

# Intentionality and emotion

## Comment on Hutto

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### 1. Introduction

I am very sympathetic to Dan Hutto's view that in our experience of the emotions of others "we do not neutrally observe the outward behaviour of another and infer coldly, but on less than certain grounds, that they are in such and such an inner state, as justified by analogy with our own case. Rather we react and feel as we do because it is natural for us to see and be moved by specific expressions of emotion in others" (Hutto section 4). This seems to me to be a good starting point for any account of the ascription and epistemology of emotions, an excellent description of data that any theory of the emotions has to take into account.

What I find puzzling is that Hutto seems to believe that this view is in opposition to certain widely accepted metaphysical assumptions about mental phenomena, and that these assumptions must be dispensed with if we are to give a proper account of emotion and avoid the problems which philosophy has traditionally had with the emotions.<sup>1</sup> This collection of assumptions about the mental is what Hutto calls the 'object-based schema.' The details of these assumptions will be discussed below; but the points I want to make in this note are (a) that Hutto is wrong in thinking that the plausible claims he makes about emotion (quoted above) require us to deny the object-based schema; and (b) that he is wrong in his claim that the object-based schema is entirely mistaken. Having established this, I will then make some remarks about Hutto's attack on my view of intentionality.

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## 2. The object-based schema

Hutto introduces the object-based schema as follows:

the hard problem of consciousness, conceived of as a problem about intelligibility, and the explanatory gap stem directly from our tendency to employ an object-based schema when characterising experience... We tend to think of experiences as inner objects (states, processes or events – or more commonly, determinable properties of these).

He then says:

This whole way of thinking about experience is encouraged by and reinforces the common idea that our experiential concepts grasp (or pick out) determinate objects or determinable objective features.

The object-based schema therefore seems to be the view that our concepts of experience pick out or refer to determinate inner entities, which may be objects in a narrower sense (i.e. persisting concrete particulars), or events, or processes or properties.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that Hutto does not deny the existence of experiences. He talks later of his “insistence that we recognise both that experiences exist and that they matter”, and we should all share this insistence. But he goes on, mysteriously, to say that “what we must not do is to think of [experiences] as existents or model them as inner objects, properties, and so on.” The claim seems to be that experiences *exist* but they are not *existents*. But how can this be? Since Hutto does not tell us what he means by ‘existent’, we are somewhat left in the dark about how to answer this question. We must assume that Hutto cannot mean by ‘existent’ *something which exists*. So let’s consider instead a number of other possible ways, suggested by other parts of his paper, in which things which exist might not be existents.

(1) *Reification*: At a number of points in the paper, Hutto talks as if the mistake in the object-based schema is that it ‘reifies’ experiences. There are experiences, to be sure, but they should not be reified. What does this really mean? The trouble with talk of reifying experiences is that it suggests that reifying is something that is *done* to already existing experiences. (After all, no-one here is denying that experiences exist.) It’s as if the idea is: ‘of course, there *are* experiences, but beware of reifying them! Say that experiences exist, by all means; but do not say that they are *things*!’ But it is plain that an experience is a thing in the broadest sense of that word and so it doesn’t need to *be* reified: it already is there. For this reason, I am sceptical whether the charge of ‘reification’ really makes much sense.

(2) *Reference*: Hutto later says that experiences are ‘not referents.’ Presumably he is employing the standard post-Fregean terminology according to which a refer-

ent is something which is referred to by a term.<sup>3</sup> Hence what he is saying is that we cannot refer to experiences. I cannot, for example, refer to my first experience of eating pigs' brains by using the words 'my first experience of eating pigs' brains.'

Taken literally, this view is quite incredible. For it cannot be seriously denied that the concepts and words we use to describe experience refer to their referents. These referents are 'entities.' And as noted above, in one clear sense of 'thing,' they are things. In which sense? The obvious answer in the case of experiences is that they are things that happen, or events.

