

SYMPOSIUM

# Another Argument for Cognitive Phenomenology

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**Abstract** In this paper, we want to support Kriegel's argument in favor of the thesis that there is a cognitive form of phenomenology that is both irreducible to and independent of any sensory form of phenomenology by providing another argument in favor of the same thesis. Indeed, this new argument is also intended to show that the thought experiment Kriegel's argument relies on does describe a genuine metaphysical possibility. In our view, Kriegel has not entirely succeeded in showing that his own argument displays that possibility. We present our argument in two steps. First, we attempt to prove that there is a cognitive phenomenology that is irreducible to any form of sensory phenomenology. Our proof relies on a kind of phenomenal contrast argument that however does not appeal to introspection. Second, by showing that the link between this form of cognitive phenomenology, the phenomenology of having thoughts, and sensory phenomenology in general is extrinsic, we also aim to demonstrate that the former is independent of the latter.

**KEYWORDS:** Cognitive Phenomenology; Irreducibility; Independence; Having Thoughts; Grasping Thoughts

**Riassunto** *Un altro argomento in favore della fenomenologia cognitiva* – In questo articolo intendiamo corroborare l'argomento di Kriegel in favore dell'esistenza di una forma cognitiva di fenomenologia irriducibile a e indipendente da ogni altra forma di fenomenologia della sensibilità, avanzando un altro argomento a sostegno della stessa tesi. Nei fatti, questo nuovo argomento vuole anche mostrare che l'esperimento mentale su cui poggia l'argomento di Kriegel descrive effettivamente una genuina possibilità metafisica; e tuttavia crediamo che l'argomento di Kriegel non abbia mostrato fino in fondo proprio questa possibilità. Vogliamo presentare il nostro argomento in due passi. In un primo momento, tenteremo di provare l'esistenza di una fenomenologia cognitiva irriducibile a ogni altra forma di fenomenologia sensoriale. La nostra prova poggia su un tipo di argomento basato su un contrasto fenomenico che non si appella all'introspezione. In un secondo momento, mostrando che il legame tra questa forma di fenomenologia cognitiva, ossia la fenomenologia del possesso dei pensieri, e la fenomenologia sensoriale è un legame estrinseco, intendiamo dimostrare che la prima è indipendente dalla seconda.

**PAROLE CHIAVE:** Fenomenologia cognitiva; Irriducibilità; Indipendenza; Possesso dei pensieri; Afferramento dei pensieri

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## Introduction

IN THIS PAPER, WE WANT to support Kriegel's argument in favor of the thesis that there is a cognitive form of phenomenology that is both irreducible to and independent of any sensory form of phenomenology by providing another argument in favor of the same thesis. Indeed, this new argument is also intended to show that the thought experiment Kriegel's argument relies on does describe a genuine metaphysical possibility. In our view, Kriegel has not entirely succeeded in showing that his own argument displays that possibility. We present our argument in two steps.

First, we attempt to prove that there is a cognitive phenomenology that is irreducible to any form of sensory phenomenology. Our proof relies on a kind of phenomenal contrast argument that however does not appeal to introspection. Second, by showing that the link between this form of cognitive phenomenology, the phenomenology of *having* thoughts, and sensory phenomenology in general is extrinsic, we also aim to demonstrate that the former is independent of the latter.

## No argument from interest

In the opening part of *The Varieties of Consciousness*,<sup>1</sup> Kriegel argues in favor of cognitive phenomenology as a *sui generis* form of phenomenology. As he claims, cognitive phenomenology is a form of phenomenology that is both irreducible to any other form of phenomenology, primarily sensory phenomenology, and independent of any such form.<sup>2</sup> Kriegel initially tries to convince us of his claim by an appeal to a «simple observation»: «if there were no cognitive phenomenology, *life would be boring*».<sup>3</sup> To be sure, he adds that an argument may be unpacked from this simple observation, namely:

- 1) If we did not have irreducible cognitive phenomenology, the contents of our phenomenal awareness from phenomenal onset to sunset would not be disposed to elicit

differential feelings of interest in us;

but

- 2) they are so disposed; therefore,
- 3) we do have irreducible cognitive phenomenology.

