem problematic, Strawson maintains that this is not the case insofar as I-content and E-content can be distinguished on the basis of how the former is given. "I-content", Strawson writes, "is immediately phenomenologically given content *considered just as immediately phenomenologically given*", thus "the difference between the way in which I-content is I-content and the way in which it can be E-content is no more mysterious than the difference between being in pain and thinking of being in pain [...]. I can think of being in pain when I'm not in pain" (pp. 34-35). Interestingly, even though Strawson's proposal focuses on the content of occurrent conscious mental episodes, it might also be adapted to accommodate unconscious mental content.

That mental content can occur either consciously or unconsciously is something that many philosophers of mind are willing to accept, notwithstanding the widespread disagreement on how best to account for their relationship. In contrast, not so numerous are those who make room for an analogous distinction at the level of qualia. Sam Coleman is one exception. In "Intentionality, Qualia, and the Stream of Unconsciousness", Coleman argues in favour of qualia-of-content (or content-carrying qualia), which can occur either consciously or unconsciously. The notion of unconscious qualia has been severely criticised in the literature, and Coleman tackles the main objections against it by arguing that none is ultimately insuperable. The aim he pursues is to clear the road to what he labels a "Grand Unification" on the mark of the mental, according to which "the mental mark consists in a kind of mental content, or intentionality, carried – or constituted – by mental qualities [...] that can be phenomenally conscious, or unconscious [...]. Hence they can provide the basis of the Freudian unconscious-mental as much as of conscious mentality" (p. 44).

The three contributions that follow address the topic of the mark of the mental from different angles. In "Inner Awareness as a Mark of the Mental", Jakub Mihálik critically assesses the idea, which he ascribes to Brentano, that being an object of inner awareness is a mark of the mental. If Brentano is right, Mihálik says, inner awareness, qua mental, should be itself an object of

inner awareness, and thus be conscious. Such a claim, however, has been rejected by the advocates of the Higher-Order Thought theory of consciousness. After examining an objection raised by Levine and Kriegel against the “non-conscious-inner-awareness” view, Mihálik focuses on arguments by Chalmers and Montague in support of the phenomenal presence of inner awareness and suggests that they all fail to prove it. Accordingly, he claims that non-conscious inner awareness is an open possibility and that Brentano’s idea of inner awareness as a mark of the mental looks eventually unpromising.

Inner awareness is a topic addressed also by Davide Zottoli within the framework of Higher-Order Intentionalism. In “Intentionality and Inner Awareness”, Zottoli deals with the major objections against the conception of subjective character as inner awareness promoted by higher-order intentionalism. In particular, he argues that these objections can be overcome by abandoning some core theses of the theory that are not indispensable to it. According to Zottoli, the project of accounting for the existence of phenomenal consciousness in terms of meta-intentionality is still worth pursuing and “higher-order intentionalism may still be conceived as a promising framework, even without conceiving of it as an illusion” (p. 79).

Intentionalism, i.e. the thesis that intentionality is the mark of the mental, is also discussed by Andrea Tortoreto, whose article (“Intentionality and Dualism: Does the Idea that Intentionality Is the MOM Necessarily Entail Dualism?”) aims to explore whether Brentano’s criterion of intentionality as a necessary and sufficient condition for something to qualify as mental commits its adherents to dualism. After discussing several criticisms against Brentano’s criterion, Tortoreto focuses on the naturalization project – that is, the attempt to account for intentionality in naturalistically acceptable terms. Against intentional naturalists’ strong reductionism, he presents an alternative position that takes intentionality as a normative property while avoiding dualism. By elaborating on suggestions traceable to Wittgenstein and Sellars, Tortoreto concludes that normative intentionalism, taken as “a third way between a radical metaphysical dualism and an absolute naturalism” (p. 90), is a very promising position in the logical space of options available.