An example will help. Suppose Cortes really did gaze at the Pacific from a peak in Darien. Then it is true that a certain thing happened – Cortes gazed at the Pacific – and my description 'Cortes's gazing at the Pacific' refers to that thing which happened. These things are what philosophers and others call events. To say that there was such an event is simply to say that such a thing happened. What reason can there be to deny that this event is the *referent* of the words in question – that we can *refer* to this event – once we accept that there was such an event?<sup>4</sup>

(3) *Innerness*: Perhaps the problem with the object-based schema is not so much that experiences are supposed to be referents or that they are events or entities, but that they are *inner* events. So let's apply this to our example: was Cortes's experience an 'inner' event? This all depends on what 'inner' means. If it means 'in or inside Cortes' then it is not plausible that this particular event is inner. For if Cortes gazed at the Pacific, then he saw the Pacific, but if he saw the Pacific then he stood in some kind of relation to the Pacific. And since the Pacific is not inside Cortes, nor is this relation in which he stands to the Pacific. Yet the event referred to by the phrase 'Cortes's gazing at the Pacific' is an experience for all that. So there is no reason to think that all experiences, as normally understood, are inner in the above sense. Some are, however: a feeling of nausea is undeniably something which is felt to occur inside the body. Further discussion of this question must depend on what important philosophical issues turn on calling something 'inner,' and this leads us into more substantial theorising. But the obvious intuitive point is that there is nothing in the ordinary idea of experiences as events which implies that they are inner, and nothing that implies that they are not.

(4) *Determinateness*: Perhaps instead the problem with the object-based schema is that experiences are supposed to be determinate. I take determinate to mean: not vague. Are experiences vague entities? This is a difficult question which everyone has to address; but it does not seem to identify the central issue between Hutto and his opponents. This is partly because the question of vague or determinate entities is not something which arises only in the case of experiences, but arises elsewhere too. We might wonder how determinate Cortes's experience of the Pacific is: how much does it involve? How little? Yet the same questions could be raised about the Pacific Ocean itself: how far does it extend? What are

its boundaries? The question about the Pacific is as good (or bad) as the question about the experience of the Pacific. This suggests that if there is a problem about determinacy, it has nothing to do with the mental or with experience as such.

So if the object-based schema simply is the claim that experiences are entities ('reified'), or the referents of experience-terms, then it does not seem to involve any especially problematic ideas. If it is the claim that experiences are inner and determinate, then it is debatable but not obviously absurd.

But the object-based schema comes in many forms. Sometimes it is simply the view that there are mental *states* or *properties*. Later on in Hutto's paper I myself am described as failing to 'free myself' from the 'schema':

For by endorsing intentionalism, the idea that experiences are in fact intentional states, [Crane] continues to accept that, "Pain is a state of consciousness, or an event in consciousness ..." (Crane 2003: 31). For example, while he denies that pains are a kind of qualia – which would make them higher-order properties of intentional states – he nevertheless falls in line with the standard idea that, "states are normally understood as instances of properties..." (Crane 2003: 45).

But the idea of mental properties should be accepted by anyone who accepts that there are kinds of mental state or event. The word 'anger' is an abstract general term for a kind of property, the property predicated of someone when we say that they are angry. To say then that I am angry with my father, is (in part) to predicate this property of me. My anger is an instance of a property in the same sense that my being heavier than my father is an instance of a property – a relational property I have which depends on certain intrinsic properties of mine and my father. These instances of properties – of my father and me – are called *states*, since it is a state or condition of me that I weigh what I do, and a state or condition of my father that he weighs what he does. Moreover, these are states (like my anger) which may also be had by others (others may weigh what I do, others may be angry in the same way as I am). This is all that is meant by saying that mental states are instances of mental properties, and Hutto has told me nothing which makes this way of talking in the least mysterious or confusing.