Yet as he admits, the argument is less convincing than the very same observation. And *pour cause*. To illustrate this point more vividly, a libertine may find premise (1) rather controversial. She may remark that, even if she had no cognitive phenomenology, she might spend her life passing from one sexual adventure to another, simply finding each adventure distinctively attractive from a sensory point of view. No orgasm she would feel in any of these encounters would be typologically identical with any other one, she may crudely comment.

However, cognitive life is indisputably interesting in itself, so as to be worth experiencing even if one did not have a sensory phenomenology. Is there another way to argue in favor of this idea?

## The Zoe argument

Kriegel claims that there is a way to argue that cognitive phenomenology is independent of sensory phenomenology. Since the independence claim entails the claim that cognitive phenomenology is irreducible to sensory phenomenology,<sup>4</sup> to argue for the former is *eo ipso* to argue for the latter.

In putting forward his new argument, Kriegel's aim is to attempt to break the deadlock in the philosophical discussion on this topic. In fact, the position that claims that cognitive phenomenology is different from sensory phenomenology, the so-called *liberal* position,<sup>5</sup> has been backed by several arguments. Among these arguments, the phenomenal contrast argument, the so-called Moore-Strawson argument,<sup>6</sup> and the one from first-person knowability, the so-called

Goldman-Pitt argument,<sup>7</sup> are the two main varieties. Although Kriegel admittedly endorses both arguments, he claims that they suffer from a lack of elucidation of the target notions they involve, i.e., the notions of cognitive and of phenomenal. His new argument's starting point consists in precisely providing such an elucidation: «with the right characterization of the cognitive and the phenomenal [...] one can start to imagine the kind of scenario whose possibility would establish the existence of primitive cognitive phenomenology».<sup>8</sup> To be sure, Kriegel's new argument *is* a phenomenal contrast argument (PCA). Yet unlike the standard arguments of this form, it does not rely on introspection, as we will see. Notoriously, appealing to introspection is a doubtful move.

Kriegel first asks us to imagine a sensory zombie, that is, someone who is devoid not only of any form of sensory phenomenology, both perceptual (linked to exteroceptive sensations) and algedonic (linked to interoceptive and proprioceptive sensations; in order to take into account the fact that such a phenomenology includes not only pains but also pleasures, one may perhaps better label it *alg/hedonic*), but also of any form of emotional phenomenology, which is for Kriegel at the very least grounded in sensory phenomenology. In order to imagine such a zombie, Zoe as Kriegel labels it, one may first imagine three partial zombies, that is, individuals who are respectively devoid of sensory, alg/hedonic, and emotional phenomenology, and second, one may fuse together such imaginations in the imagining of Zoe, who lacks all of these phenomenologies. Yet, continues Kriegel, Zoe's life is not that bad as one might suspect. For, Kriegel stipulates, on the basis of some internal yet nonconscious processes that still happen to her in the sub-personal perceptual, alg/hedonic and emotional implementing areas of her brain, she still entertains an interesting cognitive life entirely devoted to thoughts concerning mathematical calculations. In such calculations, she *inter alia* realizes some important

mathematical proofs. Any such realization involves a contrast in her cognitive life. He infers that such a contrast is phenomenal, thereby involving phenomenal mental states, simply by mobilizing his characterization of what is phenomenal, not by appealing to introspection, as standard PCAs do.<sup>9</sup> Since by assumption such mental states are not sensory, it follows that they are endowed with a cognitive phenomenology. Thus, one may overall conclude that Zoe has a cognitive phenomenology while lacking a sensory one.

As some people have remarked, the problem with this argument is that the fact that we can conceive of this previous story is no guarantee that the story amounts to a *logical* possibility. Indeed, we do not positively imagine this story.<sup>10</sup> Granted, Kriegel is convinced of the opposite, for the story betrays no trace of a contradiction.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, his opponents may reply, even if this shows that the description of the story amounts to a positive form of imaginability and hence to a logical possibility, what reasons do we have to further endorse the claim that the story is also *metaphysically* possible? Is this a case for which being logically possible entails being metaphysically possible? To this reply, Kriegel rejoins that «it is certainly highly plausible that some types of conceivability – including conceivability by an epistemically responsible agent in normal or favorable circumstances – provide *prima facie*, *defeasible* evidence for metaphysical possibility»; Zoe's case represents one of these types.<sup>12</sup>

Yet can we content ourselves with the absence of any defeater? What if some defeater eventually pops up?<sup>13</sup> In order to rule out such a possibility, we think it is useful to look for some other argument that strengthens Kriegel's credence in what he calls «cognitive-phenomenal primitivism»,<sup>14</sup> thereby demonstrating that Zoe's case is indeed a metaphysical possibility. In fact, we claim that there is such an argument. In the next Section, we tell another story which further suggests that there is no internal connection between cognitive and sensory phenomenol-

ogy, thus demonstrating not only that the former is irreducible to the latter, but also that is independent of it.

