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CONTENT INTERNALISM ABOUT INDEXICAL THOUGHT

Michael Pelczar

Properly understood, content internalism is the thesis that any difference between the representational contents of two individuals' mental states reduces to a difference in those individuals' intrinsic properties. Some of the strongest arguments against internalism turn on the possibility for two doppelgangers—perfect physical and phenomenal duplicates—to differ with respect to the contents of those of their mental states that they can express using terms such as “I,” “here,” and “now.” In this paper, we grant the stated possibility but deny that it poses any threat to internalism. Despite their similarities, doppelgangers differ in some of their intrinsic properties, and it is to such intrinsic differences that differences of indexical content reduce.

I. INTERNALISM VERSUS EXTERNALISM

Representational or “intentional” states are those by virtue of being in which a person believes or desires the world to be a certain way. Intentional states have truth conditions, or in the case of desires, satisfaction conditions. The truth conditions of a belief-like intentional state are the conditions under which it is true; they are the way the world is, if the belief or belief-like state is true. The

satisfaction conditions of a desire are the conditions under which it is satisfied—the way the world is, if the desire (or other desire-like state) is satisfied. Two states are said to have the same *content* iff the conditions (actual as well as counterfactual) under which the one state is true or satisfied are the same as those under which the other is true or satisfied.

The debate between internalists and externalists concerns the relationship between an individual's intentional states and his intrinsic properties. A thing has a property *F* *intrinsically* iff it has *F*, and could have *F* even if it were the only thing in existence. More precisely: a thing with property *F* has the property *intrinsically* iff it could have *F* even if it were the only contingently existing thing in existence. (Nothing can have any property in the absence of necessarily existing things, if there are such things.) A thing's intrinsic properties are just the properties it has intrinsically.

A standard way to frame the debate between internalists and externalists about mental representation is with the question whether two people who had all their intrinsic properties in common could differ with respect to the contents of their mental states; externalists supposedly say yes, internalists no. This is a bad way to frame the debate, however, since

it is impossible for two people to share all of their intrinsic properties. For each of one's parts, P, one has the intrinsic (to oneself) property of containing P. For any way that two of one's parts relate to one another, it is also an intrinsic property of oneself that one contains parts related to one another in this way.¹ So, anything that had all of one's intrinsic properties would contain all of one's parts related to one another as they are related in oneself. But any such thing would just *be* oneself, and, *a fortiori*, would not differ from oneself in the contents of its mental states.

The standard way of framing the debate therefore begs the question against externalism. So what is the right way to frame it? Not by confining our attention to nonrelational intrinsic properties. (F is a *relational* property iff there is some individual such that that individual must exist in order for anything to have F. An example is the property of being Swiss, which requires for its instantiation by anything that Switzerland exist.) It is true that this restriction would prevent internalism from becoming a trivial truth by taking out of consideration properties like that of containing P (where P is one of one's parts), but it is otherwise completely arbitrary. What makes externalism an intriguing position is its implication that the contents of a person's mental states depend not just on those of his features that he could have even if he were the only being in existence, but also on facts about his natural or social environment. If we were to define externalism specifically in terms of nonrelational intrinsic properties, it would not carry this implication; the claim that two individuals might differ in the contents of their mental states despite sharing all their *nonrelational* intrinsic properties is compatible with the claim that the aforementioned environmental factors are completely irrelevant to the contents of a person's thoughts. An internalist could maintain that what must be added to a person's nonrelational intrinsic properties in order to determine the contents

of his thoughts are simply his *relational* intrinsic properties, such as the property of containing such-and-such parts related to one another in such-and-such ways.

The right way to frame the debate is with the following question:

Given that two people differ with respect to the contents of their mental states, must this difference reduce to a difference in their intrinsic properties?

Internalists say yes, externalists say no. Framed this way, the debate hands neither internalism nor externalism an easy victory. In particular, it does not make internalism come out trivially true. For, from the fact that even perfect doppelgangers must differ in some of their intrinsic properties (namely their relational ones), it does not obviously follow that every difference in the contents of two doppelgangers' mental states reduces to a difference in the doppelgangers' intrinsic properties. Suppose Jules and Jim are perfect duplicates of one another. Call Jules's heart H; then Jules has the intrinsic property of containing H, which Jim lacks. But although this marks an intrinsic difference between Jules and Jim—a difference in their intrinsic properties—it is not a difference that entails any difference between the contents of their mental states.