So far I have found little to object to in the object-based schema, and no argument against it. But the protean nature of the model allows Hutto to incorporate into it even more implausible and incoherent ideas. For example, when introducing what is supposed to be the 'standard view', Hutto quotes Max Velmans:

As with any term that refers to something that one can observe or experience, it is useful, if possible, to begin with an ostensive definition – that is to point to or pick out the phenomena to which the term refers and, by implication, what is excluded (Velmans 2000: 6).

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If Velmans is really talking about referring to experiences here, then his remark seems to be off-target, since experiences themselves (as Hutto himself emphasises), are not something ‘one can observe or experience.’ But this has nothing to do with the idea that experiences are objects, events or properties – unless it is insisted that the only objects, events and properties there are are those we can observe or experience. But surely no participant in this debate will say that.<sup>5</sup>

A further controversial component of the object-based schema is its claim that our terms for experiences are based or ‘grounded’ on ‘ostensive definitions’: one’s understanding an experiential term is based on experiencing its referent. Hence if I understand the phrase ‘the experience of tasting pigs’ brains’ that is because I can ostensively refer to this experience of mine. This obviously raises the question of how I can understand someone else’s utterance of the sentence ‘I first had the experience of tasting pigs’ brains when I was seventeen’, since according to the model I understand the expression ‘the experience of tasting pigs’ brains’ only by reference to my own experience. Hence, on Hutto’s view, the model gives rise to questions about the basis on which we can judge that others have the same experience. If experiences are private objects, referred to ostensively, and if terms for experiences can only be learned by these ‘ostensive definitions’ then how can I ever reasonably judge that others experience as I do?

I agree with Hutto that this is a hopeless situation to get into. But it has little to do with the view that there are inner mental states or properties, or even that these states or properties are (in a certain innocuous sense) private. Saying that there are mental states or properties (inner or not) does not imply that terms for these states or properties have to be applied on the basis of an ‘ostensive definition.’ I myself think that when one has had an experience for the first time, one can refer ostensively or demonstratively to the object of the experience in a way in which one could not before one had the experience. One might say, having eaten pigs’ brains, ‘So *this* is what pigs’ brains taste like!’ But the ‘this’ arguably refers to the taste of the dish, and not to the experience. And in no sense is the ‘this’ part of a *definition* of the phrase ‘the taste of pigs’ brains.’

As for the much-discussed privacy of mental states, I think it should now be clear what to say, after decades of Wittgensteinian reminders. If saying that a mental state is private means that no-one can ever know what someone else’s mental states are, then it is clear that mental states are not private. But if the thesis that mental states are private is simply the thesis that necessarily, each person’s mental states are their own and no-one else’s, then it is an indisputable truth that mental states are private. Hutto writes as if there is an unavoidable trap contained in orthodox philosophy of mind, the trap of being committed to private objects and unknowable mental states, and that the only way to avoid this trap is to say things like ‘experiences exist but are not existents.’ But once the relevant sense of ‘private’

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is clarified, and once we are in possession of a good epistemology of the mind, then it is clear that there is no such trap.

A further problematic idea which Hutto identifies as contained within the object-based schema concerns the behavioural basis of the application of mental concepts. The problem here is that if we think of mental phenomena on the object-based schema, then we will be led either towards the view that we can only infer someone's inner life from their behaviour, or (even worse) towards a behaviouristic view of the inner life in general. The object-based schema "supposes that we [attribute emotions to others] in purely spectatorial contexts – ones in which we are at a necessary remove from others since the only access we have to the 'inner' life of others is through their outward behaviour." A further idea is that according to the schema, we only have access to behaviour construed 'coldly' or without interpretation. Thus there is a problem how we get from this cold conception of the mental to anything like the reality of an inner life. There is supposed to be an unbridgeable gap even in the *application* of a concept – for example of a concept of an emotion like anger – between the behavioural basis of that application and the emotion itself.

