

Counterexamples to local intentionalism

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Jeff Speaks

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Some alleged counterexamples to intentionalism turn on examples of mental states whose possibility is controversial; examples include the argument from spectrum inversion without misrepresentation and from zombies whose perceptual states represent the world but lack phenomenal character.

We'll return to those later, and focus first on alleged counterexamples to intentionalism whose possibility is not open to serious question. These come in two forms:

- Alleged examples of a pair of perceptual experiences which differ in phenomenology but not in content.
- Alleged example of states, like certain bodily sensations, which have a phenomenal character but lack a content altogether.

The second class is a counterexample only to global intentionalist theses, whereas the first aims to provide a counterexample to both local and global versions of the view. We'll discuss these first.

Here are some of the kinds of perceptual experiences which many have thought to pose a problem for intentionalism:

1. Peacocke's example of the large and short tree.
2. The coin viewed from the side and from above.
3. Aspect-switches, including the Necker cube and the duck/rabbit.
4. Phosphenes and afterimages.
5. Blurred vision and seeing objects as blurry.

It seems to me that the intentionalist has plausible things to say about each of these sorts of cases. Are there any other examples of pairs of perceptual experiences which might be harder to deal with?