

Primitive Entertainment

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Recent work on phenomenal consciousness has featured a number of debates on the existence and character of controversial types of phenomenology. Perhaps the best-known is a debate over the existence of a proprietary, irreducible *cognitive phenomenology* – a phenomenology proper to thought. Others concern the existence of irreducible agential or conative phenomenology, irreducible emotional phenomenology, and so on. In this paper, I argue that the act of entertaining a proposition exhibits its own primitive phenomenology, a distinctive phenomenology irreducible to any other. After clarifying the notion of primitive phenomenology (§1) and elaborating the thesis that entertaining exhibits one (§2), I present a *prima facie* case for the thesis (§3).

1. Phenomenal Primitives

According to eliminativists about phenomenal consciousness (e.g., Rey 1988), there are no phenomenal properties – at least no instantiated ones. Most philosophers of mind are not eliminativists here. They accept the existence of *some* types of phenomenology. In particular, there are two types of phenomenology traditionally thought relatively uncontroversial: the phenomenology of perceptual experience and the phenomenology of pleasure and pain ('hedonic' phenomenology). Mainstream philosophy of mind tends toward realism about them.

What about other types of phenomenology, neither perceptual nor hedonic – a phenomenology of thinking, say, or of agency? One perfectly coherent and stable position is to deny the existence of such types of phenomenology; this would be a

sort of eliminativism about non-perceptual, non-hedonic phenomenology. Another option is to embrace certain other types of phenomenology, but claim that they ultimately amount to some combinations of perceptual and hedonic phenomenology; this is a sort of realism of a reductive strand. A third option, however, is to accept certain other types of phenomenology and moreover claim that they go beyond perceptual and hedonic phenomenology, constituting *sui generis* or *primitive* types of phenomenology; this would be a sort of *nonreductive* realism.

In fact, for each putative type of phenomenology, these three options are *prima facie* viable. That is to say, for each there is an eliminative, a reductive, and a nonreductive or primitivist account. Consider cognitive phenomenology. Some deny its existence, claiming that thoughts do not have phenomenal properties (Nelkin 1989 and Tye & Wright 2011 *inter alia*). Others accept the existence of cognitive phenomenology, but argue that ultimately it is nothing but perceptual phenomenology; often the idea is that the auditory phenomenology of ‘inner speech’ exhausts the phenomenology of thought (Carruthers 2006 and Prinz 2011 *inter alia*). Still others, however, insist that there exists a cognitive phenomenology that goes beyond the phenomenology of inner speech, and in fact cannot be captured by any form of perceptual (or hedonic) phenomenology (Siewert 1998 Ch.8 and Pitt 2004 *inter alia*). The first view is a kind of *eliminativism* about cognitive phenomenology, the second a kind of *reductivism* about cognitive phenomenology, and the third a kind of *primitivism* about it.

The choice among these three options can typically be appreciated through an inconsistent triad. Thus:

- 1) There exists cognitive phenomenology.
- 2) Cognitive phenomenology is irreducible to perceptual and/or hedonic phenomenology.
- 3) Perceptual and hedonic phenomenologies ultimately exhaust all phenomenology.¹

The eliminativist about cognitive phenomenology denies 1, claiming that cognitive phenomenology does not exist. The reductivist denies 2, attempting to account for cognitive phenomenology in terms of perceptual phenomenology, perhaps in combination with hedonic phenomenology. The primitivist, in turn, denies 3, taking cognitive phenomenology to be a third phenomenal primitive beyond perceptual and hedonic phenomenology.

(It should be stressed that the debate over reductivism here is orthogonal to the debate over physicalism. The issue is not whether cognitive phenomenology reduces to *physical* properties, but whether it reduces to other phenomenal properties. One could be a primitivist about cognitive phenomenology in the sense of holding that it is irreducible to any other phenomenology and still reduce cognitive-phenomenal properties to some neural properties, say. Conversely, one could hold a reductivist account of cognitive phenomenology in terms of perceptual phenomenology but be a dualist about perceptual-phenomenal properties, thus denying the physical reducibility of cognitive-phenomenal properties.²)

Similar choices face us with respect to other putative types of phenomenology. Consider emotional phenomenology. It is perhaps odd to deny its very existence, claiming that emotion is always unconscious, or alternatively that there is no such thing as emotion at all. Yet the view is certainly coherent: phenomenal eliminativists are presumably committed to it. More commonly, it has often been argued that the phenomenal feel of emotion is nothing but proprioceptive (or kinaesthetic, or somatic) feeling (James 1884 and Armstrong 1968 *inter alia*). This is to claim that emotional phenomenology reduces to a variety of perceptual phenomenology. At the same time, it is also possible to claim that whatever proprioceptive and other perceptual/hedonic elements emotional experiences may involve, there is also a basic, *sui generis* element that constitutes a primitive emotional phenomenology (Stocker 1996 and Montague 2009 *inter alia*). The choice among these views can again be captured in a triad:

- 1) There exists emotional phenomenology.

- 2) Emotional phenomenology is irreducible to perceptual and/or hedonic phenomenology.
- 3) Perceptual and hedonic phenomenologies ultimately exhaust all phenomenology.

Similar triads can be formulated for other types of phenomenology – the phenomenology of agency (‘conative phenomenology’), for instance (see Bayne 2008).

It is worth noting that the three theoretical options do not *have* to be formulated relative to perceptual and hedonic phenomenology. They should be formulated relative to whatever phenomenology types one takes to be primitive. For example, a primitivist about cognitive phenomenology who considered the status of emotional phenomenology might wish to include cognitive phenomenology among the types of phenomenology emotional phenomenology might reduce to.³ At the same time, someone could deny – implausibly, perhaps, but coherently – that perceptual or hedonic phenomenology is primitive. For example, someone might hold that to feel pain is just to have tactile perception of tissue damage. Interpreted in the right way, this could amount to the claim that hedonic phenomenology reduces to perceptual phenomenology. For someone who accepted cognitive phenomenology but not hedonic phenomenology as primitive, the question of emotional phenomenology would become this: does emotional phenomenology exist, and does it reduce to some combination of perceptual and/or cognitive phenomenology?⁴

The general issue for any putative phenomenology *P*, then, is whether it reduces to whatever primitive phenomenologies one recognizes. Put in terms of an inconsistent triad, the general form of the question, for any given putative phenomenology *P*, is what to reject among:

- 1) There exists phenomenology *P*.
- 2) *P* does not reduce to phenomenologies P_1, \dots, P_n .
- 3) P_1, \dots, P_n exhaust all phenomenology.