Again, this is certainly a bad picture of emotions and emotion-concepts (indeed, of all mental concepts). But once again I don't see why it is supposed to follow from the views about mental states and properties which seem to be the plausible heart of the object-based schema. There is no inconsistency in saying that anger is a mental property – that property of people which is predicated of them when we say that they are angry – and that we can simply know that someone is angry by observing them. Indeed, it seems very plausible to me that one can literally see that someone is angry, and not simply infer their anger from an 'uninterpreted' behaviour (see McDowell 1978). The mere idea that there are mental properties encounters no difficulty with this kind of application of mental concepts.

To sum up so far: Hutto has persuaded me *neither* that there is anything confused or misleading in thinking of mental phenomena as 'entities'/referents' (or in 'reifying' them) *nor* that thinking of them like this implies that they are the kind of problematic 'private' entities he and other followers of Wittgenstein worry about. The reason is that there are at least two ideas contained in what Hutto calls the 'object-based schema' – one innocuous and one implausible. There is the innocuous claim that there are mental events, processes, properties etc. – i.e. that these things *exist*, that they are *entities*. Then there is the implausible claim that if there were such entities, they would have to be 'private' entities which we could only refer to by observing them and which would therefore be impossible to attribute to others. The latter is an unacceptable idea, for sure (and the 'therefore...' is a non-sequitur). But it is not a consequence of the existence of mental properties, processes and events. Moreover, the existence of mental properties, events and processes is entirely consistent with the plausible claims Hutto makes about emotions later in the

paper. Therefore, there is no need for Hutto to deny the innocuous claim in order to defend the plausible views of emotion. His diagnosis of the problems to which emotions give rise is mistaken.

### 3. Intentionality

I now turn to intentionality, and to some of the criticisms Hutto makes of the views I expressed in my paper ‘The intentional structure of consciousness’ (2003) and in my book *Elements of Mind* (2001). I do this partly to set the record straight, since Hutto’s paper contains a number of misunderstandings of my views. But I will also take this opportunity to clarify some fundamental points about intentionality; the matter may therefore be of some general interest.<sup>6</sup>

Hutto is sympathetic, as I am, to Peter Goldie’s (2000) use of the notion of *feeling towards*. But unlike Goldie, Hutto has little sympathy for the things I say about intentionality. Independently of his criticism that I am committed to the ‘object-based schema’ model of the mind, then, Hutto has three criticisms of my account of intentionality. The first is that on my view, subjects are directed towards *intentional contents* in intentional experiences, and this is implausible for a number of reasons (for example, that many experiences are non-conceptual, and content is conceptual). The second is that the fact that our intentional experiences can ‘miss their mark’ does not imply that they are directed on contents rather than ordinary things. The third is that we are not *related* to the modes by which intentional objects are perceived (as my account is supposed to imply) and hence we do not *experience* these experiences (as my account is also supposed to imply).

Unfortunately, all three criticisms misconstrue my views. First, I never say that intentionality is directedness towards contents as opposed to objects. Rather, the idea of a relation (which I call a *mode*) to a content is supposed to be part of an explanation of what it is for a subject’s mind to be directed towards an object. Also, since I do not equate *content* with *conceptual content* I am not committed to the claim that experience must be conceptual merely by saying that experience has a content. Second, since I do not say that we are directed towards contents, then *a fortiori* I do not say that we are directed towards contents because intentional experiences can miss their mark. Third, I do not say that we are related to intentional modes. Rather, modes are what relate us to intentional contents. If Hutto were right then I would be committed to the absurd view that someone who believes that *p* is related to *belief* as well as to *p*. But this obviously is not a consequence of my view.<sup>7</sup> So the reason Hutto gives for thinking that on my view we are aware of experiences disappears.

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I have clearly failed to explain my conception of intentionality in anything like a satisfactory way. So I should have another try.