### ■ The Vita argument

First, we focus on the most general phenomenal contrast, the one between phenomenal life on the one hand, where what Kriegel calls «the highest phenomenal determinable» aka «*phenomenality per se* (what-it-is-like-ness as such)»<sup>15</sup> is instantiated, and the absence of such a life, where no phenomenality at all occurs. Needless to say, this amounts to the contrast between being awake and being asleep (allowing for the further assumption that no dreaming occurs while sleeping; from now on, let us take this specification for granted). Passing from being awake to being asleep is precisely switching from having phenomenality *per se* to having no such thing at all.

This said, let us present a case that involves such a contrast, the case of Vita. Vita is a chronic insomniac who uses all possible techniques to fall asleep. When she goes to bed she puts a black band over her eyes, she switches on a radio that continuously repeats the same sounds; she finds the most comfortable position to lie in; she covers herself with a very soft blanket so she will stay warm, and so on and so forth. In this condition, she manages to keep her sensory phenomenology relatively stable, so as to help her to fall asleep. In this way, she manages to relax: she feels no anxiety, fear or anger. Yet when it comes to falling asleep, no way. These practices notwithstanding, she goes on *thinking*. Indeed, the reason why she does not fall asleep is precisely that she cannot stop thinking.

This reason has nothing to do with any underlying processes in her body (her brain included), for example, not falling asleep because her heart is beating too fast. Such physiological processes, if any, may *cause* her not to fall asleep, but they are not the *reasons* why the phenomenal switch from being awake to being asleep does not occur. Rather, that reason has to do with the fact that she *experienc-*

*es* such thoughts, that they are *conscious* for her. Clearly enough, the reasons for her to entertain that sort of phenomenal switch have to be phenomenal as well. Indeed, she could continue to stay awake for a variety of phenomenally relevant reasons: e.g. because she was anxious, or suffered from a terrible itch, or even because she saw a ray of light. Yet, as we have seen before, it is not her sensory phenomenology, as in all the above cases, that is responsible for her not passing into another state where she lacks phenomenology at all.

Thus, another form of phenomenology must be responsible. The *conscious* thoughts she entertains over and above sensory phenomenology play this inhibitory role; her phenomenal life continues precisely because of them.

To begin with, this argument is a form of PCA, for it involves considering a phenomenal switch from being awake to being asleep. However, it has some features of its own. For, unlike standard PCAs and like Kriegel's Zoe argument, the point of the argument is not to focus on different phenomenal states whose phenomenal difference is given introspectively. For there is no introspection as regards one's being asleep – obviously enough, being asleep is not a mental state, hence *a fortiori* it cannot be something one is introspectively conscious of. Thus, it would be better to conceptualize the phenomenal difference the story points out as a difference between the existence of phenomenal awareness on the one hand and the lack of such awareness on the other.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, it is hardly disputable that what the argument's story describes is a *metaphysical* possibility: as a matter of fact, any of us may find her/himself in Vita's state. Up to now, therefore, if we are right, we have managed to prove that there is a cognitive phenomenology that is irreducible to a sensory one.

Obviously enough, detractors of the liberal view of cognitive phenomenology will immediately protest that we have not proved the above claim. For, they would say, even if one concedes that Vita has a cognitive phenomenology that exceeds her standard senso-

ry phenomenology, that cognitive phenomenology may well be reduced to some other form of sensory phenomenology; namely, sensory imagery.<sup>17</sup> In any such thoughts, Vita entertains some kind of sensory imagery, typically but not exclusively visual imagery. While thinking, say, of her work tomorrow, she has some flashes of the building where she works; while thinking of how to get to this building, she auditorily imagines the noise of the traffic around, and so on and so forth.

