

## ***Phenomenal Intentionality and the Unconscious Mind***

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### *Abstract*

According to Phenomenal Intentionality Theory (PIT) there are intentional states whose intentionality is grounded in their own phenomenal character, and these states are the central sort of intentional states (see Bourget, Mendelovici 2017 and Kriegel 2013 for general presentations).

PIT comes in two varieties:

*Strong-PIT* – All intentionality is grounded in phenomenology.

*Weak-PIT* – A state has intentionality either in virtue of its phenomenology or by bearing the right relation to states whose intentionality is grounded in phenomenology.

My aim in this talk is twofold: 1) to show that extant versions of Weak-PIT are at best unstable positions, and 2) to argue that Strong-PIT (granted some very plausible additional premises) implies the non-existence of unconscious mental states.

As for point 1), I criticise *potentialism* (Searle 1992), *inferentialism* (Horgan, Tienson 2002), and *interpretivism* (Kriegel 2011). I claim that potentialism is an incoherent position, and that inferentialism either illegitimately presupposes unconscious contents or otherwise fails in its own terms. Interpretivism, finally, while trying to admit non-phenomenologically-grounded intentional states, cannot give them either a definite content or a realistic ontology.

As for point 2), the argument goes this way:

Strong-PIT is true.

If there is unconscious intentionality and Strong-PIT is true, then there is unconscious phenomenology.

There is no unconscious phenomenology.

$x$  is mental if and only if either  $x$  has phenomenology or  $x$  has intentionality.

Now, by I, II, and III, it follows that

There is no unconscious intentionality, and, by III, IV, and V, one has that

There are no unconscious mental states.

Granted premises II, III and IV, the above argument amounts to the thesis that Strong-PIT implies the non-existence of unconscious mental states. This may well sound like a *reductio* of Strong-PIT, and granted the untenability of Weak-PIT, a *reductio* of PIT on the whole.

### *References*

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