Research Project:
Modes and Contents

1. Summary of the Research Plan

We intuitively describe mental reality with the help of a fundamental contrast between what philosophers call psychological modes, on the one hand, and their contents, on the other hand (e.g., Searle 1983). Amongst psychological modes, we count seeing, hearing, remembering, thinking, imagining, wondering and the like and, amongst contents, any kind of propositional (e.g., that a red tree is in front of one) or sub-propositional (one's first meeting with a good friend, a melody) complement that these verbs can take.

Since this distinction is so fundamental to the way we understand the mental domain, one can be quite naturally led to think that one of the major tasks facing philosophers interested in mental states consists in studying the nature of modes and their relations to contents. Anybody reviewing the philosophical discussions of the past fifty years or so and expecting that much is bound to be disappointed, however. A vast majority of philosophers acknowledge the distinction, yet their interest in modes vanishes once they have done so. Why such a remarkable neglect?

While multifarious, some of the fundamental reasons for this neglect are due to the influence of widespread views as to how we should apprehend mental phenomena. Here are three of them.

a. The tendency by philosophers to conceive of modes in abstract terms in order to focus on the contrast between belief-like and desire-like attitudes (e.g., Armstrong 1968, Davidson 1963, Green 1992 and the influence of 'belief-desire psychology'). If the only theoretically useful contrast we can draw at the level of modes is that between belief and desire, then of course the import of modes is likely to be limited at best.

b. Functionalism and its kindred approach to psychological modes in terms of two sorts of dispositions corresponding to beliefs and desires. Given its emphasis on the purely dispositional nature of modes, functionalism fosters the idea that modes cannot manifest themselves in consciousness and do not contribute to the phenomenology – that is, the way it feels like from the subject's own perspective – and intentionality of episodic mental phenomena.

c. Representationalism (e.g., Dretske 1995, Tye 1997) and its hope to take care of all issues regarding phenomenology and intentionality in terms of content so as to avoid having to appeal to qualia. The consequence is again that the relevant issues are exclusively dealt with at the level of content, and so in complete isolation from psychological modes.

Taken together, these three influential strands within recent thinking about the mental conspire in explaining why psychological modes have been so much neglected. This means that recent theorizing about mental states is in serious tension with the way we intuitively think and speak about the mind. What is more, the claim that modes do contribute substantially neither to the way it feels for one to be in any given mental state, nor to their intentionality should be met with suspicion. Should we not preserve the idea that the contrast between imagining, remembering and conjecturing, say, is typically phenomenologically salient and that it has important consequences for intentionality?
The original idea that I want to pursue in the present research project is that we should do so, since it proves impossible to develop a convincing account of mental states without a systematic investigation of psychological modes. The overarching hypothesis is that exploring the distinction between mode and content is key to shedding new light on some deep philosophical problems surrounding the intentionality and phenomenology of mental states. The novel approach I shall explore makes modes play a key role in the intentionality of mental states by allowing some properties to enter into the correctness conditions of mental states without being represented by (i.e. be part of the content of) these mental states. And modes play a key role in the phenomenology of mental states by contributing in a distinctive and irreducible way to how it feels to have them. In order to test and develop this hypothesis, the project is divided into two parts.

In the first part, the theoretical role of psychological modes in contrast to that of contents will be systematically considered, and a taxonomy of modes will be developed.

The second part will be concerned with the impact of the above approach on questions regarding the nature and role of specific types of modes. This will offer the opportunity to explore some key issues raised by specific types of mental states from the original vantage point provided by the approach developed in the first part.

Given the nature of these issues, the project provides a unique opportunity to make arguments and claims in a variety of philosophical domains (philosophy of mind and language, epistemology) interact. To my knowledge, this is the first attempt to systematically investigate the mode-content distinction and to engage with a variety of debates that start to emerge in different philosophical domains. This investigation will not only allow for novel and promising solutions to extant problems, but also for a reconceptualisation of large chunks of the contemporary discussion. I shall now present some of the relevant debates and research questions in more detail.

2. Research Plan

This part is structured as follows. In section 2.1, I present the state of the research in the field and move on to describe, in section 2.2, the state of my personal research and its relations to the domains covered by the present research project. Section 2.3 states the aims to be attained by the research conducted within the project, as well as the methods to be used to this end. Section 2.4 lays out a schedule for this research, while the final section 2.5 explains its importance.

2.1 State of Research

As observed in section 1, we help ourselves to a fundamental contrast between what philosophers describe as psychological modes, on the one hand, and their contents, on the other hand (e.g., Searle 1983, Tye 1997). Seeing, hearing, remembering, thinking, imagining, wondering and the like are psychological modes, while contents are referred to by the propositional or sub-propositional complement of verbs that report these modes. Let me consider two terminological caveats without delay to avoid some misunderstandings.
Firstly, there is no fixed terminology to describe what I shall refer to as (psychological) modes. My adopting this term is due to the fact that ‘attitude’ carries the unwanted implication of being exclusively propositional and ‘force’ is only used nowadays with reference to linguistic phenomena. Secondly, let me emphasize that, understood in this way, psychological modes should be sharply distinguished from modes of presentation (e.g., Searle 1983, Crane 2001, Crane 2013a). Reference to modes of presentation, which sometimes also go by the name of ‘aspectual shapes’, is meant to convey the fact that the mind directs itself (often or perhaps always) to objects in a certain way, i.e. that in any specific mental state objects present themselves to the mind in one way to the exclusion of other ways that they might present themselves to it. To use a worn-out example, Venus may present itself to Paula at one time under the mode of presentation ‘the evening star’, and at another time under the distinct mode of presentation ‘the morning star’. It transpires from this that modes of presentation concern the level of content – reference to modes of presentation aims at emphasizing that the mind is directed towards entities in a way that is more fine-grained than what may be captured at the level of reference. For that reason, they should be sharply distinguished from psychological modes.

Now, understood along these lines, the distinction between psychological mode (or force, attitude) and content has been regularly acknowledged at least since the writings of Brentano (1874), Frege (1892) and Husserl (1901). It is intimately related to the contrast so regularly drawn from Frege onwards (e.g., Frege 1892, Stenius 1967 and Dummett 1973) between the force and the content of speech acts such as asserting, ordering and questioning. And, apart from its intuitive ring, there are at least three reasons why the idea that mode and content are two independent variables has been thought to be theoretically useful.