Yet no such imagistic phenomenology can account for *all* the thoughts Vita entertains while lying in bed. As she is very ingenious, she has developed a technique for thinking boring, sleep-inducing, thoughts: typically, item-counting thoughts. Yet instead of counting sheep as normal people do, Vita counts items featuring an even less exciting subject; namely, geometrical figures. As you know, she is a terrible insomniac. So, her enumeration proceeds: after a while, she starts counting first a chiliagon then a circle. Yet as we all know, no sensory imagery distinguishes the thought of a chiliagon from the thought of a circle. Thus, this switching in Vita's thoughts cannot be accounted for in terms of sensory imagery.

Yeah, yeah – our detractor will say. Yet in counting geometrical figures, as in any other thought for that matter, Vita engages herself in some inner speech, which definitely has an aural counterpart. So, while counting a chiliagon, Vita silently says to herself (and auditorily imagines herself saying) “This is a chiliagon”, while counting a circle, Vita silently says to herself (and auditorily imagines herself saying) “This is a circle”, thereby letting her switch in thought be matched by a switch in (auditory) imagery that concerns the different phonology and possibly also the different syntactical parsing of such sentences.<sup>18</sup>

Yet even if this were the case, it is quite easy to figure out a continuation of the story where Vita exploits another technique: namely, obsessively repeating to herself in inner speech the very same sentence endowed with both the same phonology and the same syntax, yet meaning it now one way,

now another way. For instance, she repeats “Dionysius is Greek” sometimes meaning Dionysius the Elder, ruler of Syracuse, Sicily, in ancient times, at other times meaning Dionysius the Younger, son of the former.

It is quite possible that in her mind, not only she does not visually distinguish the two men, with whom obviously she has never had any physical contact – she sticks to the very same mental image of a distinguished ancient adult Greek – but she also does not aurally distinguish the different yet both phonetically and syntactically alike tokens of the above sentence.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the thought switching that she repeatedly entertains cannot be accounted for by any sort of sensory imagery. As Wittgenstein once masterly said in his own way:

When someone says the word “cube” to me, for example, I know what it means. But can the whole *use* of the word come before my mind when I *understand* it in this way?

Yes; but on the other hand, isn't the meaning of the word also determined by this use? And can these ways of determining meaning conflict? Can what we grasp *at a stroke* agree with a use, fit or fail to fit it? And how can what is present to us in an instant, what comes before our mind in an instant, fit a *use*?

What really comes before our mind when we *understand* a word? – Isn't it something like a picture? Can't it *be* a picture?

Well, suppose that a picture does come before your mind when you hear the word “cube”, say the drawing of a cube. In what way can this picture fit or fail to fit a use of the word “cube”? – Perhaps you say: “It's quite simple; if that picture occurs to me and I point to a triangular prism for instance, and say it is a cube, then this use of the word doesn't fit the picture.” – But doesn't it fit? I have purposely so chosen the example that it is quite easy to imagine *a method of projection* according to which the picture does fit after all.

The picture of the cube did indeed *suggest*

a certain use to us, but it was also possible for me to use it differently.<sup>20</sup>

Once we have so managed to show that cognitive phenomenology is irreducible to *any* sensory phenomenology, it is relatively simple to also show that the former is independent of the latter, thereby also showing how Kriegel's argument may be supported by our own argument.

As is well known, the point of Wittgenstein's previous remarks was that meaning something by means of an expression does not consist in any sort of mental process that at most *accompanies* meaning:

Neither the expression "to mean the explanation in such-and-such a way" nor the expression "to interpret the explanation in such-and-such a way" signifies a process which accompanies the giving and hearing of an explanation.<sup>21</sup>

Now, Vita's case shows that the very same point can be made with regard to the relationship between sensory and cognitive phenomenology, at least as far as the phenomenology of *thought* is concerned. Let us concede that any of Vita's thoughts is accompanied by some sort of sensory phenomenology or other: in actual fact, there is no thought of Vita's that is not accompanied by some phenomenal sensory state or other, ultimately a sensory imagery of some form or other (visual, auditory, etc.). One might even wonder whether sensory phenomenology necessitates cognitive phenomenology, in Chudnoff's terms: «some phenomenal states suffice for being in a cognitive intentional state»,<sup>22</sup> where this sufficiency condition is a *factual* one: *actually*, being in some sensory phenomenal state or other suffices for being in a cognitive phenomenal state. Yet clearly enough, this relationship between the two kinds of phenomenologies is no more intimate than that of an accompanying or a surrounding. Yet this is to say, there is no *intrinsic* relationship between a cognitive form of phenomenology and a sensory form of

phenomenology.