Call this the *generalized triad* for phenomenology.

With this general characterization at hand, we can put in place an idealized procedure for generating coherent and stable accounts of the scope and structure of the phenomenal realm. To a first approximation, the (idealized!) procedure is this. In Step 1, we produce a comprehensive inventory of *putative* types of phenomenology. In Step 2, we feed each item in this inventory into the generalized triad just described, with that item serving as a substitution instance for P and all other items functioning as P_1, \dots, P_n ; Going through each of these triads, we attempt to establish which values of P are such that the nonreductive position is the most plausible for them. This produces a first outcome: a list of all phenomenal primitives. That is, it divides the set of all putative phenomenologies into two subsets: the primitive ones and the non-primitive ones. Moving now to Stage 3, we feed each member of the non-primitive subset into a new triad in which P_1, \dots, P_n are given by all the members of the primitive subset; here we attempt to establish which values of P are such that reductivism is more plausible for them than eliminativism. This produces a second outcome: a list of all ‘phenomenal derivatives.’ That is, it divides the non-primitive subset into two further subsets: those that are derivative upon the phenomenal primitives and those that are not. The overall outcome is a structure we might describe as $(S_1, (S_2, S_3))$, where S_1 = the set of all phenomenal primitives, S_2 = the set of all phenomenal derivatives, and S_3 = the set of non-existent putative phenomenologies.⁵ This represents the structure of the phenomenal realm.

As noted, this is only a first approximation of the procedure, but it should do for our present purposes.⁶ Already in this form, however, we can appreciate that the project at hand is a special case of a type of project that has been gaining momentum in other areas of contemporary philosophy. According to Schaffer (2009), the central mandate of metaphysics is to tell us what grounds what. Although philosophers commonly profess to be eliminativists about this or that putative entity, often closer inspection reveals that their view is better cast as reductivist, claiming that the relevant putative entity is ‘nothing but’ some other entity or collection of entities – that it is not fundamental. The true goal of metaphysics is to

identify the basic, ungrounded entities in terms of which all other entities can be accounted for – the ungrounded grounders of reality, if you will.⁷ (How to elucidate the notion of grounding is a non-trivial matter, but intuitively, grounding is the relation canonically picked out by the ‘in virtue of’ locution.⁸) In any case, the present project can be seen as an application of Schaffer’s framework limited to the phenomenal realm – an attempt to produce a general metaphysic of phenomenology.⁹

2. Entertaining as a Phenomenal Primitive: I. The View

The thesis of this paper is that the propositional attitude of entertaining has a proprietary, irreducible phenomenology. We may put this by saying that entertaining is a phenomenal primitive.

Talk of entertaining can be used to refer to a number of different phenomena, including but not restricted to:

- Entertaining that p
- Entertaining the proposition that p
- Entertaining the thought that p
- Entertaining the possibility that p
- Entertaining the idea of x
- Entertaining an image

My concern here is with entertaining as a propositional attitude, so I will take the second expression as canonical designator of the phenomenon I am concerned with (though also the first as shorthand for the second).¹⁰ The term ‘entertaining’ is supposed to intimate a mental act that in itself involves no *commitment* of any kind with respect to p (to its truth, its goodness, or cetera). At the same time, the term is *not* supposed to rule out the presence of other mental acts that do involve such commitment. Thus, as I use the term, S entertaining that p does not *conceptually*

exclude S believing that *p* (we may use 'S merely-entertains that *p*' to describe a state that does exclude S hosting other, more committal states). There may be other terms that, to some ears, may capture better what I am here calling entertaining: 'contemplating,' 'considering,' and 'apprehending' come to mind. I will stick with the term 'entertaining,' but the reader should substitute for it one of those terms if s/he finds it more appropriate.¹¹

My claim is that entertaining the proposition that *p* (in this sense) has a primitive phenomenology irreducible to other phenomenologies, including perceptual and cognitive but also hedonic, conative, and emotional. More formally, the thesis may be put as follows:

- (PE) There is a phenomenal property *P*, such that (i) for any subject *S* and proposition *p*, if *S* entertains that *p* then *S* instantiates *P*, and (ii) there are no phenomenal properties P_1, \dots, P_n , such that *P* reduces to some combination of P_1, \dots, P_n .

Call this the thesis of *primitive entertainment*. Observe that, as is to be expected from a primitivist thesis, it has two clauses: an existence clause and an irreducibility clause. Observe as well that the thesis claims an irreducible phenomenology only for the *attitude* of entertaining. It does not make a similar claim about *content*: it does not claim that entertaining that *p* is phenomenally different from entertaining that *q*. That may be independently plausible, at least given the existence of the attitudinal phenomenology,¹² but it is not part of the thesis of primitive entertainment.

(Note well: as we have seen in the case of cognitive phenomenology, the thesis of primitive entertainment does *not* imply that entertaining-phenomenology is irreducible *simpliciter*; in particular, it does not imply that it is irreducible to *neural* or *physical* properties. For all I will argue here, entertaining-phenomenology may be identical to C-fiber firing. The thesis of this paper concerns *phenomenal* reducibility, not *physical* reducibility.)

The view under consideration can be understood in terms of the generalized triad from the previous section. The most straightforward way to do this is to let the putative phenomenology of entertaining that p serve as the substitution instance for P , while perceptual, hedonic, cognitive, conative, and emotional phenomenologies serve as P_1, \dots, P_n . The resulting triad is this:

- 1) There exists entertaining-phenomenology.
- 2) Entertaining-phenomenology is irreducible to perceptual, hedonic, cognitive, conative, and/or emotional phenomenology.
- 3) Perceptual, hedonic, cognitive, conative, and emotional phenomenologies ultimately exhaust all phenomenology.

