

# Content ascriptions, indeterminacy, and naturalism

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## Abstract

There are various views about intentionality. There are realistic views and unrealistic views. Among the realistic views, there are primitivist views, that is, such that take intentionality to be a basic property of the mind, and reductive ones, such that ground intentionality in non-intentional properties. Among the latter, reductive naturalistic views – such as informational ones and teleological ones – are conspicuous in the philosophical landscape. I endorse intentional anti-realism, according to which there are, and can be, no intentional states, and content ascriptions cannot be true. However, intentional anti-realism can accommodate a naturalistic view of content ascriptions. In this talk, I will present a view of content ascriptions that gives a pride of place to naturalistic facts. The negative aspect of this view is the idea that content ascriptions can be neither true nor false, that is, they lack truth conditions, and this is because the concepts of content and intentionality are flawed. So this view is a conceptual view. Of course, such a view is also a (metaphysical) thesis about intentionality, according to which no concrete entity can carry or express intentional content. I refer to this conceptual view (in either its linguistic-form or its metaphysical form) as "intentional anti-realism", in contrast to the weaker contingent view called "intentional irrealism", according to which no concrete entity in fact carries or expresses intentional content. (Examples of intentional irrealist views are the views of Paul Churchland (1981) and Patricia Churchland (1986) and the early view of Stephen Stich (1983).) I will not present in this talk arguments for the negative thesis of intentional anti-realism. Rather, I will assume its truth, show that it entails a positive view of content ascriptions, and will explicate it and pursue some of its implications. In particular, I will argue that the application conditions of content ascriptions are naturalistic.