(It is true that Jim has an intrinsic property closely related to that of containing H—that of containing H', where H' is Jim's heart. It is also true that Jim shares with Jules an intrinsic property closely related to both of those just mentioned, namely the property of having a heart with a certain precise molecular structure—a structure which is common to the hearts of both men. But none of this changes the fact that only Jules, and not Jim, has the intrinsic property of containing H, and vice versa for H'.)

The proposed way of framing the internalism/externalism debate could be refined in potentially useful ways. Of particular

interest is a version of internalism that sees the contents of an individual's intentional states as supervenient upon that individual's conscious phenomenal features. This view, or something close to it, strikes this author as essentially correct. The goal of the present essay, however, is limited to defending a broader class of internalist theories against a specific set of objections. This broader class of theories includes all theories on which the contents of one's thoughts supervene on one's intrinsic properties. Phenomenalistic internalism is one theory of this kind; other internalist theories may hold that some of one's nonphenomenal intrinsic properties also play a crucial role in fixing the contents of one's mental states. The objections to internalism that we are especially concerned with here target all forms of internalism, phenomenalistic or otherwise. These objections have to do with beliefs of the sort that we typically express indexically, with statements like "I am working," "It is hot in here," and "The meeting starts now." Such beliefs are widely held to pose a problem for any theory on which the contents of one's thoughts supervene on one's intrinsic properties.²

As laid out above, the debate between internalists and externalists is also of interest for its connection with causal or "naturalistic" theories of mental representation. According to such theories, when we classify intentional states according to their truth-conditional contents, we are classifying them according to their causal powers, where a thing's causal powers consist of its ability to have certain effects in certain situations. (To say that two things have the same causal powers is to say that they have the same effects—yield the same results—if placed in the same situations.)

It is reasonable to think that which causal powers a thing has depends solely on its intrinsic properties. (How a thing *exercises* its causal powers does not depend just on its intrinsic properties, but also on how things are arranged in its environment; a burning

match has the power to light a cigar, even if no cigar is present to be lit.) But according to naturalistic theories of intentionality, the contents of a thing's contentful mental states depend solely on its causal powers. So naturalism implies that if two people differ in the contents of their mental states, this difference must reduce to some difference in their intrinsic features. In other words, intentional naturalism entails internalism, as characterized above. Any argument against internalism is therefore equally an argument against naturalism about mental representation. So this is one more reason to take interest in the debate between internalists and externalists, construed as above.³

2. ARGUMENTS AGAINST INTERNALISM

To work, an argument against internalism must show that there can be differences in the contents of doppelgangers' mental states that do not reduce to differences in the doppelgangers' intrinsic properties. To defend internalism against such an argument, we must either show that the supposed differences in content are illusory, or else grant the differences and show that for each such difference there is a difference in the doppelgangers' intrinsic features to which the granted difference in content reduces.

Arguments against internalism take two basic forms. Arguments of the first form focus on intentional states that concern general categories or natural kinds, such as chemical substances (aluminum, molybdenum, water) and biological species (tigers, beeches, elms). These arguments, reviewed in §2.1, succumb to an objection due to Tim Crane. This is an objection to the effect that the supposed differences in content of the doppelgangers' mental states are illusory.

The second form of argument against internalism focuses on intentional states that we typically express using indexical terms, such as "I," "here," and "now." After reviewing the argument from "I"-intentionality in §2.2, we

consider a basic objection to it. This is an objection that grants the supposed differences in doppelgangers' mental contents, but argues that these differences reduce to differences in the doppelgangers' intrinsic properties. (The exact nature of the relevant intrinsic properties is discussed in §3.)