There may be other types of phenomenology that may threaten to reduce entertaining-phenomenology, in which case the triad would have to be modified to accommodate them.¹³ In the above triad, adopting primitivism about entertaining-phenomenology is a matter of defending 1 and 2 and rejecting 3.

The view is not without precedent. Brentano (1874 Bk II Chs. 6-7) explicitly defends it. Brentano divides the mental into three fundamental types of phenomena. Since he takes the mental and the conscious to be coextensive, this effectively divides the conscious into three fundamental (read: mutually irreducible) types of phenomenology. There is what Brentano calls ‘judgment,’ which covers both cognitive and perceptual phenomenology, and what Brentano calls ‘interest’ (sometimes ‘phenomena of love and hate’), which covers conative, emotional, and hedonic phenomenology. In addition, however, there is what Brentano calls ‘presentation,’ which covers the phenomenology of entertaining as well as imagery.

It is an interesting question why Brentano lumps together perceptual and cognitive phenomenology, as well as conative, emotional, and hedonic phenomenology. The answer is that he takes these to have the same kind of *intentionality*: both conscious perception and cognition involve a phenomenology of being directed at the true, while conscious desire, emotion, and pleasure one of being directed at the good (or ‘good-for-me’).¹⁴ In modern jargon, we might put this

in terms of *direction of fit*: perceptual and cognitive phenomenology are inherently intentional, and their intentionality has a mind-to-world direction of fit; conative, emotional, and hedonic phenomenology are also inherently intentional, but their intentionality has a world-to-mind direction of fit.¹⁵ This also provides Brentano with his chief motivation for positing a third type of basic phenomenology, one that involves neither a mind-to-world nor a world-to-mind direction of fit.¹⁶ This is entertaining: the phenomenology is as of a proposition being in some (admittedly elusive) sense simply *present before one's mind*, unaccompanied by either assent, dissent, approval, or disapproval.¹⁷

The Brentanian picture is doubly removed from current-day functionalist orthodoxy on the propositional attitudes. First, the functionalist orthodoxy does not characterize the attitudes in terms of phenomenal character. It is often assumed that the attitudes *have* no (characteristic) phenomenal character, and that even if they did it would be an accidental feature of them. Secondly, the orthodoxy's focus on 'belief-desire psychology' highlights commitment to a basic cognitive attitude and a basic conative ('pro') attitude, making no provision for a third basic attitude neither cognitive nor conative.¹⁸

Interestingly, even when contemporary philosophers of mind do offer a phenomenological characterization of the attitudes, they tend to maintain the focus on belief and desire as the only fundamental attitudes.¹⁹ According to L.J. Cohen (1992), for instance, belief and desire are nothing but dispositions to have certain characteristic *feelings* – 'credal' feelings in the case of belief and 'affective' feelings in the case of desire. These are characterized as follows (1992: 11):

Feeling it true that *p* may thus be compared with feeling it good that *p*. All credal feelings, whether weak or strong, share the distinctive feature of constituting some kind of orientation on the 'True or false?' issue in relation to their propositional objects, whereas affective mental feelings, like those of anger or desire, constitute some kind of orientation on the 'Good or bad?' issue.

On the emerging view, S believes that p iff S is disposed to feel it true that p , and S desires that p iff S is disposed to feel it good that p – where feeling it true or good that p is understood in terms of a certain phenomenal feature, which following Cohen we may call ‘orientation.’²⁰ We might say that belief involves a disposition to experience a mind-to-world phenomenal orientation, while desire involves a disposition to experience a world-to-mind phenomenal orientation. Note now, that even in Cohen’s phenomenology-friendly approach to the attitudes, there is no provision for a third type of attitude with a ‘neutral’ orientation of the sort that would characterize entertaining.

For this the long reach of the functionalist orthodoxy may reasonably be blamed. This is significant, because to my knowledge the functionalist literature contains no *argument* that entertaining is reducible or eliminable. Moreover, there is a flourishing intellectual tradition – the ‘Brentano School’ – that treats entertaining as irreducible. The notion of entertaining as a phenomenal (and intentional) primitive propagated from Brentano through his students in at least four directions: through Husserl (1901 V Chs.4-5) to the phenomenological movement, through Marty (1908 Ch.6) to the so-called Prague School, through Meinong (1902 Ch.1) to the Graz School and early Gestalt Psychology, and through Twardowski (1894) to the Lvov School and ‘Polish logic.’²¹ In the next section, I argue that the Brentanian tradition had this one right: there is a primitive entertaining-phenomenology.

3. Entertaining as a Phenomenal Primitive: II. The Argument

The thesis of primitive entertainment, as formulated above, had two clauses: one asserting the very *existence* of entertaining-phenomenology, the other asserting its (phenomenal) *irreducibility*.²² Accordingly, the argumentative strategy I pursue in its defense proceeds as follows. In a first stage, I adduce a defeasible reason for recognizing a phenomenology of entertaining. In a second stage, I consider a number of potential defeaters and argue against them. This is meant to establish the

existence of entertaining-phenomenology. In a third stage, I consider a number of potential (phenomenal) *reducers* and argue against them. This is intended to establish the (phenomenal) irreducibility of entertaining-phenomenology.

The overall argument is non-demonstrative: it gives us a significant reason to believe in primitive entertainment, but not a conclusive reason. Certainty in phenomenological matters is most often produced by direct introspective encounter with the phenomenology, but as is widely recognized, such direct appeal to introspection is ineffective in resolving phenomenological disputes, as disputants typically profess different introspective impressions. In such dialectical circumstances, phenomenological claims call for *argument* rather than direct appeal to introspection. It is less often recognized, however, that *demonstrative, deductive* arguments for a phenomenological conclusion are bound to feature some phenomenological premise. (Tongue in cheek, we may call the attempt to *deduce* phenomenological conclusions from non-phenomenological premises the ‘physicalistic fallacy,’ in allusion to G.E. Moore’s ‘naturalistic fallacy.’²³) Sometimes these phenomenological premises will command introspective agreement, but if they fail to, some other type of argument will be needed. The only hope for an introspectively neutral argument for a phenomenological conclusion thus lies in a *non-demonstrative* (plausibly: abductive) argument with non-phenomenological premises.