Criticisms against reductionist approaches to intentionality are raised also by Brian Ball, whose paper (“Intentionality, Point of View, and the Role of the Interpreter”) revolves around the role that subjectivity plays in determining mental content. By adopting a grammatical point of view on intentionality, Ball considers two ways in which subjectivity might be thought to have a role – one first-personal, the other second-personal. Being his explicit aim to carve out “a distinctively second-personal role for subjectivity in the determination of intentional content” (p. 95), Ball defends a form of interpretationism that, he suggests, is immune to the risks of relativism. Refining his proposal further, he clarifies the kind of relation to truth and to interestedness of the interpreter, and concludes that his methodologically non-reductive outlook on intentionality does not commit his view to metaphysical anti-reductionism.

The topic of intentionality, taken as the intrinsic aboutness or directedness that characterizes consciousness, is dealt with by Federico Zilio in “A Ghost in the Shell or an Anatomically Constrained Phenomenon? Consciousness through the Spatiotemporal Body”, in an attempt to disentangle the role that the body and the environment play in shaping our experiences. On the heels of Sartre, Zilio claims that the world-disclosing activity of consciousness crucially depends on the conditions of interaction between the body and the world. He emphasizes that consciousness does not merely require the “anatomical body”, but the “spatiotemporal body”. On the grounds of this thesis, he argues that cases of apparent disembodied/disconnected consciousness (e.g. dreams, out-of-body experiences) do not actually run against his view because they do not imply the existence of a consciousness that is fully deprived of spatiotemporal corporeality.

Maik Niemeck’s paper (“Two Problems with Shoemaker’s Regress and How to Deal with Them”)

adds a further tile to the debate by assessing the topic of self-awareness. It focuses specifically on Shoemaker's regress argument for the claim that some cases of self-awareness cannot be based on identification. While agreeing with Shoemaker that self-awareness, at its most basic level, functions independently from the ascription of identifying properties, Niemeck disagrees with the claim that this is what distinguishes self-awareness from perception. The thesis he argues for is that self-awareness and perception do not differ in their relation to identification. The point is discussed by overviewing the vast literature on singular thoughts.

The five papers that follow deal with perception and its various theoretical accounts. In "Amodal Completion and the Impurity of Perception", Søren Overgaard defends a Husserlian view of perception. He labels such a view "Impure", in opposition to (what he calls) the "Pure" view. If the latter claims that perception is pure presentation, in the sense that it has no commitments that exceed what is given or presented in the experience itself, the former denies it. Overgaard criticizes the Pure view by focusing on amodal completion, and argues that none of the strategies available to the Purists in order to explain away amodal completion (by accounting for it in terms of non-perceptual mental states) is promising. While allowing for cases of "pure presentation", he claims that what amodal completion shows is that at least some cases of perception are impure presentations. The purist position is thus implausible and explanatorily defective.

Both Giulia Martina's and Daniel Kim's contributions address the pure presentational view of perception that they discuss under the label "naïve realism". In "Phenomenally-grounded Intentionality for Naïve Realists", Martina focuses on naïve realism and intentionality as dealt with within the phenomenal intentionality theory. Martina argues that a version of the thesis that intentionality is phenomenally grounded fits well with a naïve realist view of perceptual experience. Yet, the problem arises of how to accommodate the fact that not only veridical, but also hallucinatory perceptual experiences are intentional – even though they are not relations of awareness with the mind-independent world. Martina recommends that naïve realists embrace a disjunctivist approach: an externalist view of phenomenally grounded intentionality for genuine perceptual experiences, while holding that hallucinations have intentionality dependently or derivatively, insofar as we attribute it to them on the basis of their indiscriminability from, or similarity with, perceptual experiences. By adopting this approach, Martina claims, naïve realists can concede that perceptions and hallucinations have a property in common – that of being intentionally directed at apparently mind-independent entities – whilst having wholly different metaphysical natures.