In other terms, the cognitive phenomenology of having thoughts is *independent* of any sensory phenomenology. There indeed is a possible world in which Vita still has the thoughts that prevent her from falling asleep and yet has no phenomenal sensory states at all – or in other terms, there is a possible world in which Vita is nothing but our old Zoe.<sup>23</sup>

In order to further confirm that there is no intrinsic relationship between cognitive and sensory phenomenology, consider situations in which, unlike the previous one, irreducibility of cognitive phenomenal states to sensory phenomenal states does not lead to the fact that the former states are independent of the latter states. There indeed is a difference between the phenomenology of *having* thoughts, which is what we have talked about all along, and the phenomenology of *grasping* thoughts, namely that form of phenomenology that paradigmatically takes place in experiences as of understanding, those originally pointed out by Strawson<sup>24</sup> among others. In such experiences, there definitely is a dependence of the cognitive phenomenology of understanding on the sensory phenomenology of hearing or reading. One could not understand the thought that is expressed by a sentence that by itself is "dead", i.e., meaningless, if one did not hear or read that very sentence, or even another such sentence that is ascribed the very same meaning (for instance, a synonymous sentence in a different language). For understanding presupposes interpretation of a meaningless sentence that is heard or read as such, as ambiguous sentences clearly show.

One could not understand the famous Wildean joke "To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness" if one did not first hear or read that sentence as a meaningless sentence by then interpreting it in the sense having to do with misplacing rather than in the sense having to do with suffering from deprivation.<sup>25</sup> Yet in *having* a thought, no such act of interpretation has to be presupposed. It is not

the case that one mentally hears or reads a certain sentence and then understands it by interpreting in a certain way, possibly choosing one among different theoretically legitimate interpretations.<sup>26</sup> Rather, one immediately thinks the thought in the only sense it has.

Thus, even if some sentence or other imaginatively heard or read in inner speech pops up while having that thought, this sentence only accompanies the thought in an *extrinsic* sense: one might have thought that very thought without silently repeating to herself that sentence, or any other sentence for that matter.<sup>27</sup> In a nutshell, the difference between the phenomenology of having thoughts and that of grasping thoughts explains why in the former the relationship between cognitive and sensory phenomenology is not the one holding in the latter; namely, it is an extrinsic and not an intrinsic one, thereby leading to the independence of the former from the latter.<sup>28</sup>

Let us take stock. If we have managed to show that Zoe's case really amounts to a metaphysical possibility by illustrating how the case of Vita, which undoubtedly is a metaphysical possibility, may ultimately coincide with it, we have also managed to show that there is a form of cognitive phenomenology that is both irreducible to and independent of sensory phenomenology.<sup>29</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See U. KRIEGEL, *The Varieties of Consciousness*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2015.

<sup>2</sup> To put things in Chudnoff's terms. See E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, Routledge, London 2015, pp. 15-17. To be sure, Kriegel limits himself to saying that his arguments are intended to prove the fact that cognitive phenomenology constitutes a primitive and distinctive form of phenomenology, hence that it is irreducible (in the phenomenal sense of irreducibility) to sensory phenomenology. Yet if successful, those arguments also show that there may be someone who entertains cognitive phenomenology without entertaining any sensory phenomenology.

<sup>3</sup> U. KRIEGEL, *The Varieties of Consciousness*, cit.,

p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> See E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> See T. BAYNE, M. MONTAGUE, *Cognitive Phenomenology: An Introduction*, in: T. BAYNE, M. MONTAGUE (eds.), *Cognitive Phenomenology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, pp. 1-34, here p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See U. KRIEGEL, *The Varieties of Consciousness*, cit., p. 40. One can find the argument in G.E. MOORE, *Propositions*, in: G.E. MOORE, *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, Routledge, London 1953, pp. 52-71, in particular pp. 58-59 and in G. STRAWSON, *Mental Reality*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1994, pp. 5-13.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibidem*. One can find the argument in A.I. GOLDMAN, *The Psychology of Folk Psychology*, in: «Behavioral and Brain Sciences», vol. XVI, n. 1, 1993, pp. 15-28 and in D. PITT, *The Phenomenology of Cognition, or What Is It Like to Think that P?*, in: «Philosophy and Phenomenological Research», vol. LXIX, n. 1, 2004, pp. 1-36.