First, it is claimed that this is the best way to acknowledge the fact that contents can be merely entertained, this being necessary to appealingly account for the way they contribute to the conditionals or disjunctions in which they feature. For instance, the content Napoleon crossed the Alps is present despite not being asserted when it is part of the conditional If Napoleon crossed the Alps, then he made a lot of Swiss victims or of the disjunction Either Napoleon crossed the Alps, or Josephine was unhappy.¹ In the same vein, we can add that actors or poets are in the business of using sentences that retain their usual contents even though they are not asserted.

Second, it is observed that, if we do not allow for independent variation of mode and content, questions, assertions, orders etc. (on the side of speech acts), as well as wonderings, beliefs, desires etc. (on that of mental states) could not have the same content. Obviously, not being in a position to say that speech acts or mental states can share their contents means that one has to face critical difficulties. More specifically, it then becomes difficult to account for the logical and epistemological relations between mental states (e.g., Fodor 1979). For instance, how should we understand the relations between what we would ordinarily describe as believing that the Earth is round, wondering whether the Earth is round and conjecturing that it is if we cannot assume that these mental states have the same content? Moreover, rejecting the distinction between modes and contents is arguably incompatible with the celebrated

¹ This is what Geach described as ‘Frege’s point’ and used to discredit speech-act analyses of ‘good’ or ‘intentional’ (Geach 1960, 1965). For this reason, these observations continue to be at the centre of discussions surrounding the prospects of expressivism (Schroeder 2008).
productivity and systematicity of speech and thought (e.g., Chomsky 1968). At the very least, it becomes more difficult to account for it if we cannot make use of the idea that one and the same content may be united to different kinds of psychological modes or attitudes.

Third and finally, the distinction is claimed to allow for a neat division of labour between semantics, which concerns itself with the nature of content and typically emphasizes its connections with truth, and pragmatics, whose subject-matter is the various ‘uses’ to which these contents are put (e.g., Pendlebury 1986). To these traditional reasons in favour of the mode-content distinction, I shall explain below why we should add reasons derived from the intentional and phenomenal nature of mental states.

Armed with this distinction, it is quite natural to believe that mental states should be approached from two distinct yet intimately related perspectives: one focussing on content, the other on mode. To account for a memory episode, say one’s remembering that Napoleon crossed the Alps, one has to explain the nature of its content (e.g., is it necessary that a relation to a past mental state be represented in memory?) as well as that of memory as a psychological mode (what does remembering that content, as opposed to e.g. entertaining it or wondering whether it is true, consist in?). The same procedure seems to apply to many – perhaps even all – mental states. Yet, a variety of theoretical reasons have led a majority of philosophers to pay at most lip service to the distinction between mode and content. As I mentioned in section 1, this is likely to trace back to a widespread tendency to oversimplify the nature of modes (e.g., in the still much widespread belief-desire psychology) or to the more recent and influential idea according to which the only fundamental function of the mind consists in representing.

Whatever the reasons for that disregard ultimately are, I wish now to focus on two specific philosophical issues. This will next put me in a position to illustrate the consequences of the neglect of modes and the potential theoretical benefits that can be reaped from an interest in their nature and their roles.

**Intentionality** There have been many attempts to account for intentionality in general and the type of intentionality possessed by specific mental states by an exclusive focus on contents, a position that has been developed in different ways and is generally referred to as ‘representationalism’ or ‘intentionalism’ (e.g., Dretske 1995 and Tye 1997). We can approach this position as follows. The idea is to start by considering the conditions under which mental states are correct. For a variety of reasons, one may be led to think e.g. that the belief that p is correct if and only if p is *true*, that the visual experience of an object as red is correct if and only if this object is red and is *the cause of the present experience*, or that fear of a dog is correct if and only if that dog is *dangerous*. The next step is to fashion contents so as to mirror these constraints on correctness conditions. The key claim is that correctness conditions cannot but result from the fact that mental states represent the relevant properties. Accordingly, one is led to conclude that it is because belief represents a proposition as being true, because perceptual experiences represent themselves as being caused by objects, and because fear represents some entity as being dangerous that

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2 Appeal to a content of such complexity for perception is due to the possibility of ‘veridical hallucinations’. One example is a situation in which it seems to one as if there is an apple on the table, there is indeed one, yet one’s perception is due to the fact that a brain scientist is manipulating one’s visual cortex (Lewis 1983). Given that this counts as an hallucination, one must manufacture a content of corresponding complexity.

3 Searle (1983) provides an especially lucid example of this strategy.
these properties end up being part of their respective correctness conditions. Insofar as one thinks that the only function of the mind is to represent and adheres to the corollary claim that the only mode as far as correctness conditions are concerned consists in representing, these are consequences we should be ready to countenance. This move is quite appealing and, when writing *Qu’est-ce qu’une émotion?* (2008), I was convinced that it was mandatory in order to account for the connection between emotions and values (see section 2.2 for detail).

As has been frequently emphasized, however, one major cost of this strategy is that it saddles contents with a complexity that is difficult to reconcile with the intuitions e.g. that believing does not imply mastery of the concept of truth (pace Davidson 1973), or that perception is not as cognitively demanding as it would be if it had a causal self-reflexive content (Burge 1991, Smith 1986). In the light of problems such as these, advocates of approaches to intentionality that make exclusive reference to contents have been led to pursue two distinct approaches.

According to the first, the representations in question need not require much cognitive sophistication on the subject’s part, since they are claimed to be non-conceptual (on this notion, see e.g., Crane 1992, Tye 1997). The idea here is to allow for the possibility of something being represented by a subject as red or as the cause of an experience despite the fact that this subject lacks the conceptual repertoire that is required to describe what is represented. According to the second approach, which is by no means incompatible with the first, the content at issue in the representations under discussion need not be consciously accessible (Searle 1991). This is to acknowledge the possibility of something being represented by a subject in a given way despite the fact that this content fails to make itself manifest from the subject’s own perspective.

