

Introduction to the Special Issue *The Phenomenological Turn in Analytic Philosophy of Mind*

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1. Is there a Phenomenological Turn in Analytic Philosophy?

Talk of “turns” is widespread in analytic philosophy—the linguistic turn, the cognitive turn, the naturalistic turn, and so forth. With the title of this special issue, we would like to capture an important trend that is currently emerging in the philosophy of mind. Looking back at what analytic philosophy was in the ’80s, one can clearly see that a theoretical attitude dominated the debate over minds, and in particular over mental content and intentionality. The attitude was that intentionality and content could—and should—be *naturalised*. That is, analysed in non-semantic, non-mental and non-contentful terms. To use one of Fodor’s catchphrases, the *zeitgeist* declared that “if intentionality is real, it really must be something else” (Fodor 1987: 97). Accordingly, philosophers were called to take up the task of discovering what parts of the natural world intentionality and mental content *really* were.

Clearly, this is not a *neutral* way to approach the topics of intentionality and mental content. For one thing, it assumes that intentionality and content are natural in the sense that they are “made up” by ingredients pertaining to the natural sciences. Accordingly, intentionality and content were studied from a “third-person” point of view, with little regard to one’s introspective awareness of mental contents. In addition to this methodological assumption, mental content and intentionality were also treated as self-standing. In particular, their analysis was abstracted away from phenomenal consciousness, under the assumption that this move would not result in any great loss of information about them (cf. Dretske 1983; Fodor 1987; Millikan 1984).

Now, whilst some philosophers are still out looking to naturalise content (e.g. Neander 2017; Shea 2018), it seems safe to say that this kind of project has run into significant difficulties (cf. Schulte 2023), which justifies seeking for an alternative. What we are calling the “phenomenological turn” qualifies as such

an alternative, one that calls into question most of the implicit assumptions made by the content naturalisation project. Within this phenomenological turn, content is no longer considered natural, in the sense that it does not need to be made up by ingredients snatched from the natural sciences' cookbook, and consequently the task is no longer that of naturalising it. Accordingly, content and intentionality are studied and approached introspectively, from the "first-person" perspective. What is more, the deep ties between intentionality and phenomenal consciousness are highlighted (Bourget and Mendelovici 2019).

Opposing standard projects of naturalisation of content, however, is not the only distinctive trait of the phenomenological turn. Interestingly, if this were the case, we might end up including strongly anti-representationalist and radically embodied views (e.g. Chemero 2009), which instead fall outside the scope of this special issue. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the missing ingredient is the focus on the *phenomenological* approach: content is investigated in its own terms and for its own sake, bracketing—so to speak—its relation with the natural world as it is usually understood by science. Among other things, this nicely fits with the original, Husserlian, phenomenological research project, and provides us with the reason to refer to a *phenomenological* turn.

Needless to say, some philosophers might see themselves as taking part in this "phenomenological turn", and yet disagree with some of the claims we have just listed. Philosophical movements are rarely crisply defined, and this makes no exception. Still, the rough characterization of the phenomenological turn we have provided should at least capture some sort of family resemblance. And, we believe, a useful one.

2. Contents

Opening the special issue, Alfredo **Tomasetta** offers a guided tour through analytic phenomenology, providing a detailed description of what we have been calling the "phenomenological turn". Tomasetta's invited article does not just provide a useful and detailed introduction to the core themes of this special issue. It also investigates the broader cultural significance and place of the phenomenological turn in the contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, with particular attention to the ways in which it differs from phenomenology-inspired approaches in embodied cognitive science.

After Tomasetta's contribution, the special issue focuses on one of the most important and most easily recognizable aspects of the "phenomenological turn", namely the deep connection between intentionality and phenomenal consciousness. First, Elisabetta **Sacchi**'s invited article assesses the tenability of a phenomenal account of content, which she understands as a novel, and arguably stronger, variety of psychologism. According to Sacchi, this variety of psychologism can be resisted without compromising the phenomenal adequacy of our accounts of mental content. David **Bourget**'s and Angela **Mendelovici**'s invited contribution is animated by a similar, critical spirit. In the form of a dialogue, Bourget and Mendelovici consider various ways in which intentionality may be a form of mind-world relation, rejecting them all. In addition to that, a sub-theme of their dialogue concerns the way the relationship between consciousness and intentionality should be conceived and how this should affect our view of mental content. After that, Christopher **Stratman**'s article offers an in-depth analysis of the *inseparability thesis*, namely the view that the intentional and the phenomenal cannot be

separated, with a particular focus on temporal experience. **Negro**'s contribution takes a different, more neuroscientific approach, arguing that *Integrated Information Theory*—one of the main theories in the current landscape of the neuroscience of consciousness—entails a form of phenomenal intentionality.

Having dealt with intentionality, the special issue veers towards phenomenal consciousness. The change in topic starts with Anna **Giustina**'s invited contribution. Her article offers an acquaintance-based account of the knowledge we have of the qualitative character of our experiences. In her view, the qualitative character of our experience is constituted by the subject's acquaintance with the representational properties of the conscious state. After that, Jacopo **Pallagrosi** and Bruno **Cortesi** examine the stalemate between causal and constitutive accounts of introspective knowledge by acquaintance. In particular, they consider Giustina's (2022) argument from epistemic asymmetry in favour of a constitutive account, arguing that it is not conclusive, and they attempt to propose a way out of the stalemate. Arianna **Beghetto**'s article also deals with acquaintance and its dialectical role in refuting illusionism about phenomenal consciousness. She claims that some of our best accounts of knowledge by acquaintance do not successfully refute the illusionist's claim—and thus that introspective knowledge by acquaintance may be not as infallible as typically supposed. Daniel **Guilhermino** adopts instead a different epistemological perspective, focusing on Husserl's critique of Lotze and its relation to the so-called "Myth of the Given". In this way, Guilhermino's contribution offers an important analysis from both a theoretical and an historical point of view.

Alberto **Voltolini**'s invited article offers instead a passionate and straightforward defence of the idea that phenomenality is the *mark of the mental*; that is, having a phenomenal character is the sole necessary and sufficient condition for mentality. Alberto **Barbieri**'s contribution leaves behind any relationship with intentionality, focusing instead on state consciousness. He argues that the conceptual priority of state consciousness over creature consciousness is unjustified, and that creature consciousness should be given priority in light of the for-me-ness of our phenomenal experience.

Jérôme **Dokic**'s invited article closes the special issue, exploring the feeling of presence, reality and virtuality from a phenomenological, action-oriented perspective. In this way, it offers a useful bridgehead to allow a dialogue between the "phenomenological turn" in analytic philosophy of mind and phenomenology-inspired approaches in embodied cognitive science, bringing us back to themes touched upon in Tomasetta's initial contribution to this special issue.

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