An argument of this sort for *cognitive* phenomenology is sketched by Goldman (1993) and carefully developed by Pitt (2004). Both argue abductively from epistemological premises about our *knowledge* of our cognitive states to phenomenological conclusions about the *feel* of these cognitive states. Goldman points out that the propositional attitudes are introspectively discriminable: we can often tell by introspection that we believe that *p*, as opposed to desiring that *p* or believing that *q*.²⁴ This datum needs explaining, and the best explanation, suggests Goldman, is that the belief that *p* has a distinctive phenomenal character for introspection to detect.²⁵ Pitt (2004) develops a more involved account of the special knowledge we have of our cognitive states – it is immediate, non-inferential

knowledge (again, both of the attitude and of the content of cognitive states). For Pitt too, the best explanation of this is that we are directly acquainted with phenomenal features distinctive of our cognitive states (both attitude and content).²⁶

Similar reasoning could be used to support the existence of a phenomenology of entertaining. Consider some proposition which does not command immediate assent or dissent, perhaps because it is too complicated or too profound – say, <the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things> (from Spinoza's *Ethics*). When presented with such a proposition, most of us would not be immediately in a position to either believe or disbelieve it. More likely, our first act would be to merely entertain it. Importantly, as we entertain a proposition such as <the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things>, we are not typically inclined to confuse our act (or episode) of entertaining for belief, desire, or any other attitude.²⁷ Rather, we typically know that what we are doing with this proposition is entertaining it to be the case, not believing or desiring it to be the case.²⁸ Moreover, this knowledge is immediate in Pitt's sense: the second-order belief that I am entertaining that p (rather than believing or desiring that p) is not arrived at by inference from some other belief, and what epistemically justifies it is not any such inference either. That is to say, this second-order belief is neither *psychologically* nor *epistemically* based on inference. Its formation seems rather immediate and unmediated. It is natural to say that such beliefs are based directly on introspection: we form them by simple endorsement of the introspective appearances, somewhat as perceptual beliefs can be formed by simple endorsement of the perceptual appearances. Just as I believe that there is a table before me simply because it perceptual seems to me that there is and I endorse that perceptual seeming, so I believe that I have a table-experience right now simply because it introspectively seems to me that I do and I endorse this introspective seeming.²⁹

Both the notions of introspective observation and of its endorsement are not unproblematic, and certainly call for some account; I offer my own in Kriegel 2011

Ch.1.³⁰ But however these notions turn out to be explicated, a certain datum emerges: that we can sometimes form a second-order belief about some (or all) of our acts (or episodes) of entertaining without inference and through simple endorsement of introspective appearances. Note well: the datum is *not* that we have infallible knowledge, incorrigible knowledge, or otherwise extraordinarily enviable knowledge of our entertainings. In fact, the datum just isolated does not even mention knowledge proper – merely second-order belief (whether or not true).³¹ What needs explaining is that we can form such beliefs – justifiably – without inference.

One natural explanation of the datum is that (i) at least some (and perhaps all) acts/episodes of entertaining exhibit a distinctive phenomenology P and (ii) we form second-order beliefs about these acts/episodes on the basis of direct introspective observation of P. This basic story can be developed in a number of different ways.³² However developed, the fact that this sort of story manages to explain the datum provides *defeasible reason* for believing the story – including the part of the story that asserts the existence of a phenomenology of entertaining. The reason provided is defeasible, and might ultimately be defeated (e.g., if a *better* explanation of the datum could be provided). But the very fact that a story implicating entertaining-phenomenology has the resources to explain the datum, and so naturally no less, does provide a defeasible reason to believe in entertaining-phenomenology. This, recall, is the first stage of my argument for primitive entertainment.

The second stage is to consider potential defeaters. I cannot rule out here every possible defeater. (If I did, the argument would become demonstrative!) Instead, I will consider two particularly promising candidates.

The first potential defeater appeals to functional role. Mere entertaining that *p* clearly does not play the same functional role in our mental economy that believing or desiring that *p* does. It may be suggested that the relevant second-order beliefs are based on introspective observation of the distinctive *functional role* of

entertaining (rather than of any *phenomenal character*). The problem with this suggestion, however, is that the functional role of a mental state is a *dispositional property* of it: the state is disposed to have certain typical causes and effects. But dispositional properties are not directly introspectible (any more than fragility and explosiveness, for instance, are directly perceivable). So second-order beliefs could not be based on direct introspective observation of functional role.

A second potential defeater appeals to *absence* of phenomenology. Suppose for simplicity of exposition that there are three basic propositional attitudes – belief, desire, and entertaining – such that belief is associated with a distinctive phenomenology B and desire with a distinctive phenomenology D, but entertaining is associated with no phenomenology. Then S could tell by introspection that S entertains that *p* simply by noticing that she experiences neither B nor D.³³ Importantly, this explanation is clearly more parsimonious than the entertaining-phenomenology-positing one. There are two problems with it, however. First, it seems possible to simultaneously desire that *p* and entertain that *p*, and moreover to *know* that this is what one is doing. Yet the present account would make such knowledge impossible, since it allows knowledge of entertaining only in the absence of D. Secondly and more importantly, S's introspective encounter with the absence of B and D is consistent with S having *no* attitude towards *p*. So we would need an account of how S comes to know that she has a propositional attitude to begin with. If S infers as much from other beliefs, then the ensuing knowledge is not immediate in the relevant sense. Thus S must be able to tell by introspection alone that she is having *some* attitude. The only way this could work is if there is a general attitudinal phenomenology – call it A – shared by belief, desire, and entertaining, in addition to the phenomenal dimensions special to belief and to desire. In this picture, however, it is no longer true that there is no distinctive phenomenology of entertaining. The phenomenological situation is this: the phenomenology of belief is a composite of A+B, the phenomenology of desire is a composite of A+D, and the phenomenology of entertaining is simply A. Here S may well be able to tell introspectively that she has some attitude, but then S is also able to tell by introspection that she entertains

rather than believes or desires – she does so on the basis of introspective observation of A (and only A), a phenomenology distinctive of entertaining.³⁴

This concludes the second stage of my non-demonstrative argument for primitive entertainment. By this stage, the argument has established the *existence* of entertaining-phenomenology (pending unconsidered defeaters). The third and final stage attempts to establish the *irreducibility* of such phenomenology. It does so by ruling out potential reducers. Again, I will only consider two particularly promising candidate reducers.