Now, while these moves no doubt allow one to deal with some specific cases, they raise some important worries. They often have an air of ad hocery about them, they remain purely negative (as is made manifest when one insists on the non-conceptual or unconscious nature of content), and they seem in addition to sever the links between content and the subject’s own perspective in an unconvincing way. After all, contents were introduced into philosophy in the first place so as to try to remain faithful to the subject’s perspective on the relevant phenomena.

Before I present the way in which I think we can make progress in this area, let me now turn to a second philosophical issue, that of phenomenology – as we shall see, considering psychological modes and their role in the context of both the intentionality and the phenomenology of mental states will be ideal to reveal their full potential for illuminating central philosophical issues.

**Phenomenology** Under the joint influence of wide-ranging worries regarding the place of consciousness in the physical world and of the representationalism (or intentionalism) already mentioned, the felt aspects of mental states have been discussed through the selective lens of their content. More specifically, a very influential claim is that phenomenology is wholly fixed by what mental states represent – the exact

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4 They are compatible insofar as the sort of non-conceptual content appealed to within the first approach need not be conscious – and it is correct to point out that the notion of non-conceptual content has often, but by no means always, been used to describe unconscious, sub-personal states. For discussion, see Davis 1997.
nature of the fixation (identity? supervenience?) being the matter of further debates. The ambition is to avoid all reference to (in-)famous qualia, i.e. properties of mental states that are divorced from their intentionality. And a typical strategy consists in motivating this position with regard to perceptual experiences by appealing to a thesis often referred to as the ‘transparency claim’, i.e. the idea that, when we have perceptual experiences, we are exclusively aware of what they represent – and not of our representing it (Harman 1990, Martin 2002). As far as these experiences are concerned, this claim appears compelling, since it is indeed difficult to latch onto something over and above the properties of what we see or hear when we are asked to describe our visual or auditory experiences. This goes of course no way towards showing that the intuitions behind the transparency claim hold across the board nor supports the general idea according to which the phenomenology of all mental states is exclusively due to what they represent. Yet, this is in any case the idea advocated by an influential form of representationalism nowadays described as ‘pure intentionalism’ (on this theory, see e.g., Crane 2007, Mendelovici 2014) and which is widely perceived as the only sensible alternative to approaches that appeal to qualia. So as to be in a position to explain the import of an appeal to modes in relation to phenomenological issues, I shall now turn my attention to worries that have been raised regarding the capacity of pure intentionalism to smoothly account for each and every aspect of phenomenology and then introduce the problematic approach to which it often leads.

These worries can be illustrated with the help of three cases. Firstly, there is a well-known distinction between proper sensibles (colours for vision, sounds for hearing, etc.) and common sensibles (shapes, for instance). Colours can only be seen, and so are proper sensibles of vision, but shapes are common sensibles since one can see and feel them. Now, there is surely a difference between seeing and touching a given shape, and this difference seems at least partly phenomenological. Yet, this diagnosis appears incompatible with the approach under discussion: its central claim is that phenomenology cannot vary independently of representation, and these two experiences represent the same property (Nudds 2004).

Secondly, affective experiences in general and pain more specifically have proven especially resistant to pure intentionalism. Indeed, the claim that there is nothing more to the phenomenology of pain – think of its distinctive unpleasantness – than what it represents is hard to accept. According to the most attractive intentionalist approach, pain is the representation of tissue damage. Yet, while in pain, does it seem to one as if some tissue is damaged? Is this really what painfullness comes down to? It is fair to say that pure intentionalism is hard-pressed to answer these worries in a convincing way (Aydede 2006).

Thirdly, consider a situation in which you perceive something blurrily. Can we account for the phenomenological contrast between seeing an object clearly and seeing it blurrily in intentional terms (e.g., Byrne 2001)?

This sample of the challenges faced by pure intentionalism is enough to illustrate how this position risks being unfaithful to the phenomenological nuances that colour our mental lives.

Now, a fact of special significance for the present project is this: philosophers who have rejected pure intentionalism have as a result been led to advocate approaches in terms of qualia (Ross 2001). Although it is rarely explicitly laid down, the underlying reasoning seems to go like this. Insofar as the relevant
phenomenology does not trace back to the contribution of content, it has to be constituted by properties of mental states that are divorced from their intentional properties. This is of course related to a quite traditional distinction within the philosophy of mind, according to which there are on the one hand the intentional propositional attitudes and, on the other hand, the nonintentional sensory or sensory-like mental states (see e.g., Rosenthal 1994 for a clear expression of this distinction and, for discussion, Montague 2010). Moreover, it is especially important in the present context to emphasize that the reasoning at issue is only valid if it harnesses the implicit premise that psychological modes do not have any sort of impact on phenomenology.\(^5\) This is the case because, as we shall appreciate below, there are reasons to think that modes are an aspect of the intentional structure of mental states. In any case, we should be suspicious of this alternative – it must be either content or qualia.

Firstly, a qualia approach is often if not always hard to accept, because it sits uneasily with the deliverances of phenomenology. Pain may serve as an illustration. When one’s knee hurts, it does not seem to one that one is aware of a location in one’s knee and, in addition, that one’s being so aware has or perhaps causes a quale (Crane 2003, Tye 1997). This is definitively not the way it feels. If we remind ourselves of the above observations about transparency, these considerations prove even more convincing in the case of perception.

Secondly, as soon as we expand our stock of modes, the idea that they are phenomenologically mute becomes difficult to maintain. Do we really want to claim that neither feeling nor remembering contributes in any way to the phenomenology of, respectively, an episode of proprioception directed towards one’s elbow or to that of a memory of a childhood’s event?

All in all, then, neither pure intentionalism nor a qualia approach seems to be in a position to account for phenomenology. This predicament can only be overcome if we develop a novel option, and modes can as we shall see come to the rescue.

In the foregoing, I have offered a brief characterization of what I perceive as fundamental strands within contemporary philosophical discussions of the intentionality and phenomenology of mental states as well as the problems faced by the dominant positions within these debates. Against this backdrop, I now want to explain why we should turn our attention to psychological modes and their contribution to these aspects of mental states. While doing so, I will refer to the existing literature on these issues as well as point to what I perceive as gaps where there is room for progress. In this way, I will put myself in a position to explain the relevance of the research to be conducted within the present project.