2.1. *Natural Kinds Arguments*

Twin Earth is familiar territory to philosophers: a planet just like Earth, except that wherever there is H_2O on Earth, on Twin Earth there is a liquid that has all the same outward qualities as H_2O , but a different molecular composition, call it XYZ. In 1750, no one on Earth or Twin Earth knew the molecular composition of the stuff in their respective lakes, swimming pools, and so on. So, consider Oscar and Twin Oscar ("Toscar," for short). We are to imagine that Oscar and Toscar are perfect physical and phenomenal duplicates of one another (except for the fact that Oscar is about 60 percent H_2O whereas Toscar is about 60 percent XYZ—a difference we may ignore as irrelevant). Also, Oscar and Toscar have the same quality of conscious experience: when Toscar drinks a cold glass of water, he has the same thirst-quenching sensation as Oscar, etc. Whatever utterances Oscar is prepared to make using the word "water," Toscar is prepared to make as well. Oscar utters things like: "Water boils at $100^\circ C$ and freezes at zero degrees," "Liquid water is denser than solid water," "Clouds consist of water vapor," and "I would like a glass of water." Toscar makes exactly the same utterances.⁴

But when Oscar says "Please bring me some water," he gets H_2O , whereas Toscar gets XYZ when he utters the same words. Similarly, if Oscar neglects to pay the bills that have "Water Bill" printed on them, the result is that H_2O ceases to flow from his faucet, whereas if Toscar neglects to pay bills with the same heading, the result is that XYZ stops flowing. And so forth. Externalists think that such considerations show that when

Oscar sincerely says "Water is wet," he is in an intentional state that is true iff H_2O is wet, whereas when Toscar utters the same words sincerely, he is in an intentional state that is true iff XYZ is wet.

Or take the case of Hilary and Thilary, who, like Oscar and Toscar, duplicate one another molecule-for-molecule (and, at the level of conscious experience, qualecule-for-qualecule). Neither Hilary nor Thilary can distinguish beech trees from elm trees, and they both have the same vague mental image when asked to imagine a beech or an elm. But on Twin Earth, the words "beech" and "elm" are switched, such that "beech" is the accepted term for elm trees, and "elm" the accepted term for beeches. So when Hilary goes to the nursery and says "please give me a dozen beech trees," what he gets is a dozen beeches, whereas when Thilary says "please give me a dozen beech trees," what he gets is a dozen elms; etc. Now suppose someone says to Hilary: "Elms grow taller than beeches." If Hilary accepts this person's statement, he is, according to externalists, in an intentional state that is true iff elms grow taller than beeches. But when Thilary accepts some Twin Earthling's statement, "Elms grow taller than beeches," he is, according to externalists, in an intentional state that is true iff beeches grow taller than elms. Thus, Hilary and Thilary have intentional states with different contents, despite duplicating each other in all relevant intrinsic respects.

As they stand, these arguments against internalism simply do not work. For, as Tim Crane has pointed out, the cases described above are consistent with the view that Oscar and Toscar (or Hilary and Thilary) are completely alike in the contents of their intentional states. If, for example, Hilary and Thilary both use "elm" as a term to cover both beeches and elms, their uses of this term still have the different results described earlier. (Hilary would bring home elms from the nursery, whereas Thilary would bring home

beeches, etc.) Similarly for Oscar and Toscar: their uses of “water” will have the different consequences described earlier—Oscar’s waiter will bring him H₂O, Toscar’s will bring him XYZ, and so on—even if by “water” they both mean drinkable stuff that freezes at 0°C, boils at a 100°C, and is denser as a liquid than as a solid. Since nothing about these thought-experiments forces us to attribute to Oscar and Toscar intentional states with different truth conditions (or desires with different satisfaction conditions), they simply fail to call internalism into question.⁵

The influence of the natural kinds arguments may be due partly to a failure to distinguish clearly between (1) what people mean by the words they use, and (2) what the words themselves mean. What the word “water” means in a given linguistic community is a function of what those who use it in that community mean by it (although not a straightforward function—democracy does not always prevail). Unless the linguistic community consists of just one speaker, it would be absurd to hold that the meaning of a word supervenes on the intrinsic properties of any single speaker. But it would be a mistake to infer from this that what a given person *means by* a word does not supervene on that person’s intrinsic properties. At most, the natural kinds arguments show (what is in any event obvious) that what the words a person uses mean does not depend only on that person’s intrinsic properties. They do not show that what a person means by the words he uses depends on something beyond his intrinsic properties; much less do they show that the contents of his beliefs depend on more than this.

