

Micah Newman
PHIL 5317, Prof. Clark
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Phenomenal Intentionality, Inverted Spectra, and Inverted Earth

Phenomenal Intentionality: A Unique Brand of Inseparatism

“A traditional picture of the mind divided it into two separate realms: sensory states, which are essentially phenomenal, and non-sensory states, which are essentially intentional.” (Kriegel and Horgan 2008: §2.2) An alternative to this conception is that given by the phenomenal intentionality research program (PIRP), in which Terry Horgan and others¹ have explored the intentional and the phenomenal as having some intrinsic connection one with another. PIRP-ists call the aforementioned “traditional picture” “separatism.” Ned Block has called the different approaches “[t]he greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind—maybe even all of philosophy[.]” (2003) Block draws the dividing line between the two as differing “on whether there is anything in the phenomenal character of conscious experience that goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive and the functional.” (*ibid.*) Besides PIRP, other examples of what may be classed under “inseparatism” are what has been called “intentionalism,” the view that “the sensational component of a perceptual experience cannot vary independently of its intentional component” (Byrne 2001: 199); and “representationism” (*e.g.*, Lycan 1996), according to which the representations done by intentionality are indeed, as Brentano famously said, “the mark of the mental,” from which all other mental aspects, including phenomenology, are ultimately derived. Each of these forms of inseparatism, in fact, seek to take intentionality as the primitive and the explanans where other aspects of consciousness are the explananda.

On the other hand, PIRP’s distinctive approach seems to be in its emphasis on phenomenology—the paradigmatic sensory-experiential states involving qualia, or ‘what-it’s-like-ness’—as the mark of the mental. For example, in one recent paper, “Consciousness and Intentionality,” Graham, Horgan, and Tienson (2005) define

¹ *E.g.*, with John Tienson (2002), Uriah Kriegel (2008), and George Graham (2005, 2009).

separatism and inseparatism in terms of consciousness and intentionality: “*Inseparatism* says that consciousness and intentionality are interdependent.” (468) They then go on to state a characteristic inseparatist claim: “Every paradigmatic mental state is *phenomenally intentional* in content. A mental state is phenomenally intentional in content just in case the intentional content of the state (what it’s about or represents or is directed at) is determined or constituted by its conscious or phenomenal character or what-it’s-likeness alone.” (470) So, the distinctive PIRP-ist formulation of inseparatism takes phenomenology to be the mark of consciousness, and furthermore that intentional content supervenes on the associated phenomenology, which, conversely, determines the intentional content.

Also, in an initial formulation of PIRP perspectives, Horgan and Tienson (2002: 520) formulated the one of the basic inseparability theses as the following.

The Intentionality of Phenomenology: Mental states of the sort commonly cited as paradigmatically phenomenal (e.g., sensory-experiential states such as color-experiences, itches, and smells) have intentional content that is inseparable from their phenomenal character. (Horgan and Tienson 2002: 520)

The intentionality of phenomenology is something that may well have been recognized as far back as Brentano, although has not received particular attention as such until recently.² This thesis is also held by other inseparatists such as representationists. Representationism does not, however, embrace a further PIRP-ist thesis that Horgan and Tienson identify:

Phenomenal Intentionality: There is a kind of intentionality, pervasive in human mental life, that is constitutively determined by phenomenology alone. (*ibid.*, 520)

This claim goes against the grain of representationism, which holds that intentionality is constitutive of phenomenology rather than the reverse.

² There is also a PIRP-ist claim involving the phenomenology of intentionality, but I will not be concerned with that here.

Horgan and Tienson “articulate and sharpen” the notion of phenomenal intentionality as follows. “Let two creatures be *phenomenal duplicates* just in case each creature’s total experience, throughout its existence, is phenomenally exactly similar to the other’s. We can then state the Phenomenal Intentionality thesis this way:

There is a kind of intentional content, pervasive, in human mental life, such that any two possible phenomenal duplicates have exactly similar intentional states vis-à-vis such content.