**Psychological modes and their contribution to intentionality** As we have seen above, the exclusive emphasis on content that is characteristic of much of the recent philosophy of mind stumbles on a series of important difficulties: it either saddles content with too much complexity, or it suggests ad hoc and problematic reasons for thinking that content complexity is no reason to worry. An attractive alternative

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\(^5\) This implicit premise, it should be emphasized, is on the face of it independent of the transparency claim presented above.
approach, one that is almost completely neglected within contemporary philosophy\(^6\), consists in appealing to the intentional contribution of psychological modes. The first step in this direction is to observe that there are properties – truth for belief, specific values for types of emotions, but also possibility for imagination, probability for conjecture and perhaps even desirability for desire – that have a systematic connection to types of mental states, and not merely to some of their tokens. That is to say, there is a specific relation between belief as a type and truth, between fear as a type and danger, and so on. In an established terminology, these properties are the formal, as opposed to the particular, objects of these mental states (Kenny 1963, Mulligan 2007, Teroni 2007). The underlying idea is that the particular object of a given token mental state is not or at least not necessarily related to the type to which the mental state belongs. It corresponds to the level of content, i.e. what the mental state is about, and we have already seen why we should agree that mental states of different types can share their content. By contrast, reference to a formal object lays emphasis on what is distinctive of a given type of mental state: it helps describe the kind of intentional relation that is characteristic of it and for that reason relates to the level of the (psychological) mode.

Now, these observations provide some support for the following thought: insofar as the relation between a type of mental state and a property is of this kind, its presence should be elucidated through the nature of the relevant mode. After all, it seems convincing to claim that it is in virtue of belief’s nature as a specific psychological mode that the belief that p is correct if and only if p is true, as it is in virtue of the nature of fear as a mode that fear of a dog is correct if and only if the dog is dangerous. Making sense of this relation in terms of the mode presupposes of course that one develops an account of their nature and confronts a variety of theoretical challenges (see section 2.3). This is the only sound way to go if we want to avoid the difficulties attending representationalism. For, as I have just illustrated, it then becomes possible to account for correctness conditions with the help of mode (formal object) and content (particular object). And, again, this contribution of the mode in no way implies that the mode itself is represented. If it is because of the mode of believing that a mental state is correct if and only if its content is true, this only requires that this mode be directed towards this content. This appears to be completely divorced from its being represented.

All in all, an account in terms of modes appears for that reason – and as opposed to approaches that try to adjust the nature of content – to be in a position to do justice to the relation between mental states and their correctness conditions while still honouring the close links between content and the subject’s own perspective. For the reasons sketched above, I have recently been led to defend such a view about the emotions (Teroni 2012), a domain where adopting a theory in terms of evaluative modes led to fruitful developments (see section 2.2 for detail).

More generally, the account to be put forwards within the present project holds many promises in connection with issues of intentionality. Amongst these promises, let me mention, firstly, the absence of appeal to cognitively demanding contents and, secondly and as a result, the possibility of recruiting mental states with more modest contents to understand primitive forms of cognition and the

\(^6\) This contrasts with the writings of Brentano and Husserl, who acknowledged the existence of different modes and explored some of their consequences for intentionality.
development of a variety of conceptual abilities. In these respects, an approach in terms of modes bears important similarities to the theses defended by Perry (1998) regarding the ‘inarticulated constituents’ of some thoughts (like ‘in this time zone’ in the thought that it is 12 o’clock, or ‘here’ in the belief that it is raining). These similarities run deep because Perry is one of the few philosophers who have developed a theory whose aim is to make content ‘lighter’ by accounting for some aspects of truth conditions via external constraints on the situations in which contents are tokened. An account along these same lines has been more recently advocated by Recanati (see in particular the distinction between ‘explicit’ and ‘modal’ content emphasized in Recanati 2007).

There are then certainly some forerunners to the sort of approach to the intentionality of mental states to be conducted within the present research project. Yet, there is important room for progress in this area, and this for two distinct reasons. Firstly, the existent literature is to my knowledge never premised on a more general approach to mental states and so is not sufficiently systematic in its appeal to psychological modes and their contribution to intentionality. Secondly, existing reflexions about modes, which are in any case few and far between, suffer from a shortage of careful attention to specific types of mental states. As surprising as this may be, detailed investigation of mental states from a perspective informed by the mode vs. content distinction and careful characterization of the nature of different types of modes is almost absent from the recent philosophy of mind. These gaps in the literature are what the present research project aims at filling by developing the systematic approach to the contribution of modes to intentionality sketched above and by applying it to different types of mental states.

**Psychological modes and their contribution to phenomenology** The distinction between psychological mode and content arguably plays a similarly fundamental role when the task is to account for phenomenology. It has indeed been sometimes observed that (at least some) modes contribute to phenomenology (see e.g., Goldman 1993). One especially forceful and influential expression of this idea is due to Horgan and Tienson (2002), who in their classic paper rightly lay emphasis on the distinctive contribution of modes to the phenomenology of mental states (see also Loar 2003). Yet, the most explicit endorsement in the recent literature of the kind of view to be put forward in the present project is to be found in the writings of Crane (e.g., 2007 and, in relation to belief more specifically, 2013b).

Crane offers substantial reasons to think that the above worries should lead us to distinguish a pure from an impure form of intentionalism and to opt for the latter position. Pure intentionalism – the widespread theory we have considered above – claims that phenomenology is fixed by content. Impure intentionalism disagrees while trying to avoid any reference to qualia. It does so by exploring an alternative that is left aside by pure intentionalism: the idea that the whole intentional structure of mental states, and not solely their contents, contributes to their felt character (see also Chalmers 2004). According to this approach, what it is like to remember an event, for instance, is the joint upshot of the phenomenology of remembering as a mode and of the content one remembers (in the guise of a ‘mental image’, perhaps). Similarly, it is partly because feeling and seeing are distinct modes that these intentional relations differ phenomenologically. In trying to drive a wedge between pure intentionalism and qualia approaches, impure intentionalism offers an appealing yet surprisingly unpopular approach to phenomenology. This
approach to phenomenology emphasizing the contribution of modes will be systematically pursued within the present project.