2.2. *The Indexical Argument*

Natural kinds arguments fail to refute internalism, because they give us no compelling reason to believe that doppelgangers’ mental states differ in their truth or satisfaction conditions. The situation is different, however,

if, following Hilary Putnam, we suppose that natural kind terms like “water” function as indexicals. Imagine that Oscar lives at the dawn of modern chemistry, so that while the concept of a molecule is available, it has not yet been discovered what kind of molecules make up the earthly substance known as “water.” Now suppose that Oscar defines the word “water” for himself as follows: “By ‘water,’ I mean whatever consists of molecules that have the structure exhibited by the molecules that fill this glass”—raising the glass that he is holding. It is hard to deny that when Oscar proceeds to use the word “water” in thought and speech in accordance with his definition, he uses it to form and express beliefs and desires whose truth or satisfaction conditions have to do specifically with H₂O rather than XYZ. For example, if Oscar thinks to himself: “There is water on the floor,” he is in a mental state that is true iff there is H₂O on the floor. Supposing that Toscar has defined “water” in his idiolect in a similar manner, when he thinks to himself “There’s water on the floor,” his thought is true iff there is XYZ on the floor.⁶

Let us call this *the indexical argument*, since it focuses on beliefs of the sort that we typically report or describe by means of indexical expressions. (It may or may not make sense to describe the beliefs themselves as indexical; at least, it seems possible for such a belief to exist in the absence of indexical terminology.) Putnam’s supposition that natural kind terms function as indexicals is incidental to the argument; he could simply point out that when Oscar says “I’m hungry!” he means something that is true iff Oscar is hungry, whereas when Toscar utters the same words sincerely, he intends something that is true iff Toscar is hungry. So the truth conditions of their utterances differ, as do the contents of their underlying belief and desire states: Oscar is in a belief state that is true iff Oscar is hungry, and in a state of desire that is satisfied iff Oscar eats; *mutatis mutandis* for Toscar.

On the face of it, this is a strong argument against any thoroughgoing internalism about mental representation. Unlike the beliefs that the doppelgangers express with the sentences, “Water is wet” and “Elms make great firewood,” it is hard to argue that the belief Oscar expresses with the words “I am hungry” has the same truth conditions as the belief Toscar expresses with the same words.⁷

Is there any way to defend internalism about indexical content? Maybe this is a case in which the best defense is a good offense. Intuitively, a person’s success at referring to himself does not—or at any rate need not—depend on anything besides his intrinsic properties. If, on some occasion, Oscar succeeds in referring to himself, for instance in the course of thinking to himself, *I am hungry*, or *I call the liquid in the glass I am holding “water,”* then, intuitively, he refers to himself in any possible situation in which he has the same intrinsic properties as he has on this occasion. Certainly, his success at self-reference does not depend on anything extrinsic to him, since he does not differ from Toscar in any relevant extrinsic respect; Oscar’s success in referring to himself has nothing to do with the fact that his environment contains H₂O rather than XYZ.

Oscar succeeds in representing himself. That much is certain, and anyway required by the indexical argument against internalism. He does not succeed in doing so by possessing some extrinsic property that Toscar lacks, since, for the purposes of self-reference, Oscar and Toscar are alike in their extrinsic properties. Nor does Oscar succeed in representing himself by dint of his nonindexical beliefs, since, first of all, these do not differ in content from Toscar’s nonindexical beliefs (see §2.1), and, second, even if we were to grant the differences in nonindexical belief content that Putnam posits, these differences would not account for the fact that Oscar refers to himself rather than Toscar in such thoughts as *I call the liquid in the glass I am holding “water.”*

This leaves just two options. Either it is a brute, irreducible fact about Oscar that he represents himself in thought and speech (and likewise for Toscar), or else Oscar represents himself by virtue of possessing certain *intrinsic* properties.