One potential reducer of entertaining is belief in mere possibility. On this view, the phenomenology of entertaining that p is in reality nothing but the phenomenology of believing that $\Diamond p$, with the modality being the least demanding – logical possibility. One problem with this, however, is that arguably one can entertain even propositions one believes to be (logically-)necessarily false.³⁵ For example, I might entertain Frege’s set theory, or perhaps just its axiom of comprehension, even though, being familiar with Russell’s Paradox, I believe it to be incoherent.³⁶ (Compare: I can visualize an Escher triangle, even though I believe it to be logically impossible.³⁷) A second and deeper problem, to my mind, is that the ‘orientational neutrality’ in the phenomenology of entertaining is not replicated in beliefs about logical possibility. Even if we were wired so as to be unable to entertain propositions we believed to be impossible, believing that $\Diamond p$ would still involve a certain element of *doxastic commitment*, or *affirmation*, or *assent*, altogether absent in entertaining that p .³⁸

A second potential reducer is perfect balance between belief and disbelief. The idea might be to reduce the phenomenology of entertaining that p to the phenomenology of having exactly 50% credence in p . This appears more likely to replicate the doxastic neutrality of entertaining. Many other problems arise, however. First, if I can entertain Frege’s set theory despite believing it to be incoherent, then I can certainly entertain propositions in which my credence is much lower than 50%. Secondly, I may entertain that p precisely with a view to

establishing some credence in p , with the episode of entertaining spanning moments in which I am inclined to be 55% credent, moments I am inclined to be 45% credent, and moments of thorough indecision. Thirdly, if it turns out that entertaining-phenomenology individuates as finely as content,³⁹ then entertaining that p and entertaining that $\sim p$ would feel different – yet arguably having 50% credence in p and having 50% credence in $\sim p$ feel the same. Finally, it is not clear that the phenomenology of orientational neutrality in entertaining is indeed replicated in 50% credence – there is a sense in which the latter involves 50% commitment to the truth of p , whereas the former involves 0% commitment.⁴⁰ Consider that a rational subject 50% credent in p who also experienced great certainty in q (say, 90% credence) would likely experience significant credence in $p \& q$ (circa 45%); whereas an equally rational subject who merely entertained that p , but also experienced great certainty in q (90% credence) would be unlikely to experience any separate degree of conviction in $p \& q$ (no credence assignment for the conjunction).⁴¹

I have considered two possible attempts to reduce entertaining-phenomenology to some kind of cognitive phenomenology, and have argued against them. I take it that the probability of reducing entertaining-phenomenology to conative, emotional, perceptual, or hedonic phenomenology is much lower. I conclude, tentatively, that entertaining-phenomenology is irreducible – it is a primitive type of phenomenology. This concludes the third and final stage of my (non-demonstrative) argument for primitive entertainment. The argument proffers a defeasible-but-as-yet-undefeated reason to posit primitive entertaining-phenomenology.

One final objection worth considering is that there is no such thing as mere entertaining at all. Certain recent models of thought and reasoning have been taken to have this consequence. According to Gilbert (1991), the traditional model, whereby when presented with a proposition we first entertain it and only later come to believe or disbelieve it, is false to the facts. In reality, when presented with a proposition we automatically believe it and only later may suspend or even reverse

our initial belief.⁴² The empirical evidence for this is varied, but the findings revolve around the following point: when comparing two groups of subjects presented with the same propositions, such that one group's cognitive functioning is interfered with (interference condition) and one group's is not (control condition), subjects in the interference condition behave in a way that suggests *greater*, rather than lesser, belief in those propositions than subjects in the control condition (Gilbert et al. 1993). Some interpreters have taken such findings, and their attendant model of reasoning, to recommend dispensing with the notion that subjects can entertain a proposition without believing it, that is, can *merely* entertain a proposition (Mandelbaum 2010).⁴³

In response, I would argue that there is a superior model of reasoning that accommodates Gilbert's findings but makes ample room for entertaining. Gilbert's model predates developments in cognitive science suggesting that many cognitive functions are subserved by a dual-process architecture. In such architecture, a function F is performed by both (i) a low-road process that is typically fast, efficient, automatic, implicit, unconscious, specialized, and directly tied to action, but not very flexible, not particularly amenable to monitoring and control (because informationally encapsulated), and with limited range, and (ii) a high-road process that is the converse: flexible, wide-ranged, consciously and explicitly controllable and manipulable, but linked to action only indirectly, slow and inefficient. This dual-process architecture has been empirically defended for reasoning (Sloman 1996), with the high-road process construed along broadly rationalist lines and the low-road one along broadly associationist ones.⁴⁴ My hypothesis is that Gilbert's model accurately describes belief formation through the associationist, low-road process, which accounts for the behavioral evidence he adduces.⁴⁵ All the same, the rationalist, high-road belief-formation process conforms at least in part to the more traditional model, where conscious acts of entertaining do occur occasionally.⁴⁶

Conclusion

The central purpose of this paper has been to make the case for the thesis of primitive entertainment: the thesis that there is a distinctive phenomenology of entertaining a proposition that does not reduce to any combination of other types of phenomenology. In the process, we have also encountered a template for considering the prospects for primitivism about any given type of phenomenology. Unless one can deduce the very existence of the relevant phenomenology from uncontroversial phenomenological premises, one would probably need to produce a non-deductive argument devoid of phenomenological premises that would generate a defeasible reason for accepting that phenomenology's existence. After rebutting sufficiently many potential defeaters of the defeasible reason, and then sufficiently many potential reducers of the relevant phenomenology, one will have produced a *prima facie* case for primitivism about it. This procedure may fail at various junctures, and depending on where the failure occurs, reductivism or eliminativism about the relevant phenomenology may recommend themselves.