Two additional recent lines of research should also be mentioned at this juncture. Firstly, there is the already well-entrenched discussion that focuses on the existence of cognitive phenomenology (see Pitt 2004 for an influential early defence, Bayne and Montague 2011 for recent contributions to the debate and Montague 2010 for an overview). Secondly, there is the more recent research conducted within the so-called ‘phenomenal intentionality’ research program (e.g., Kriegel 2011, Kriegel 2013) influenced by Horgan and Tienson’s (2002) seminal discussion. The discussions surrounding the alleged existence of cognitive phenomenology have certainly been instrumental in promoting some important distinctions between types of phenomenology (e.g., Tye and Wright 2011), but it is fair to say that they have focussed almost exclusively around the issue of whether or not occurrent thoughts have a phenomenal character. And, despite Horgan’s and Tienson’s emphasis on the distinctive contribution of different types of modes to phenomenology, the ensuing debates have rather focused on their (admittedly important) rejection of the classic distinction between, on the one hand, intentional mental states and, on the other hand, sensory or sensory-like mental states. As a result, the focus here is almost exclusively on the relations between the phenomenology and intentionality of mental states’ contents (see the essays collected in Kriegel 2013 and, in particular, Pautz 2013). So, while this literature is rich with insights regarding various aspects of phenomenology, the research to be conducted within the present project is expected to improve on the understanding of the distinctive contributions of psychological modes to phenomenology, an issue that will be investigated systematically for the first time. The anticipated improvements are likely to be due to the fact that this research will be informed by the account of the contributions of these same modes to intentionality that I have sketched above. Such an account is indeed required as soon as the task is to carefully carve out the distinctive contributions of different types of modes and contents to the felt aspects of mental states.

In the foregoing, I have hopefully illustrated the import of a distinction between modes and contents with the help of both new and traditional problems in the philosophy of mind. On the one hand, by insisting on the contribution of modes to intentionality, the approach put forward makes room for an understanding of intentionality that does not rely on cognitively too demanding conceptions of content. On the other hand, by insisting on the contribution of modes to phenomenology, it holds the promise of offering a convincing account of phenomenology apt to avoid the pitfalls of pure intentionalism and of an appeal to qualia.

The aim of the next section is to explain why my own past research puts me in a good position to pursue the issues presented in the foregoing. On this basis, I will then, in section 2.3, present the more specific research questions that will structure my project.

2.2 State of Personal Research

The present project is a natural descendent of my research until now, which has often been conducted in tandem with my colleague Prof. Julien Deonna. I have developed the specific way of approaching intentionality sketched in section 2.1, and in particular its emphasis on the role of psychological modes for
intentionality and phenomenology, in my recent writings on the emotions, starting from *The Emotions: A Philosophical Introduction* (2012). The development of this approach was due to my growing dissatisfaction with the dominant approaches in the field. As different as they are in other respects, feeling theories, judgement theories and perceptual theories speak with one voice in their attempt at analysing the emotions in terms of psychological modes (feeling, believing, perceiving) that are not exclusive to the emotions, and at understanding what is distinctive of them solely in terms of their representational contents. Feeling, believing or perceiving would accordingly become emotional when they happen to represent specific objects or properties. The basic worry raised by approaches of this nature is that one cannot in this way understand what is emotional about the emotions, something which should rather be understood in terms of the distinctive psychological mode(s) that occurs when one is in a state of fear, of pride or of amusement.

I have continued investigating the fundamental roles played by the contrast between modes and content in the philosophy of emotions in several papers since the publication of this monograph. More specifically, I have for instance shown how helpful the contrast is to understanding and comparing a variety of well-known approaches to the emotions and the worries they give rise to (Teroni in press and forthcoming a), have discussed several important objections to it that are premised on the alleged inseparability of mode and content in the case of the emotions (Teroni submitted a), and have started applying it to problems surrounding the rationality of emotions elicited by fiction (Teroni 2014a, Teroni submitted b).

This body of work on the emotions has been very positively reviewed (e.g., Smith 2014) – with an emphasis on the fruitfulness of the approach I favour, which is as a result now regularly discussed in the literature on the emotions.

I am currently investigating the complex epistemological ramifications of the approach in relation to some classical issues arising in this field. If evaluative properties need not be represented by an emotional experience, can we still maintain that emotions can immediately justify the corresponding evaluative judgements? If the answer is positive, what does that teach us regarding the nature of immediate justification and its relations to mode and content? If it is negative, how damaging is this conclusion and how should we reframe the relations between emotions and evaluative judgements?

In parallel, I have started applying the contrast between psychological mode and content with success to other mental states, in particular to memory (Teroni under revision). In the latter case, it allowed me to revisit a traditional problem in the philosophy of semantic or propositional (i.e., non-episodic) memory, which concerns the role that is played by ‘impressions’ or ‘seemings of remembering’ – the sort of phenomenal state one is in when one inclines to endorse a content because it somehow feels familiar.

Harnessing the contrast between mode and content, I argue that the feeling of familiarity is distinctive of remembering as a mode and that it plays an ineliminable although not justificatory role in connection with propositional memory judgements. This confirmed to me the rich potential of the theoretical framework put forward here to shed new light on classical issues in the philosophy of mind and in epistemology. Also directly relevant to this theoretical framework is my past work on the relations between emotions and their formal objects (Teroni 2007).
Thanks to my research and teaching, I am moreover already well acquainted with the literature on the nature of a variety of other kinds of mental states – moods, pleasures and pains, desires, perceptual experiences (a central topic in the recently launched SNSF project “Sensing as Activity: Its Impact on the Structure of Perceptual and Emotional Experience” that I codirect), propositional and sensory imaginings, and beliefs – as well as with the literature on the fundamental controversies and problems their study gives rise to.

The present project will also profit from my expertise in epistemology and more specifically in issues surrounding the nature of the norms that apply to different types of mental states, a domain of research that has a variety of implications for the understanding of the intentionality and correctness conditions distinctive of these mental states. These issues constitute the core topics of the weekly seminar of the SNSF project “Analyses de la rationalité en terme de connaissance” that I also codirect since 2012.

Finally, through my implication in these various research and teaching activities, I have developed over the years many contacts with philosophers directly working on the mode vs. content contrast and its implications, or on topics closely related to it.