To say that it is a brute fact that Oscar represents himself is just to say that it is a brute fact that he has the property of representing himself, and that is just to say that his having this property does not reduce to his having any other property, intrinsic or extrinsic. But if Oscar has a property that does not reduce to his having some other properties, intrinsic or extrinsic, then he has that property intrinsically. For if he had it extrinsically, his having it would reduce to his relating in a certain way to his environment.

The upshot is that Oscar’s success in representing himself either reduces to his having certain intrinsic properties, or else just *is* a matter of his having the intrinsic property of representing himself. Either way, an internalist account of self-representation turns out to be the correct one. In the next section, a rough sketch of such an account is provided, before turning in §4 to other forms of indexical thought (corresponding to our uses of the words “here” and “now”).

3. THE INTRINSIC BASIS OF SELF-REPRESENTATION

What does it take for a person to have a belief that is made true, if at all, by a state of affairs that cannot obtain unless that person exists? Call such a belief a *self-regarding belief*. It is implausible that it is just a brute fact about a person that he has self-regarding beliefs. So, in light of the previous section, it must be that having a self-regarding belief reduces to having some intrinsic properties. But which intrinsic properties?

We know that they must be relational intrinsic properties, since these are the only intrinsic properties that Oscar does not share with Toscar. This means that Oscar’s having a

given self-regarding belief reduces to some of his features relating in some way to some of his other features (or, to Oscar as a whole).

Take a very simple self-regarding belief: Oscar's belief that he is in pain. This is a somewhat peculiar belief—peculiar, because, arguably, there is no difference between Oscar's believing that he is in pain and his *being* in pain. It is hard to see how he could be in pain without believing it, and hard to see how he could believe he was in pain without being in pain. The same seems to be true of any of one's beliefs to the effect that one is having conscious experience of such-and-such a phenomenal quality. Still, some maintain that there is a difference between having a phenomenal experience and believing that you are having it. It is not necessary to take sides on this issue here. It turns out that the required point can be made either way.

First, suppose that Oscar's pain and his belief that he is in pain are different states—"distinct existences," as David Armstrong puts it.⁸ What, then, is it for Oscar to have the belief? Details aside, it is for one part of Oscar's mind or brain to scan another part of it—the part that constitutes the pain. Exactly what "scanning" comes to, and exactly what is the nature of the scanner and the pain it scans, are questions that need not detain us here. For whatever scanning is, it is a relation between the scanner and the state scanned, and whatever might be the nature of the scanner and the state scanned, their natures are exhausted by Oscar's intrinsic features. This is true regardless of whether the pain and the scanner are purely physical entities, or include some extra-physical element. Vary Oscar's environment and history however you like, Oscar will continue to believe that he is in pain, as long as you hold his intrinsic features constant.⁹

How does this sort of account square with internalism? The key point is that the scanner scans one of *Oscar's* states—Oscar has the property of containing a scanner that scans

a pain state of *Oscar*. We can represent this property with the following incomplete sentence: "_____ contains a scanner that scans a pain state of Oscar." This is a property that Toscar lacks. Instead, Toscar has the (relational, intrinsic) property of containing a scanner that scans a pain state of Toscar.

But now let's suppose that there is no difference between Oscar's pain and his belief that he is in pain. In that case, we should really treat his belief as a sort of limiting case, where belief and experience converge—perhaps not a proper belief at all. But there are other beliefs that do not raise these issues. Even if some introspective beliefs (like the belief *I am in pain*) are tantamount to the states of affairs they concern (e.g., the state of affairs that constitutes the author's being in pain), not all introspective beliefs are like this.

For one thing, there are introspective beliefs about one's past conscious experiences. Oscar's belief that he has recently been in pain is undoubtedly a distinct existence from the pain it concerns (even assuming that the belief is true). Oscar could have had the pain without subsequently believing that he had it; perhaps he forgets about it, or perishes just as the pain subsides. Yet the belief does not depend for its content on anything extrinsic to Oscar; he would have this belief, with this content, even if he were the only being in the world, provided only that he perform an appropriate act of introspection, and perhaps deduction from what this introspective act reveals (a memory, or apparent memory, of recent pain).