Repeating this exercise, or ones like it, for a variety of different putative types of phenomenology would yield a partial portrait of the scope and structure of the phenomenal realm. From this perspective, the 'ultimate goal of phenomenological inquiry,' if you will, is to produce a recommendation of primitivism, reductivism, or eliminativism for *every* putative type of phenomenology. And the emergence of a (virtual) consensus about the proper recommendation for each putative type of phenomenology may be thought of as the 'end of phenomenological inquiry.'

References

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¹ The triad could be put in more overtly metaphysical terms thus: 1) Some cognitive-phenomenal properties are instantiated. 2) Some instantiated cognitive-phenomenal properties are irreducible to combinations of perceptual- and/or hedonic-phenomenal properties. 3) Perceptual- and hedonic-phenomenal properties ultimately exhaust all phenomenal properties. This formulation is more precise, in a way, but also more cluttered, so in the text I stick with the simpler formulation.

² In other words, the triad I am interested in should be distinguished from the following one: 1) There is cognitive phenomenology. 2) Cognitive phenomenology does not reduce to physical properties. 3) Everything is physical.

³ The triad she would face would thus be better formulated as follows: 1) There exists emotional phenomenology. 2) Emotional phenomenology is irreducible to perceptual, hedonic, and/or cognitive phenomenology. 3) Perceptual, hedonic, and cognitive phenomenology ultimately exhaust all phenomenology.

⁴ The corresponding inconsistent triad would be this: 1) There exists emotional phenomenology. 2) Emotional phenomenology is irreducible to perceptual and/or cognitive phenomenology. 3) Perceptual and cognitive phenomenology ultimately exhaust all phenomenology.

⁵ Putting things this way has the unfortunate feature that we are quantifying over non-existents. Arguably, however, any kind of ontological theorizing has to start with *putative* existents, and would thereby be forced to speak of what may potentially turn out to be non-existents.

⁶ There are several issues with this procedure. One concerns where the list of putative types of phenomenology comes from. A deeper one concerns how the phenomenal realm is carved out into

types to begin with. A third one concerns the relationships between determinable types and their determinates. Doubtless, these issues complicate the final procedure significantly.

⁷ In an ostensibly more epistemological vein, Chalmers (forthcoming) proposes that a central goal of philosophical worldviews is to produce the minimal base of truths from which the totality of truths could be derived a priori by an ideal reasoner. This is, in Chalmers' term, a 'scrutability project': when p can be derived from q a priori by an ideal reasoner, we say that p is 'scrutable' from q . I describe the vein is only *ostensibly* epistemological because on the 'Australian view' of ontological reduction (Chalmers and Jackson 2001), a necessary condition on the ontological reduction of entity E_1 to entity (or entities) E_2 is that all truths about E_1 be scrutable from truths about E_2 . At least against the background of this Australian view of reduction, then, the question can be cast in terms of scrutability: which phenomenal truths are scrutable from which, and which types of phenomenology are such that truths about them form the scrutability base of all phenomenal truths?

⁸ There are other intuitive devices for giving a feel for the grounding relation. Sometimes it is said that all God would have to do to create the world is to create the grounders, for example. For a more theoretical take on grounding, see Fine 2001, Schaffer 2009, and Sider 2011.

⁹ More precisely, the present project is an application of a somewhat more inclusive approach to ontology, which Schaffer (personal communication) now favors, that covers both grounding and existence questions (see Kriegel Ms).

¹⁰ Entertaining that p seems to be the same as entertaining the proposition at p . The relation between this and entertaining either the thought that p or the possibility that p is a contentious matter we need not get into here. In any case, entertaining an idea or an image does not seem to be a propositional attitude at all, but what we might call an *objectual attitude*.

¹¹ In particular, I suspect that to some readers the term 'entertaining' may suggest commitment to the possible or potential truth of what is entertained. To my ear, this is more the case with 'considering.' The term 'contemplating' certainly seems to me to suggest the entirely non-committal character I have in mind.

¹² One reasonable claim is that wherever an attitude has a distinctive phenomenology, that phenomenology does individuate as finely as content. This could be put as follows: for any attitude A and propositions p and q (where $p \neq q$), if there is a phenomenology of A -ing all, then A -ing that p is phenomenally different from A -ing that q . This principle, in conjunction with the thesis of primitive entertainment, does entail that entertaining that p is phenomenally different from entertaining that q .

¹³ For example, elsewhere I argue for a distinction between agential and conative phenomenology (Kriegel forthcoming Ch.2). This would recommend adding agential phenomenology to the list of potential reducers. I do not do so here because the distinction is unfamiliar and would take us too far afield to introduce, while not ultimately affecting the dialectic.

¹⁴ Recall that Brentano takes intentionality to be the mark of the mental, which means that he takes intentional directedness as such to be the most general mental determinable. It is therefore natural for him to hold that mental determinates are distinguished by their *mode* or *type* of intentional directedness. Thus he writes (1874: 197): 'Nothing distinguishes mental phenomena from physical phenomena more than the fact that something is immanent as an [intentional] object in them. For this reason it is easy to understand that the fundamental differences in the way something exists in them as an [intentional] object constitute the principal class differences among mental phenomena.'

¹⁵ The notion of direction of fit comes to us from Anscombe (1957). The idea is that some mental states' intentional contents have satisfaction conditions which are in fact satisfied only when the mind fits itself to the way the world is (namely, belief-like states), while others have ones that are satisfied only when the world fits itself to the way the mind is (desire-like states).