For me, the basic intentional (and therefore mental) notion is the notion of directedness towards an object – with ‘object’ interpreted in a very broad way. I include among objects in this sense material and abstract objects, properties, states of affairs, facts... anything which one can think about, or have one’s mind directed towards in some other way. Following the tradition, I call these objects *intentional objects*. It is crucial to recognise that intentional objects are not entities of a certain kind. They cannot be, since some intentional objects do not exist. Yet all entities exist. In other words, to talk about an intentional object is to talk about *that on which one’s mind is directed*, whether or not it exists. I take it for granted that our minds can be directed on the non-existent, although this is what gives rise to some of the hardest problems of intentionality. A conclusion I draw from this fact is that intentional states cannot, in general, be relations to their objects (Crane 2001, chapter 1).

To say that all states of mind must have an intentional object, then, is just to say that it is impossible for there to be a state of mind which is not *about* something, which is not *directed* on something. There are however different ways in which a state of mind may be directed on something: wanting something, disliking it and merely contemplating it are all intentional states, but different ways of being directed on that something. And in ‘The intentional structure of consciousness’ (2003) I also said that the way in which pain is directed on a part of the body is a form of intentional directedness. The way in which these intentional states differ need not be in their object, but in what I call their intentional *mode*. (The intentional mode is what Husserl in the *Logical Investigations* called the intentional *quality*; other philosophers, who think that all intentional states are propositional attitudes, would call it the *attitude*.)

Intentional states can, however, be identical in mode and intentional object, but nonetheless differ. This is because they may differ in the way in which they present their object – or, as I put it, in the *aspect* under which they present it. This kind of difference in intentionality I describe as a difference in intentional *content*. For a state to have intentional content is for it to have an (existing or non-existing) intentional object presented under a certain aspect. Since it is impossible, I claim, for an intentional state to have an object without presenting it under some aspect, then it follows that all intentional states have intentional content. I do not say that the intentional content of a state of mind is the way the world is represented as being, since some intentional states (e.g. desires, hopes) do not represent the world as actually *being* a certain way, but rather represent a non-actual condition of the world. Nor do I say that all content is propositional – that is, assessable as true or false – since there are many states of mind (notably object-directed emotions like love and hate) which do not have propositional contents. Many intentional states

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do have propositional content – these are the propositional attitudes. And finally, I do not say that all intentional content is conceptual, though what this precisely means should be left to another occasion (see Crane 1998; Gunther 2002).

I therefore understand intentionality in terms of the three central ideas of intentional object (where object is not understood as *thing* or *entity*), intentional mode (belief, desire, hope, fear etc.) and intentional content (that which characterises that on which the state is directed, and therefore incorporates the aspectual shape of that intentional state).

I hope it is clear from this brief description of my view of intentionality that it implies none of the things that Hutto says it does. First, intentional directedness is towards intentional objects. If I want a bottle of inexpensive burgundy, that is the object of my desire. On some views, desire is really a propositional attitude: what makes it the case that I desire a bottle of inexpensive burgundy is that I am related to a proposition (which may be represented as, for example, the set of all worlds in which I have a bottle of inexpensive burgundy). But what I want – the intentional object of my desire, what my desire is directed on – is not a proposition, but a bottle of inexpensive burgundy. (I don't myself endorse this view of desire, but it is uncontroversial and it illustrates well the difference between object and content on which I want to insist.)

Hutto writes that “introducing content into the equation is an unnecessary and potentially confusing extra step when it comes to understanding *feeling towards*, at least in the most basic cases involving nonconceptual responses.” But if feeling towards is supposed to discriminate between different ways in which objects of emotions can be experienced (conceptually or nonconceptually), then introducing content is necessary. For differences in content are supposed to be differences in the aspects under which intentional objects are apprehended (again, conceptually or nonconceptually). To deny a role for content here is to accept the phenomenologically incredible idea that one can have a conscious intentional state directed at an object *as such*, as opposed to an object appearing in a certain way.

Hutto is sceptical about what I say about intentional modes and intentional contents, but I submit that the best way to read him is as misunderstanding what I mean by mode, object and content. In one particularly puzzling passage, he says that a proper account of the relation between experience and belief

requires endorsing a position that Crane summarily dismisses when considering the options. He writes, “The second view, that the phenomenal character of the state of mind is *fixed purely by the mode*, has little to be said for it; obviously, any plausible intentionalist view must allow that the intentional object and content contribute to phenomenal character.”