The point can also be made with reference to desires. Suppose that Oscar desires that he not experience pain; i.e., suppose that he has the self-regarding desire *that I not have pain*. This desire is, alas, a distinct existence from the state of affairs that must obtain in order for it to be satisfied. Yet it is clear that Oscar's having the desire does not depend at all on his extrinsic properties. Rather, it depends on his having a certain disposition:

a disposition—roughly—to engage in pain-avoidance behavior when not in pain, and in pain-relief-seeking behavior when in pain.

Again the account squares with internalism, this time due to the intrinsic character of the relevant dispositions. Oscar, but not Toscar, has a disposition that a thing has just in case it is caused to engage in pain-avoidance behavior when *Oscar* is not in pain, and to engage in pain-relief-seeking behavior when *Oscar* is in pain. Toscar has the disposition that you get if you replace the italicized *Oscars* with *Toscars*. These dispositions are ones that Oscar and Toscar, respectively, have intrinsically: even if Oscar were the only thing in existence, he could still be disposed to engage in pain-avoidance behavior when he was not in pain, and to engage in pain-relief-seeking behavior when in pain. *Mutatis mutandis* for Toscar.

Of course there are many more self-regarding beliefs and desires than the ones we have considered so far. Internalism implies that *all* self-regarding intentional states have their contents fixed by the intrinsic properties of the individuals whose states they are. A complete internalist account would reduce all such states to relevant intrinsic properties. The reduction would be a matter of building up from basic self-regarding intentional states (plus those non-self-regarding states, if any, that do not depend for their existence on self-regarding states) to get ever-more-complex intentional states. Such a wholesale reduction would be a large project and is out of the question here. But nothing in the literature critical of internalism gives us reason to doubt that the project could be carried out, and the fact that at least some self-regarding beliefs and desires have their contents fixed by relevant intrinsic properties removes the highest conceptual barrier from the path to such a reduction. In any event, the argument of §2.2 shows that self-regarding intentional states must reduce to intrinsic properties, if they reduce to anything at all.

4. HERE AND NOW

Indexical thought is not limited to self-regarding thought. In addition to indexical beliefs of the form, *I am such that such-and-such*, we also have indexical beliefs of the form, *It is now the case that such-and-such*, and *It is here the case that such-and-such*. According to internalism, people's intrinsic properties decide the truth conditional contents of these beliefs too. A successful defense of internalism along the lines being pursued here must also show how a person's intrinsic properties fix the contents of these "here" and "now" intentional states.

Begin with "now." In the Twin Earth thought experiment, Oscar and Toscar actually mean the same thing by "now," since they live as perfect contemporaries. But let us change the scenario so that Oscar and Toscar live during different (but indistinguishable) cycles of some kind of cosmic eternal recurrence. Then, plausibly, Oscar means different times from Toscar by his uses of "now." Suppose the cosmic cycles recur at one-billion-year intervals; then Oscar's thought, *It's raining now*, is true iff it rains at *t*, whereas Toscar's thought *It's raining now* is true iff it rains at *t-plus-one-billion-years*.

This thought experiment actually does not threaten internalism at all. At *t*, we are supposing, Oscar refers to *t* as *the time at which I now am*. But how does he manage to do that? Just by performing an appropriate mental act at *t*. But the property of performing that act at that time is *intrinsic* to Oscar. Granted, it is a property he has only by virtue of relating in a certain way to *t*—by standing to *t* in the relation designated by the incomplete sentence, "_____ performs such-and-such mental act at time _____." But this is a property Oscar could have even if he were the only contingent thing in existence. For time *t* exists necessarily. The property of Oscar that enables him to refer to *t* as *the time at which I now am* is therefore intrinsic to Oscar.

Yet again, the key lies with relational intrinsic properties, in this case, properties that Oscar has by virtue of his relationship to times. In fact, it is not even crucial that times enjoy necessary existence. Even if time t exists only contingently, it exists in Oscar as much as it exists anywhere. So even on the view that t is a contingent existent, Oscar's relationship to t may be regarded as a relation to one of his own parts, and hence as intrinsic.