¹⁶ Brentano (1874: 201) writes: 'When we say that presentation and judgment are two different fundamental classes of mental phenomena, we mean, in accord with our preceding remarks [see previous note], that they are two entirely different ways of being conscious of an object.' Clearly, it is the type of intentionality employed that seems to him to distinguish judgment and presentation. Brentano proceeds to offer two sustained lines of argument against reducing presentation to judgment (hence entertaining-phenomenology to cognitive and perceptual phenomenology).

¹⁷ Often there is also an agential element of *holding* a proposition before one's mind. (Thanks to David Pitt for pointing this out to me.) However, this is probably not an essential or mandatory feature of the phenomenology of entertaining.

¹⁸ The two departures are arguably connected: since direction of fit is construed by orthodoxy in functional terms, the 'neutral' direction of fit that would characterize entertaining would appear to have no clear functional profile.

¹⁹ That is to say, even when they overcome the first gap between the functionalist orthodoxy and the Brentanian picture, they still implicitly or explicitly embrace the second gap.

²⁰ Cohen does not explicitly state this dispositional analysis for desire, but he does write that 'belief that *p* is a disposition... normally to feel it true that *p* and false that not-*p*, whether or not one is willing to act, speak, or reason accordingly.' (1992: 4) In any case, in discussing feeling it to be good that *p* Cohen clearly does not have in mind *moral* goodness. Rather, there is probably a notion of good-for-the-subject at play here.

²¹ This is not to say that followers accepted every aspect of Brentano's views. Husserl, for example, finds much ambiguity and under-description in Brentano's account of presentation, while Meinong argues that in addition to Brentano's three phenomenal primitives there is a fourth one, 'assumption,' which lies in-between presentation and judgment.

²² Recall that the thesis is this: There is a phenomenal property *P*, such that (i) for any subject *S* and proposition *p*, if *S* entertains that *p* then *S* instantiates *P*, and (ii) there are no phenomenal properties P_1, \dots, P_n , such that *P* reduces to some combination of P_1, \dots, P_n . In this formulation, (i) is the existence clause and (ii) is the irreducibility clause.

²³ Moore (1903) called the 'naturalistic fallacy' the attempt to deductively infer normative conclusions from exclusively non-normative ('naturalistic') premises – to deduce an 'ought' from an 'is.' The neo-Mooreans can accept normative facts that reduce to natural facts, as per Cornell realism in metaethics, but would maintain the reduction is not a priori, and therefore normative propositions are not deducible from natural propositions. Likewise, most contemporary philosophers of mind would agree that even if phenomenal facts that reduce to physical facts, the reduction is not a priori, and therefore phenomenal propositions are not deducible from physical propositions. The only opponents of this would be a priori physicalists – proponents of what Chalmers (2002) calls 'type-A materialism,' according to whom there *are* a priori connections between physical and phenomenal facts. If type-A materialism is true, then the 'physicalistic fallacy' is not a fallacy after all.

²⁴ Note that although this consideration mentions introspection, it is not introspectively based, in a sense that it is not for introspective reasons that we are compelled to believe it – we do not introspect the introspective discriminability of propositional attitudes.

²⁵ Overall, Goldman sketches four arguments for the ‘phenomenological parity’ of the attitudes – what we call today cognitive phenomenology. Here I am concerned with the third of these. Goldman (1993: 24) writes: ‘My third argument is from the introspective discriminability of attitude strengths. Subjects’ classificational abilities are not confined to broad categories such as belief, desire, and intention; they also include intensities thereof. People report how firm is their intention or conviction, how much they desire an object, and how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with a state of affairs. Whatever the behavioral predictive power of these self-reports, their very occurrence needs explaining... The most natural hypothesis is that there are dimensions of awareness over which scales of attitude intensity are represented.’

²⁶ Pitt (2004: 7): ‘Normally – that is, barring confusion, inattention, impaired functioning, and the like – one is able, consciously, introspectively and non-inferentially (henceforth, “Immediately”) to do three distinct (but closely related) things: (a) to distinguish one’s occurrent conscious thoughts from one’s other occurrent conscious mental states; (b) to distinguish one’s occurrent conscious thoughts each from the others; and (c) to identify each of one’s occurrent conscious thoughts as the thought it is (i.e., as having the *content* it does). But (the argument continues), one would not be able to do these things unless each (type of) occurrent conscious thought had a phenomenology... different from that of any other type of conscious mental state (proprietary).’ In Pitt’s hands, this argument appeal to a special case of inference to the best explanation, which we may call ‘inference to the *only* possible explanation,’ but this is not an essential feature of the reasoning, and the argument can certainly be set out as a standard inference to the best explanation.

²⁷ I am operating here with a distinction, which otherwise will not matter to the discussion, between *acts* of entertaining and *episodes* of entertaining. The former are endogenous and voluntary (as when I consciously decide to entertain some proposition), the latter exogenous and involuntary (as when a proposition to entertain just pops in my mind or is foisted on me by an external source).

²⁸ This is not to suggest, of course, that we would be in a position to apply the public-language expression ‘merely entertaining’ to the episode! Also, note that unlike Goldman and Pitt, I am making a claim here only about the *attitude*, and not about the *content*, of the state in question. I believe the claim about content to be true as well, but it is not my concern in the present paper.

²⁹ This is, to be sure, a controversial view on how the relevant kind of self-knowledge is produced. I defend it, however, in Kriegel 2011 Ch.1.

³⁰ Pitt (2004) too offers a rather developed account of the kind of immediate knowledge he appeals to, also exploiting an analogy with perceptual knowledge. The extant literature is of course rife with other accounts of introspective observation (or quasi-observation). In any case, the fact that introspective observation is hard to analyze should no more incline us to doubt its reality than the fact that the analysis of knowledge has proven elusive inclines us to adopt global skepticism.

³¹ Admittedly, even this relatively thin datum is not beyond rational doubt. However, I will not defend it any further here. For relevant discussion, see Kriegel 2011 Ch.1.