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The quotation here from me describes a view which I reject, and Hutto claims to endorse. But if Hutto has understood what I mean by ‘mode’, then this is very puzzling. For the position he says he wants to endorse here implies that the phenomenal character of (e.g.) a visual experience is determined solely by the fact that it is a visual experience. And this cannot be true: two experiences can both be visual experiences and yet differ in their phenomenal character, on anyone’s understanding of ‘phenomenal character.’ If Hutto has understood me here, he would be endorsing an incredible view. Since I don’t think he means to endorse such a view, I must conclude that he has misunderstood what I mean by ‘mode.’

Hutto takes exception to my description of content as what one would put into words (a phrase I borrow from J.J. Valberg). He seems to think that this description runs into problems in saying what the intentional states of non-verbal animals are. There isn’t actually a problem here, but my use of this phrase has caused problems elsewhere so I should probably stop using it and say exactly what I originally meant. I did not mean: if a state of mind S has a content C, then C can be expressed in words regardless of whether the subject of S has a language at all. Rather, I meant: if you put your thoughts into words, then what you put into words is the content. This is consistent with there being aspects of content which cannot be put into words, and obviously implies nothing about non-verbal animals.

Just to labour the point: I do not mean that you cannot directly express what the *object* of your thought is. If I put my desire into words, when asked what I want, I might say ‘a bottle of inexpensive burgundy.’ What I have put into words is the (non-propositional) content of my desire; but by putting this into words, I have *ipso facto* given the intentional object of my desire. The fact that the phrase ‘a bottle of inexpensive burgundy’ can both *give* the intentional object of my desire and *put into words* its content is simply a reflection of the fact that (as Dummett says when discussing sense and reference) “in saying what the reference [of an expression] is, we have to choose a particular way of saying this” (Dummett 1975: 227).

Moving on to Hutto’s second point: I, too, want to “retain the simpler idea that we are only ever directed at those items we are meant to be directed at”: these items are intentional objects. This should be clear from what I said above in re-expounding my view. And I agree with Hutto too that “we normally account for straightforward perceptual error by invoking experiences that make sense of why such beliefs *seemed* justified, given how things *looked* to us at the time.” I have explained above why it is that intentional states involve direction upon objects, not contents; we do not experience contents. If anything, contents are that by means of which we have experiences of objects. So Hutto and I ought to be in agreement here. But he thinks we are not. He says that on his view “object and content do not contribute to the phenomenal character by being part of what is experienced”, implying that on my view they do. But this is not so: on my view an intentional object

is not *part* of what is experienced; an intentional object of an experience is *what is experienced*. Content, although in some sense part of an experience, is not part of what is experienced. So on my view too “object and content do not contribute to the phenomenal character by being part of what is experienced.”

Finally, to return to Hutto’s third point against me, it should be clear by now that I never say or imply that experiences are experienced, I never say that consciousness is what is experienced, and I see nothing in my view which entails or even suggests that intentional contents appear ‘before the mind’s eye’ as a kind of ‘calling card.’ These ideas do not follow from my view of intentionality.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

Hutto’s strategy in the first part of his paper is to identify a collection of assumptions about the mind, which he calls the object-based schema, and then to attribute these assumptions to what he supposes to be the orthodox philosophy of mind. The assumptions are a combination of the innocuous (there are mental properties) and the absurd (we experience experiences). Given this way of collecting ideas together, it is easy to see how the ‘schema’ both fits all current theories and also damns them all. Yet, as I have argued, there is no reason to think that all (or any) current theories are committed to all these assumptions, and hence to the model.