With self- and now-regarding intentional states accounted for, it is relatively easy to give an internalist account of here-regarding thoughts. Oscar's beliefs of the form, *It is here the case that p* reduce to beliefs of the form, *It is the case that p where I am now*.

The only concern that might arise here is in relation to time travel. If time travel is possible, the equation *here = where I now am* would seem to be no better than the equation *now = when I am here*. But if we try to incorporate time travel into the recurrent Twin Earth scenario, we run into a number of conceptual problems.

For one, if Oscar is allowed to travel in time, we have no compelling reason to accept that the recurrent Twin Earth scenario is a possible one. We might just as well maintain that the supposedly recurrent scenario is actually a nonrecurrent scenario with time travel. In that case, Toscar is not as it were a second edition of Oscar: he just *is* Oscar, transported from the past to a qualitatively indistinguishable future.

For another, if time travel is possible and allows Oscar to be in different places at a single time, then we are faced with a situation in which Oscar exists simultaneously at two or more distinct locations. It is true that

he cannot refer to any of them as *the place where I am now*, but that is only because there is no such thing for him as *the place where I am now*. If time travel is possible, it may be that Oscar fails to have any here-regarding thoughts, but that is only because there fails to be any such thing as the place where Oscar is.

5. CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper has been a limited one, namely, to cast doubt on the main class of arguments against internalism that survive Crane's criticism of the natural kinds arguments. These indexical arguments appear strong at first glance, but they lose this appearance of strength once we formulate the disagreement between internalists and externalists properly and recognize the existence, and importance, of relational intrinsic properties. This recognition in place, we see that the right way to defend against the indexical arguments is not by denying that doppelgangers differ in the contents of their indexical mental states, but by granting the differences in content while insisting that these must reduce to differences in their intrinsic properties.

If the arguments given here are sound, the main result is that we can work on theories of mental representation unfettered by concerns about their possibly internalistic implications. Externalism may yet turn out to be true, but if so, this is something we shall know only after we have completed our investigations into the nature of intentionality, not before we have begun.¹⁰

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NOTES

1. Here we exclude relations that two of one's parts bear to each another only by virtue of bearing some other relation(s) to some third thing existing outside of oneself; an example would be the relation designated by the following formula: " x is adjacent to y and y lies within a light year of the Sun" (x and y might be a couple of one's brain cells). This exclusion does not affect the point being made in the text.

2. For the merits of phenomenalist internalism in contrast to a broader “from the skin-in” internalism, see Farkas (2003, pp.189–198), and also Williamson (2000, p. 49).
3. The point is not new: see Crane (1991, pp. 5–9) and Jackson (1996, pp. 398ff.). (The claim that a thing’s causal powers depend solely on its intrinsic properties is what Jackson calls the “here-and-now” intuition.)
4. For the origin of this thought-experiment, and the natural kinds arguments based on it, see Putnam (1973, pp. 700–704); see also Burge (1977).
5. For Crane’s strangely neglected discussion, see Crane (1991, pp. 10–13).
6. For Putnam’s discussion, see Putnam (1973, pp. 706–710).
7. Crane is aware of the indexical argument, but his objection to it is hard to construe, seeming to trade on an ambiguity in the word “means.” The ambiguity comes across in the observation that it is because “I” means (in one sense) what it does—rather than what “here” or “kumquat” means—that it means (in another sense) John when John uses it, Sally when she does. See Crane (1991, pp. 13–14).
8. Armstrong (1968, pp. 104–107).
9. Tyler Burge argues for a related claim in Burge (1988, pp. 652–655). However, his focus is on introspective *knowledge* of one’s own *beliefs*; this complicates matters twice over, since, first, it raises issues of justification, and, second, to give an internalist reduction of an introspective belief about another belief, one may have to give a prior reduction of the belief that is introspected. In the end, Burge does not come out in favor of internalism about the contents of self-regarding beliefs, but only in favor of *epistemic* internalism about the justification of (some) such beliefs; see Burge (1988, p. 663).
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