³² For my part, I would say that phenomenal properties of conscious states are the only eligible objects of introspective observation, somewhat as the sensible qualities of external objects are the only eligible objects of perceptual observation. We form second-order beliefs about our entertainings by first introspectively observing their distinctive phenomenology and then endorsing the content of this introspective observation; this involves the performance of no inference. For more detail, see Kriegel 2011 Ch.1. Pitt (2004) too offers a rather developed account of the kind of immediate knowledge he appeals to, also exploiting an analogy with perceptual knowledge. The extant literature is of course rife with other accounts of introspective observation (or quasi-observation). In any case,

the fact that introspective observation is hard to analyze should no more incline us to doubt its reality than the fact that the analysis of knowledge has proven elusive inclines us to adopt global skepticism.

³³ Thanks to **Victor Kumar and David Pitt** for independently raising this possibility with me.

³⁴ This picture is in fact consistent with the idea that the phenomenology of entertaining is that of merely having a proposition before one's mind. For then belief and desire involve apprehension of a proposition, it would be natural to see their phenomenology as amounting to suitably modified or augmented entertaining-phenomenology. This is perhaps why Brentano (1874 Bk II Ch.1) maintained that every conscious act involves a presentation as component, a view also shared by many of his students (see, e.g., Husserl 1901 V Ch.5).

³⁵ In one sense, mathematicians entertain impossibilities routinely in the course of proving theorems by *reductio ad absurdum*. (Thanks to **Elijah Chudnoff** for pointing this out to me.)

³⁶ It might be objected that it is in fact impossible for us to entertain such necessarily false propositions, perhaps on the grounds that there are no such propositions for us to entertain, there being no such things as 'incoherent propositions.' This might be augmented with the suggestion that we are truly entertaining in such cases are the *words* used to express the alleged proposition, not the proposition itself. This objection seems to me wrongheaded, but in any case I rest my case against analyzing entertaining in terms of believing possibility mainly upon the second consideration raised against the analysis in the text. The reason the objection seems to me wrongheaded is that it strikes me as imposing certain antecedent theoretical commitments on what seems to me pre-theoretically manifest, namely, that we can entertain what we take to be impossible. Moreover, the consideration that we cannot entertain incoherent proposition because there are no such proposition for us to entertain applies with equal force to incoherent propositions of whose incoherence we are unaware of. But it is highly questionable that I cannot entertain the proposition that my mother's nieceless brother's only nephew is not me in case I am unaware that it is an 'incoherent proposition.'

³⁷ For a sustained argument that it is possible to have a conscious experience as of an Escher triangle, see Kriegel 2011 Ch.3.

³⁸ The same considerations would apply to a variant on this reductive proposal that would attempt to reduce entertaining *p* to believing not that *p* is *metaphysically* or even *logically* possible, but that it is *epistemically* possible. Plausibly, Frege's set theory is not even epistemically possible (the set of centered world in which it is true is the null set). Moreover, belief in its epistemic possibility would still involve an element of doxastic commitment where none is present in the mere entertaining. (Furthermore, it is not entirely clear that we can make sense of epistemic possibility without appealing, explicitly or implicitly, to the notion of entertaining.)

³⁹ See **Note 12** above.

⁴⁰ Relatedly, Brentano (1874 BkII Ch.7) distinguishes two dimensions of intensity along which judgments (cognitive phenomenology) can vary, one to do with the degree of conviction in the proposition judged and one to do merely with the degree of vividness with which the proposition is present before the mind; according to Brentano, presentation (entertaining-phenomenology) exhibits only the second dimension. He writes: 'Furthermore, in presentations the only intensity involved is the greater or less sharpness and vividness of the phenomenon. When love and hate enter in, however, a new kind of intensity is introduced – a greater or lesser degree of energy, vehemence or moderation in the strength of these feelings. In an altogether analogous manner, we also find an entirely new kind of intensity when judgment is added to presentation. For it is obvious that the

greater or lesser degree of certainty in conviction or opinion is more closely related to the differences in the intensity of love than to differences in the strength of presentations.' (1874: 223)

⁴¹ Thanks to **Lizzie Kriegel and Joseph Tolliver** for helpful discussion of this issue.

⁴² Gilbert (1991: 107) writes: 'Is there a difference between believing and merely understanding an idea?... [I argue] that (a) the acceptance of an idea is part of the automatic comprehension of that idea and (b) the rejection of an idea occurs subsequent to, and more effortfully than, its acceptance.'

⁴³ Mandelbaum (2010: 13) writes: 'If I tell you that I'm about to read a list of sentences all of which are false and then I read the sentences, it seems plausible that you would not automatically believe these sentences in the way that you may, for example, automatically get excited when hearing of a rare and tantalizing opportunity. However, in what follows I will argue that this plausible assumption is false: ... just as emotions are insensitive to our background beliefs, so too is belief formation initially insensitive to our background beliefs. More specifically, I will argue for the claim that, whenever we entertain a proposition, we automatically believe that proposition. The plausible idea that we can entertain a proposition while withholding assent from it is a myth...'

⁴⁴ In the rationalist process, or system, thought is taken to be guided by deductive and inductive logic, such that causal connections among mental states somehow follow logical connections (deductive or inductive) among these states' representational contents. In the associationist system, causal connections among mental states are determined by certain *laws of association* among their contents rather than deductive or inductive connections. Thus Sloman (1996: 3) writes: 'One system is associative because its computations reflect similarity structure and relations of temporal contiguity. The other is 'rule based' because it operates on symbolic structures that have logical content and variables and because its computations have the properties that are normally assigned to rules. These systems serve complementary functions and can simultaneously generate different solutions to a reasoning problem.'

⁴⁵ This is at least a first approximation of what I have in mind. My own view is that Gendler's (2008) distinction between alief and belief tracks very closely the kinds of state produced by the two reasoning systems: the associationist low-road system produces aliefs, the rationalist high-road system produces beliefs (for details, see Kriegel 2012) . If so, the system that produces automatic doxastic commitment to the truth of propositions is not really a belief-formation system, but an alief-formation one. Since aliefs control behavior by default, this explains Gilbert's findings.

⁴⁶ This being an empirical hypothesis, it should be experimentally testable, though I confess to not having tested it myself.