All in all, then, I think that my background puts me in a very good position to conduct the present project with success. It would in any case constitute an ideal opportunity to develop in a systematic way some fundamental aspects of my past and present research.

2.3 Detailed Research Plan

In the light of the considerations put forward in the foregoing, it is fair to say that the development of a systematic approach to the nature of psychological modes is mandatory for offering appealing accounts of both intentionality and phenomenology. The present research project is structured around this overarching hypothesis, and constitutes the first attempt to systematically investigate the distinction between mode and content and its consequences. In this way, it provides a unique opportunity to make arguments and claims that start to emerge in a variety of philosophical domains (philosophy of mind and language, epistemology) interact. Given that the hypothesis around which the project revolves has important repercussions on issues regarding, on the one hand, approaches to intentionality and phenomenology in general and, on the other hand, on issues raised by the study of specific mental states, it is divided into two parts.7

General issues in intentionality and phenomenology In the first part, the theoretical role of psychological modes in contrast to that of contents will be systematically investigated, and a taxonomy of modes will be developed. As explained in section 2.1, the approach I want to explore allocates to modes two key roles. Firstly, it allocates to them an intentional role, that of allowing some properties to enter into the correctness conditions of mental states without being represented by (i.e. be part of the content of) these mental states. For instance, it is because its content is believed as opposed to desired or conjectured that a mental state is correct if and only if its content is true. Properties that relate to the specific intentional contribution of modes are sometimes called ‘formal objects’ (in our example, truth

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7 Please observe that the division here is theoretical and does not correspond exactly to the way the research within the project will unfold over time, and which will be presented in section 2.4.
would be the formal object of belief) and I want to explore their role by putting to the test the idea that a formal object corresponds to each mode. Secondly, the approach allocates to modes a phenomenological role: modes contribute in their own distinctive way to the felt aspects of mental states and hold for that reason the promise of offering an attractive alternative to both pure intentionalism and qualia approaches. The research questions structuring the first part of the project will reflect the issues raised by these two contributions of modes to the nature of mental states.

Investigation of the contribution of modes to intentionality will be structured around the following questions, which are the first to be faced if one wishes to recruit modes in this way. What is the exact nature of formal objects? How precisely are we to understand their contribution to correctness conditions? How exactly does the claim that modes contribute to intentionality relate to the idea that there are unarticulated constituents of some thoughts? Does for instance the contribution of modes to intentionality constitute simply one of the ways in which thoughts may have unarticulated constituents? If so, do these other ways of appealing to ‘lighter’ contents compete with a reference to psychological modes? And what sorts of criteria are relevant for deciding which amongst these approaches should be preferred? What is the exact relation between formal objects and the sorts of norms that apply to the relevant types of mental states? For instance, what is the relation between truth as the formal object of belief and the sorts of epistemic norm that bear on believing? Moreover, do these norms derive from the nature of the relevant psychological modes, or do they on the contrary contribute essentially to making them the specific modes they are? Challenges coming from the philosophy of mind, from the philosophy of language and from epistemology against the mode-content distinction, as well as alternative approaches (e.g., Martinez 2011) will also have to be taken into account. Exploring these largely unfamiliar territories promises to deliver some original results.

As regards the contribution of modes to phenomenology, research will be structured around the following axes. The main issue here will be to assess the relative merits of distinct approaches to the phenomenology of mental states. These are, as emphasized in section 2.1, pure intentionalism, qualia approaches and impure intentionalism, which allocates distinct roles to psychological mode and content in the constitution of the phenomenology of mental states. What sort of picture fosters the most convincing understanding of the felt aspects of mental states? Moreover, the claim that psychological modes contribute to phenomenology raises a number of intriguing questions. For instance, are there traits characteristic of the phenomenal contribution of any kind of mode and, if so, which are they? Is there a sort of constant phenomenal signature of the mode, or is there at most a family resemblance amongst the felt aspects of different kinds of modes? Is there for instance a ‘feeling of intentionality’, i.e. a feeling of relating to something distinct from one that is to be found in all or most mental states (e.g., Frey 2013)? And what is the relation between the felt aspects of modes and the felt aspects of contents? These questions will obviously have to be investigated in relation to two important issues at the forefront of contemporary debates. The first is the issue regarding the existence and nature of cognitive phenomenology (e.g., Bayne and Montague 2011) – it will be approached here from the original perspective offered by an emphasis on modes. The second is the issue of the relation between intentionality and phenomenology at the heart of the phenomenal intentionality research program (e.g.,
Kriegel 2013). As noted in section 2.1, the aim here will be to scrutinize the rich observations on various aspects of phenomenology that abound in this area of research, and to take advantage of them to develop a systematic account of the respective contributions of mode and content to phenomenology.

In addition to these issues regarding the contribution of modes to intentionality and phenomenology in general, research will focus on the development of a taxonomy of modes. Modes appear to be quite diverse and heterogeneous, and we should certainly resist the temptation of analysing them in terms of one or two primitives like belief and desire. Yet, this does not mean that no illuminating ordering can be found in this area. To this end, the following additional issues will have to be confronted. What sorts of intentional modes are distinguished by commonsense? Which criteria are used in this respect? For instance, is the distinction between propositional and nonpropositional modes (Crane 2009, Forbes 2006, Montague 2007) sound, or should we rather accept that one and the same mode can have a variety of propositional and nonpropositional contents? More generally, do these criteria prove strong enough, or should they be replaced by a different and more theoretical set of distinctions? If so, what sort of intentional constraints bear on the individuation of psychological modes? Is there a contrast between mental states they contain a mode and those that do not, or is the distinction valid across the board? Can one build a taxonomy around criteria that do not have the consequence of multiplying modes beyond necessity (e.g., Kriegel 2011)? Some of the criteria to be explored here are: the contrast between dispositional (believing) and episodic (judging) modes, that between voluntary and non-voluntary modes, or that between primitive (e.g., seeing, hearing) and ‘modified’ (imagining seeing or remembering hearing) modes (e.g., Gerrans and Mulligan 2013, Teroni 2012, Teroni under revision).

