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# QUALIA AIN'T IN THE HEAD

*Review of*: Tye, Michael (1995), *Ten Problems of Consciousness: A Representational Theory of the Phenomenal Mind.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. xvi, 248p. ISBN: 0-262-20103-8.

1.1 Brian McLaughlin says on the jacket of this book that it is "the most developed intentional theory of consciousness to date". "Intentional" here has nothing to do with intentions. It simply means that consciousness always *represents* and so may misrepresent, even to the extent of presenting what does not exist. I agree with McLaughlin's assessment. If he and I are right, then this is a very important book. I declare an interest, though. I accept the intentional theory of consciousness. I think, in particular, that all consciousness is awareness of various sorts, though of course the word "awareness" is not to be taken as a success-word here. There can be mistaken awareness.

1.2 Tye's title is to a degree misleading. He is not offering a general theory of consciousness but only of what he calls "phenomenal consciousness". The central case is perception, but Tye thinks it can be extended to after-images, bodily sensations, the having mental images (which he does not say very much about, perhaps because he has already written a separate book about it, 1991), and even emotions and moods. The great problem here for a materialist, as Tye is, is of course the dreaded *qualia* and with it the problem of the bat's eye view, or perhaps one should say the bat's sonar view.

1.3 Tye contrasts his account of consciousness with those who insist that "consciousness is a matter of turning one's attention inward and thinking about what is going on in one's own mind" (p. 5), and instances myself, David Rosenthal and Dan Dennett. This formulation sounds like David Rosenthal and is not my view. In a paper "What is Consciousness?" (1980) I distinguish minimal, perceptual and introspective consciousness, where perceptual consciousness is more or less Tye's phenomenal consciousness, though his term seems rather better than mine. Introspective consciousness I hold to be an *awareness* of the current state of our own mind, and draw what I take to be a demythologizing parallel with proprioceptive perception of the current state of our own body. Locke, who Tye mentions in this connection, and also Kant, thought of introspective consciousness as "inner sense" and such a conception, if it can be made good, might enable Tye to extend his account of phenomenal consciousness to this higher-order consciousness, with only a little stretching.

1.4 There is a tendency in our tradition to run together phenomenal consciousness with introspective consciousness. Tye will have nothing of this. He does not think that when, for instance, one is seeing, or seeming to see, one is automatically aware of this perceptual state that one is in. He indicates the some of the empirical evidence on this topic, evidence which seems to defeat the a priori reasonings of many philosophers. (For myself, I have found N.F. Dixon's work on subliminal perception - 1971, but not, I understand, superseded - very helpful here. Tye uses newer evidence from blindsight research, citing Weiskrantz, 1986, and devoting an appendix to further discussion of the phenomenon.) I am inclined to think that the phrase "perceptual *experience*" encapsulates the confused running together in philosopher's minds of perceptions of the world and introspective awareness of those perceptions. Indeed, the phrase "phenomenal consciousness" itself is potentially a little misleading.

1.5 By taking a perception of, say, a red cube against a flat green background as an intentional affair, Tye gets the redness of the cube, as well as its cubical shape, the greenness of the background as well as its flatness, out into the world, where they all appear to be. And if, as is possible, the whole perception is hallucinatory, then because perception is essentially representative, there is, or there need be, nothing that is actually red or green or cubical or flat in the world.

1.6 Tye thinks that there are ten problems about phenomenal consciousness that need to be resolved by a satisfactory theory. There is (i) the problem of ownership ("only I can have my own pain"); (ii) the problem of perspectival subjectivity ("what it is like"); (iii) the problem of mechanism (how do our brains produce what McGinn calls the "technicolour phenomenology"?); (iv) the problem of causation (can we give our perceptions any causal role, or must they be impotent?); (v) the problem of super blindsight (an imaginary subject who gets all the information ordinary people get from vision, but has no visual experience); (vi) the problem of duplicates (zombie duplicates of ourselves who lack phenomenal consciousness); (vii) the problem of the inverted spectrum (you see green where I see red); (ix) the problem of transparency (you can only say what an experience is an experience *of*); (x) the problem of the alien leg ("how can I feel a pain as a pain in *my* leg?"). His claim, argued in detail, is that only an intentional theory, which takes phenomenal consciousness to be essentially representative, can solve *all* of these problems.