Hutto reads my views on intentionality in a similar kind of way. His remarks attempt to convict me of some obvious error, like the error of thinking that experiences are the sorts of things that can be seen or experienced. It has been a common charge of a certain style of philosophising, often inspired by Ryle and Wittgenstein, that ‘Cartesian’ or ‘representational’ views of the mind (like mine) imply the absurd idea that all we are aware of are representations.<sup>8</sup> This is the charge which Hutto brings against me too. But, as I hope to have shown, it is unfounded. The truth is rather that my views on intentionality are quite in sympathy with Hutto’s views about emotions, but his procrustean tendency to force views into vague all inclusive ‘schemas’ does not allow him to see this.

#### Notes

1. “For if we ought to legitimately abandon certain assumptions about the “extensions” of experiential concepts and how they are acquired, we can put to rest certain of the concerns that give emotions a bad name.” (Hutto section 1).
2. Hutto’s claim that experiential properties are determinable seems to be a slip. Of course, there are determinable experience properties: *listening to Wagner*, for example, is a determinable

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of which individual acts of listening are determinates. So any experience of listening to Wagner has the determinable property of being an experience of listening to Wagner. But no particular experience will be *simply* determinable; so it would be wrong to say that any view says that experiences only have determinable properties (as if one could listen to Wagner without listening to some particular performance of some particular work).

3. In the passage in question, he contrasts referents with modes of presentation. But the contrast, on Frege's view, is not exclusive: just because something is a mode of presentation does not mean that it cannot be a referent. The expression 'the sense of "Napoleon"', for example, refers to a mode of presentation of Napoleon; so the sense of 'Napoleon' is the referent of this expression.

4. Hutto later admits that "we can still refer to 'experiences'" so long as we are using phrases like 'she saw the yellow card' rather than 'she saw yellowness.' I doubt the significance of this distinction; nonetheless, I assume that Hutto is here taking back his earlier claim that experiences cannot be referents.

5. It is perhaps worth saying, though, that there is an ordinary sense in which one can be aware of being conscious: one can be aware *that* one is conscious. In this sense one can experience being conscious; but this does not imply that one is aware of one's consciousness as one is aware of its objects.

6. Hutto ends his discussion of intentionality with some remarks about David Lewis's 'ability hypothesis', which should not pass without comment, since they represent a common misunderstanding. Hutto says that if it is viewed as a reductive account (presumably of experience) then "the original 'ability hypothesis' is circular, since the notion of a particular sort of experience (e.g. recognising red, re-identifying red) must be invoked in order to characterise the abilities in question." He then endorses a non-reductive 'non-circular' understanding of the hypothesis. But the attribution of circularity misunderstands the nature of the ability hypothesis as endorsed by Lewis and others. The hypothesis is not meant to be a reductive explanation of consciousness. Rather it is supposed to be an account of our *knowledge* of consciousness. It is certainly related to the reductive account of consciousness given by Lewis and others – since it is employed in a *defence* of that account against the claim that our knowledge of consciousness shows that consciousness is not physical. But this is inessential to the hypothesis, as is shown by the fact that the hypothesis could be employed by someone who rejects reductionism (as it is, e.g., by Mellor 1992). Hence it cannot be an objection to the hypothesis that it invokes the notion of an experience (of red, say). These experiences are what it is that is supposed to be known. The ability hypothesis as such does not try and reduce these *experiences*; rather, it makes a claim about what it is to know them. Compare: the hypothesis that *knowing how to ride a bicycle irreducibly consists in the ability to ride a bicycle, and not in any propositional knowledge*, is not undermined by the fact that this statement of the hypothesis employs the phrase 'ride a bicycle.' And this would be true even if there were a true reductive account of what it is to ride a bicycle.

7. Unless  $a$  is related to the relation  $R$  whenever it is true that  $aRb$ . But I doubt that this is what Hutto has in mind: for then he would be committed to the equally absurd view that when  $a$  is bigger than  $b$ ,  $a$  is related to the relation *bigger* than.

8. Vincent Descombes (2001) raises a similar charge against what he calls 'mental philosophy'; I criticise Descombes in my 2004.

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