**Issues in the intentionality and phenomenology of specific types of mental states** The second part of the project will be concerned with the impact of the general hypothesis about the contributions of psychological modes on questions regarding the nature and role of specific types of modes. This part will offer the opportunity to explore some key issues raised by specific types of mental states from the original vantage point provided by the hypothesis developed in the first part.

To that effect, I shall start by focussing on mental states I am already familiar with, such as emotions, memories and perceptual states. For each type of mental state, this will lead me to investigate a series of fundamental issues. Here are three of them, which I will briefly illustrate. Firstly, does a given type of mental state really involve a psychological mode playing the role I hypothesize that modes play? For instance, is there really a contrast between mode and content in perceptual experiences? Or are perceptual experiences (perhaps the only) type of mental states for which pure intentionalism holds true? This is closely related to fundamental and on-going debates in the philosophy of perception. Some think that there is a distinctive *sui generis* attitude involved in perception (e.g., Johnston 1997), while others emphasize that perception is at most an ‘invitation’ to form an attitude towards the relevant content (McDowell 1994). Secondly, do some mental states resist the drawing of a clear contrast between mode and content, not because it is absent, but rather because mode and content are too intimately related to allow for independent variation of these two variables? Is there for instance something to be said in favour of the recent defence of this idea with respect to the emotions (Goldie 2000, Gunther 2003)? Moreover, what sort of intentional and/or phenomenal consideration could bear on this difficult issue?
Thirdly, which specific properties (formal objects) are contributed by specific psychological modes? For instance, what would the formal object be in the case of perceptual experiences? And, in the case of remembering, what are the pros and cons of claiming that familiarity or, alternatively, that pastness is the formal object of memory?

As already observed, these questions will first be raised in connection with mental states with which I am already familiar, in particular affective states, memories and perceptual experiences. After having considered these questions and refined the main hypothesis in the light of the conclusions this will lead to, the framework will be in a second phase extended to some further mental states such as sensations, beliefs and imaginings. In so doing, emphasis will also be systematically put on the epistemological repercussions of the views put forwards. Let me also observe that, given the nature of these issues, the second part of my project could, depending on the exact interests of the collaborators it will involve, give rise to subprojects that would systematically contribute to the issues relevant to the project as a whole.

**Methods** As is usual in philosophical research, the principal method of investigation to be used within the project is conceptual analysis. The core elements of conceptual analysis as it will be applied here include

i. investigation of linguistic usage

ii. close attention to ontological distinctions amongst the mental phenomena to be examined with

iii. a distinctive interest in the similarities and differences between types and subspecies of mental states (in this respect, research will combine the rigor of analytic approaches to intentionality and correctness conditions with sensitivity to the felt aspects of mental states)

iv. introspection

v. resort to a variety of thought experiments and, more generally,

vi. close attention to the tools and interests peculiar to the metaphysics of the mental, as well as

vii. to the role and impact of normative claims about the mind on issues regarding the nature and felt aspects of the relevant phenomena.

Intense communication between the project members, who will of course conduct their research on closely related topics, will prove especially important, as well as the input received by the international collaborators.

Conceptual analysis may be complemented and informed by empirical research in neuroscience and experimental psychology in relation to issues raised by specific kinds of mental states – yet, given the nature of the issues to be investigated within the project, uses of such data are likely to be few and far between.

**Planned doctoral theses** Collaborators within the project will have the opportunity to write their dissertations on two main areas of research.

The first possibility will be to concentrate on the general approach to mental states that is put forward within the project, the challenges it faces, as well as its assets and liabilities as compared with other approaches to mental phenomena (such as functionalism and representationalism). Amongst the likely
topics of dissertation in this first area of research are: the nature and roles of formal objects; a typology of types of modes (or some sub-question this raises, such as the contrast between propositional and nonpropositional modes); a critical assessment of representationalism.

The second possibility will be to concentrate on a specific type of mental states while taking into account the vantage point provided by the distinction between psychological mode and content. Given my areas of expertise, preference will be given to dissertations focussing on affective phenomena, memory and/or perception. Likely topics of dissertation in this second area are then as follows. Is the mode/content distinction applicable to perceptual experiences? What is the nature of the formal object in the case of remembering? How should we develop the mode/content distinction in the case of the emotions?

Given that the exact domain covered by the doctoral theses will of course take into account the individual interests of people who will be hired within the project, it is at this early stage difficult to provide more detailed information. The project is meant to start in 09.2015, and my intention is to advertise the doctoral positions much in advance, to rely on broad-spectrum distribution channels such as Philos-L and to contact my colleagues working in neighbouring domains of research so as to be in a position to find the collaborators who are best suited for the project.

**Setting of the project** The ideal place to conduct this research is the philosophy department at the University of Fribourg, which would be eager to welcome me and to put the needed resources at my disposal. Two members of this institution, Prof. G. Soldati and Prof. M. Nida-Rümelin, are experts in some of the topics with which my project is concerned, more specifically in the philosophy of perception and the nature of phenomenology. It should be added that many doctoral students and postdocs at Fribourg are or have been working on intentionality and phenomenology, and this is likely to lead to fruitful collaborations. Furthermore, some interesting early attempts to approach the mode-content distinction have been offered by Brentano, Husserl and philosophers influenced by them. On these topics, exchanges with Prof. Soldati will prove extremely valuable. I have been already collaborating with him for some years within the Pro"Doc "Intentionality as the Mark of the Mental" as well as less formally and know that I will very much profit from these interactions. Finally, the fact that I have taught for some years in German, while my mother language is French, means that the bilingual environment in Fribourg will be ideal. Whilst I think for these reasons that this institution is especially well suited to host my project, it is by no means the sole environment in which it can be successfully conducted (other possibilities are the philosophy departments of the universities of Geneva and Bern).

2.4 Schedule

**First half of the project (09.2015-08.2017)** Work on the project will start with a distinct focus on the general theoretical framework presented in section 2.1. During the first phase, emphasis will then be put on the impact of the distinction between psychological mode and content for general issues regarding the phenomenology and intentionality of mental states. Issues regarding the nature of formal objects, their contributions to correctness conditions and the individuation of modes will take centre stage. A typology of psychological modes will also be developed, and a variety of challenges that threaten the general distinction between mode and content, which come from several domains of research (philosophy of
mind, philosophy of language, epistemology), as well as alternative approaches will be assessed during this phase. In parallel, research on the types of mental states I am most familiar with (emotions, memories, perceptual experiences) will be conducted, of course with a specific emphasis on the underlying theoretical framework.