1.7 This review will not discuss Tye's very useful exposition and discussion of all these topics. (He includes box summaries and even a few cartoons.) I will just make a few remarks. On the question whether only I can feel my pains Tye discusses a very complex case involving the dividing up of two brains, a case due to Arnold Zuboff but presented by Peter Unger (1990). A simpler case might be one of *siamese brains*. Suppose that a certain pair of twins has not merely portions of their bodies in common, just one liver and so on, but also a portion of their brain in common. Suppose, as a result, that they have just one pain-registering centre. Suppose, to make it simple, that a pain-receptor is stimulated in an overlapping portion of their bodies, and this registers in their brain. Given a materialist theory of mind, will they not have numerically the same pain?

1.8 The transparency of experience, its diaphanous quality except for the putative objects of experience, seems to me to be a fact, but some philosophers of mind would deny it. So I am not sure whether it should be presented as Tye presents it, as a datum to be explained. But it is certainly a pity that Tye does not mention Brian Farrell's fine paper "Experience" (1950) which emphasizes and argues for the featurelessness of experience (and, incidentally, briefly asks what it would be like to be a bat). There is a tendency in the rush and hurry of contemporary philosophy for important older but still relevant work to drop down the memory-hole.

1.9 An even more important omission, I think, is Elizabeth Anscombe's paper "The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature" (1965), though the appearance of the word "grammatical" is likely to put contemporary researchers off! She argued that perception has the classic features associated with intentionality: possible non-existence of the object (hallucination, etc.); non-substitutability of different descriptions of the object, where it does exist (it will only be perceived as having certain properties); possible indeterminacy of the object (it may be perceived imprecisely).

1.10 One difficulty for the programme Tye is pursuing lies in the secondary qualities. The difficulty is not so much intellectual but, so I

have found, just getting a hearing or even an understanding. A Lockean, or internalist, account of colour, sound, taste and smell seems to hold contemporary philosophers in a vice-like grip. The idea that these qualities are not in the head, but are instead where their phenomenology seems to place them, things or properties out in the world, arouses enormous resistance! Tye's slogan that qualia ain't in the head is a splendid attention-getting device in these circumstances. The resistance seems not to be caused by the reflection that these properties present themselves as fairly simple, dissective properties, whereas their micro-physical correlates outside the head are quite complex and structured. For physicalist Lockeans seem quite happy to identify the internal qualia with brain-processes, and exactly the same difficulties, if not worse, arise with their preferred identification. Tye does say that "on the face of it, colours and other 'secondary qualities' pose a special difficulty for the theory I have been developing" (p. 144). But he devotes just under seven pages to the problem. I think what he says is fine as far as it goes, but quite a bit more needs to be said by way of overcoming the quite real phenomenological difficulties. My own most recent attempt to do a little more is in my 1987, appropriately in a book honouring Jack Smart.

1.11 Suppose that a purely intentionalist/representationalist theory of perception can be developed. Suppose that an account of bodily sensations can be developed as bodily perceptions (proprioceptions). Suppose that mental images can be argued to be what they appear to be: like perceptions, even if no more than like. Suppose that the emotions can be brought within this net. Suppose that introspective consciousness can be represented as a form of awareness, awareness of the mental, and so, among other things, as an awareness of first-order awarenesses. To do all this would all be a great triumph for the intentionalist programme. But, of course, for a materialist/physicalist like Tye or myself, the problems involved in the mind-body problem have been no more than reduced to one. What account can we give of intentionality? For we must concede Brentano, the pioneer of the intentional theory of the mind, the following point: intentionality does not *seem* to be a purely physical property. Tye gives the problem of the nature of intentionality only the briefest of discussions, in connection with perception, which he sees as a map-like type of representation. Fair enough, for he did not set out to solve it.

1.12 If one *does* want to move on to this problem that emerges, one could very well begin with a wonderful, and intellectually extremely accessible, Penguin book by Tim Crane: The Mechanical Mind (1995). It is the best treatment of the intentionality of the mental that I have yet come across.

1.13 I have in this review been interested in Tye's *research programme*, trying to give a general account of it, and so, I hope, showing its strength at the level of programme. There is much more in the book than that, much useful discussion of relative detail, and, of course, detailed discussion of the ten problems. I strongly recommend it.

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