In "Naïve Realism and Minimal Self", Daniel Kim argues for the fruitfulness of a naïve realist theory of perception combined with a pre-reflective model of self-consciousness derived from the phenomenological tradition – i.e. the "minimal self" view. As he claims, such a hybridization is explanatorily virtuous in that it would enable the naïve realist to develop a more adequate account of the "subjective" dimension of perceptual phenomenology. The central idea of Kim's proposal is that, given the 'object-directed' nature of their account, naïve realist theories of perception have paid inadequate attention to the "subject" side of the relation that is constitutive of perception, and this theoretical gap could be fruitfully filled by appealing to the notion of minimal self as developed within the recent phenomenological literature.

The topic of perceptual experience is also addressed by Max Minden Ribeiro. In "Is Presence Perceptual?", Minden Ribeiro considers the relations between perception and visual imagination. Both perception and imagination offer a first-person perspective on visible objects, but differ in that only the former, in Minden Ribeiro's view, can exemplify the phenomenal property of "presence". Presence, as characterized in the paper, is "the phenomenal property of perceptual experiences, by which a perceptual object is given as a constituent of mind-independent reality such that the experience seems, by the very kind of

experience it is, to reveal how things are” (p. 167). Minden Ribeiro argues against competing approaches that account for presence in non-perceptual terms by appealing to empirical research on derealisation disorders, virtual reality, and hallucination. The conclusion is that none of such approaches provides independent reasons to think that presence is not instantiated by perceptual experiences.

Bringing to the fore another prominent approach to perceptual experience, in “The Significance of the Many Property Problem”, Tim Crane and Alex Grzankowski deal with the so-called “many property problem”, originally put forward by Jackson as a devastating objection to adverbialism about perceptual experience. Because of this objection, adverbialism is usually treated as being of purely historical significance. In contrast, the authors argue that, far from tipping the balance in favour of certain philosophical theories of perception, the many property problem arises for all the leading metaphysical theories of experience, none of which is able to adequately account for it. Their aim, they state, is not to defend adverbialism, but to draw attention to a general problem that all theories of experience have – namely, the *ad hoc* character of the explanations provided for how experienced properties are connected. Simone Nota’s paper (“Wittgenstein’s Transcendental Thought Experiment in Ethics”) shifts the focus to the perspectival nature of transcendental thought experiments – that is, of those imaginative procedures that make us realize that something is a necessary condition for the representation of the world. By contrasting them with transcendental argumentation, Nota argues that the inherent perspectival and experiential character of thought experiment puts one in the right position to cast new light on ethical problems in general, and on Wittgenstein’s *Lecture on Ethics* in particular. The final goal of the contribution is to clarify the Tractarian treatment of ethics by showing that there being a world is the outcome of a transcendental thought experiment and a necessary condition for the possibility of representation. The volume closes with Nadjia-Mira Yolcu’s contribution, titled “Vindicating Avowal Expressivism: A Note on Rosenthal’s Performance-Conditional Equivalence Thesis”. The paper addresses Rosenthal’s claim that saying “*p*” has the same conditions of use of – is performance-conditionally equivalent to – saying “I believe that *p*”. By way of counterexamples, Yolcu argues that the equivalence does not hold in this generality, and offers an expressivist way to distinguish cases in which “*p*” and “I believe that *p*” are performance-conditional equivalent from cases in which they are not. The conclusion is that, once narrowed in scope, the performance-conditional equivalence thesis provides an argument against Rosenthal’s preferred ‘avowal descriptivism’ and in favor of ‘avowal expressivism’, i.e. the thesis that utterances such as “I believe that *p*” are expressive of a first-order belief.

As this presentation has highlighted, this Special Issue of *Phenomenology and Mind* addresses the complex relations between mind, language, and the first-person perspective from a variety of angles. We anticipate that the contributions collected in this volume will further current debates and possibly open new research paths in philosophy of mind, phenomenology, and beyond.

We are particularly grateful to all scholars who took part in the Conference and School, contributed their papers, and questioned their views in the light of heated discussions. Furthermore, this volume would not have been possible without the commitment of a great number of anonymous reviewers from all over the world who accepted to collaborate with us and to whom goes our heartfelt gratitude.¹

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