One of the main outputs of the project will be a monograph (see also section 2.5). This monograph will contain a presentation and defence of the general approach to mental states delineated in sections 2.1 and 2.3, as well as a series of chapters applying this approach to specific mental states – shedding in this way new light on problems related either to their intentionality, or to their phenomenology, or to both. These chapters will focus on emotions, memories, imaginings, perceptual states, beliefs, desires and suppositions. During the first half of the project, work on the monograph will concentrate on the presentation and defence of the general approach, as well as on two chapters, one about the emotions and one about memory.

I will also submit approximately three papers to international journals during that same period. The first paper will defend the general approach to mental states underpinning the project. The second will offer a criticism of representationalism from the theoretical vantage point put forward within the project. The third paper will approach either the emotions or memory from the same theoretical perspective.

In addition, collaborators will organize an international two-day workshop on the general distinction between mode and content and its consequences on a variety of issues in the philosophy of mind and epistemology. Given the importance of input for the research to be conducted within the project, this workshop will take place during the first year. Decision to organize a second workshop in the same format during the second year will be reached on the basis of the results of that first workshop – the topics which we want to cover will be a function of its output as well as of the research interests that will have been raised by the on-going research of the collaborators.

Second half of the project (09.2017-08.2019) Research conducted during the second phase of the project will focus on additional types of mental states. The conclusions reached by the investigations conducted during the first phase will be applied to them, of course with suitable modifications. Target mental states will during this phase be: imaginings, perceptual states, beliefs, desires and suppositions.

Work on the monograph will go on with a focus on the five chapters that will be devoted to these five types of mental states, and the results of these investigations are foreseen to exert important feedback effect on the general theoretical framework.

Three papers about these same types mental states will be submitted to international journals. The first one will be concerned with imaginings and the contrast between sensory and propositional imagination. The second will be on desires and the nature of conative psychological modes. The third is very likely to focus on believing and neighbouring modes.

Two additional workshops, one per year, will be organized during the second phase. It is quite difficult to be precise so early about the topics that will be covered by these workshops. One is very likely to be about one or more of the types of mental states on which research will revolve. The other may have a similar
focus, but may also return to the general contrast between mode and content with the benefit of hindsight resulting from research to be conducted until then.

2.5 Importance of the Research

The planned research will deliver original and significant results in relation to issues that are central for the understanding of mental states. The importance of the expected results is due to the fact that the project focuses on the overlooked topic of the nature of psychological modes, and does so from a perspective informed by their impact on both the intentionality and the phenomenology of mental states. Research conducted within the project will in this way attempt to combine the rigor of analytic approaches to intentionality and correctness conditions with sensitivity to the felt aspects of mental states.

The aim is to be able to offer a systematic approach to some of the most basic issues pertaining to the phenomenal aspects as well as to the intentionality of mental states - reconceptualising in this way fundamental aspects of the contemporary discussions and allowing for original and promising solutions to extant problems. In so doing, research will lead to original and critical perspectives on rather influential views in the philosophy of mind, such as functionalism and intentionalism. While adopting such an approach, the project will be in a position to fruitfully engage with research programs that, although relatively recent, are already well-established (such as the literature on unarticulated constituents of thoughts, or the body of research surrounding the nature and varieties of cognitive phenomenology (Bayne and Montague 2011), for instance), as well as with research programs that are only beginning to emerge (research on phenomenal intentionality, with which there are some important points of contact, is a case in point, see e.g., Kriegel 2013).

Collaborators who will be hired within the research project to write their doctoral theses will thus have the opportunity to concentrate on issues that will structure important debates in the foreseeable future of the philosophy of mind and of epistemology - be it on the general issues with which the project is concerned, or on some more specific type of mental states from the theoretical perspective that underpins it (see section 2.3, planned doctoral theses, for detail). This will be an important asset in their career.

The research is foreseen to lead to the following publications (see section 2.4 for the schedule).

- One monograph in English. This monograph will offer a full presentation and defence of the original approach to mental states sketched in sections 2.1 and 2.3, as well as a series of chapters applying this approach to specific mental states - shedding in this way new light on problems related either to their intentionality, or to their phenomenology, or to both. These chapters will focus on emotions, memories, imaginings, perceptual states, beliefs, desires and suppositions. The book will in this way offer an original and systematic perspective on a significant number of mental states. The project of this monograph will be submitted to a prominent publishing house, such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press or Routledge, at the onset of the research project.

- I will write approximately six papers on the same topics and submit them to international philosophy journals.
- Doctoral students will be encouraged to try to publish one paper in an international philosophy journal towards the end of their work on the dissertation.

- One collection of papers on topics related to the project will be edited by members of the project, and will also be submitted to a prominent publishing house.

Communication of these results to academic audiences will take the shape of participation to academic events. I will continue to publicize my work in international conferences and workshops, and will also organize with the help of people hired within the project a minimum of three international two-day workshops on the themes around which the project revolves. The first one, which will be concerned with the general contrast between modes and contents and its relevance for the study of mental states, will serve to launch the project and initiate international exchanges on the core topics.

It would take a rather candid philosopher to deny that transfer of philosophical results outside the academic domain is a challenging task, and the task is made especially difficult when quite abstract issues such as those at the heart of the present research project are concerned. That being said, I have over the years acquired a rich experience in this area. I have for instance been interviewed several times by general media: by the French-speaking Swiss TV on the topic of emotions; for an issue of a well-established show for the Swiss radio around my co-authored monograph on shame; as well as for articles reporting on my research that have appeared in newspapers such as La Repubblica and Le Temps. I have also edited a collection of short essays somewhat less demanding than is usually the case (Teroni 2011), and have recently collaborated to an illustrated volume trying to convey the nature and interest of philosophical issues and the way they are fruitfully pursued to a more general audience (Teroni 2014b). It is my firm intention to go on with these communicating activities during the period covered by the present project, since this is something I perceive as especially important in order to go beyond the various caricatures of philosophy that prevail in the general public.

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