<sup>8</sup> *Ivi*, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> See *ivi*, pp. 30-31. To be sure, in Chudnoff's terms, unlike *pure* PCAs, Zoe's argument is a *hypothetical* PCA, that is, an argument in which the imagined case is not actual. See E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., pp. 45-55. Yet this does not undermine its non-introspective nature.

<sup>10</sup> See A. PAUTZ, *Does Phenomenology Ground Mental Content?*, in: U. KRIEGEL (ed.), *Phenomenal Intentionality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, pp. 194-234, in particular p. 219. For the notion of a positive imaginability and its link to logical (and also metaphysical) possibility, see originally D.J. CHALMERS, *The Conscious Mind*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1996.

<sup>11</sup> See U. KRIEGEL, *The Varieties of Consciousness*, cit., p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> *Ivi*, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> Chudnoff's criticism may be taken to go along this direction. E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> U. KRIEGEL, *The Varieties of Consciousness*, cit., p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> *Ivi*, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> In this respect, one might take our PCA as a form of what Chudnoff labels a *glossed* PCA, in whose premises one also glosses on the nature of the phenomenal difference involved. See E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., pp. 55-60.

<sup>17</sup> See J. PRINZ, *The Sensory Basis of Cognitive Phenomenology I*, in: T. BAYNE, M. MONTAGUE (eds.), *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., pp. 174-196, here

pp. 181-193.

<sup>18</sup> See *ivi*; M. TYE, B. WRIGHT, *Is There a Phenomenology of Thought?*, in: T. BAYNE, M. MONTAGUE (eds.), *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., pp. 326-344.

<sup>19</sup> For similar examples, see e.g. C. SIEWERT, *The Significance of Consciousness*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1998.

<sup>20</sup> L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Blackwell, Oxford 2009, IV ed., I, § 139.

<sup>21</sup> *Ivi*, I, § 34.

<sup>22</sup> E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., p. 133.

<sup>23</sup> Accepting this claim means accepting what Chudnoff labels the Disembodied Qualia Premise: «if there are cognitive phenomenal states, then there should be parts of phenomenally different total phenomenal states  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  such that:

$T_1$  includes both sensory and cognitive states and  $T_2$  is the same as  $T_1$  with respect to cognitive phenomenal states but lacks all sensory phenomenal state» (E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., p. 118).

<sup>24</sup> See G. STRAWSON, *Mental Reality*, cit.

<sup>25</sup> It may then be the case that also in the other two cases that Chudnoff points out, namely: grasping a mathematical proof that uses a diagram and intuiting a mathematical proof by visualizing a shape, cognitive phenomenology is grounded in sensory phenomenology. For both such cases are cases in which one perceives something meaningless and then ascribes an interpretation to it. See E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenom-*

*enology*, cit., p. 107.

<sup>26</sup> Perhaps interpreting that sentence amounts to matching it with a Mentalese sentence in the brain, Fodorians say. Yet the Mentalese sentence is not a meaningless sentence that is first (imaginatively) sensed as such and then interpreted in some way or other, for it is an *originally meaningful* sentence. Thus, if it is a vehicle of thinking, it is not so in the same way as a meaningless sentence is a vehicle of understanding.

<sup>27</sup> Chudnoff acknowledges that there may be cases of thoughts endowed only with cognitive phenomenology. Yet by echoing Prinz (see J. PRINZ, *The Sensory Basis of Cognitive Phenomenology I*, cit.), he wonders whether such cases are possible (see E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., p. 108). If we are right in splitting these cases from cases of understanding in the above way, there is no problem in accepting their being genuinely possible.

<sup>28</sup> Thus, by drawing such a difference between these phenomenologies, with regards to the phenomenology of having thoughts one may rebut the argument Chudnoff labels “the missing explanation argument” that supposedly blocks the inference from irreducibility of cognitive phenomenology to sensory phenomenology to independence of the former from the latter. See E. CHUDNOFF, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, cit., pp. 117-120.

<sup>29</sup> Although this paper was mutually conceived and discussed, Elisabetta Sacchi is particularly responsible for sections 1 and 3, while Alberto Voltolini is particularly responsible for sections 2 and 4.