We will call this type of content phenomenal intentional content. The full range of a creature’s phenomenal intentional content is determined and constituted *wholly by phenomenology.*” (*ibid.*, 524)

One of the areas in which PIRP needs further explication and defense is in how the particular inseparatist view of mental content involved in Phenomenal Intentionality (hereafter PI) is supposed to work in cases like the inverted spectrum (Shoemaker 1982), where phenomenal character is allowed to vary independently of referentially-based content. One oft-remarked response to the inverted spectrum problem is Gilbert Harman’s (1990), who insists that qualitative and intentional content cannot come apart because there is no *purely qualitative* aspect to experience, apart from its representational content. In one sense, thus, Harman may be considered a sort of inseparatist. Yet in another sense he is a separatist, because an underlying reason for his claim that there is no qualitative aspect of experience separable from its intentional and representational content, is that there is no purely qualitative aspect of experience *period*: Harman is rather a “qualiaphobe.”³ (Rey (2004) is another example of this sort of position.) At the other end of the spectrum comes Block the committed qualiaphile: “Those who think that the phenomenal character of conscious experience goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive, and the functional believe in qualia.” (2003)

In this paper, I will explore what challenges may be posed to PI by the inverted spectrum, and Block’s variant on it, “inverted Earth” (1990). These thought experiments have been deployed as a challenge to inseparatism generally, and most of the responses to it have come from intentionalists (*e.g.* Tye 1994, Marcus 2006, Watkins 2008). But the

³ I don’t recall who introduced the “qualiaphile”/“qualiaphobe” terminology.

inverted spectrum can just as well represent a challenge to PI, although as such, it has received little discussion.⁴ Harman, as mentioned, resists the inverted spectrum challenge only by eliminating qualia; but the perspective of PI, if it can successfully meet the inverted spectrum challenge, will have the unique advantage over the other brands of inseparatism (intentionalism, representationism) of letting the distinctiveness of phenomenology play a central role in inseparatist explanations of the mental, rather than being eliminated or reduced.

The way that Block (2003) paints it, anything under the respective headings of separatism and inseparatism are fundamentally opposed and irreconcilable doctrines. (Indeed, he seems to think that separatism is surely the way to go if you're a "qualiophile.") But part of what I want to explore in this paper is the idea that the particular inseparatism involved in PI can actually be considered a somewhat ecumenical approach to aspects of consciousness, and one that has the capacity to reconcile internecine conflicts between different brands of separatists—some qualiaphobes and qualiaphiles—as well as between intentionalists and qualiaphiles, on just such issues raised by the inverted spectrum. For example, Ned Block's variant on it, "inverted Earth" (1990), is a challenge from the direction opposite to the inverted spectrum: inverted Earth asks whether intentionalism can account for sameness of phenomenology with differences of represented content. What I hope to show is that PI can bridge the gap, so to speak, between the inverted spectrum and inverted Earth, showing how inversions of qualia *and* intentional content can be handled by this sort of phenomenology-centric inseparatism. But as I go it will be needful to clarify what PI is all about, not least to defend it against the inverted spectrum: it may seem *prima facie* that if phenomenology can come apart where the representational, intentional content stays the same, PI will be "right out." So I will start by showing why the idea of PI is compatible with the possibility of an inverted spectrum as well as an inverted Earth. Then, I will discuss why I think PI actually has distinct *advantages* over other forms of inseparatism, as well as over separatism, in dealing with potential inversions of qualia and content.

⁴ Loar's (2003: 245–7) is the only extant discussion of phenomenal intentionality specifically with respect to the inverted spectrum that I know of.

Phenomenal Intentionality's Compatibility with Inverted Spectra and Inverted Earth

Shoemaker's discussion of the inverted spectrum (1982) is meant to bring to light the possibility that there is something irreducibly qualitative and nonrepresentational in qualia such as color experiences. This is done by describing a case of my invert and I as differing in qualitative contents of an experience of something in the world, although the intentional object, that thing in the world, is the same between the two of us. Now, even if we agree with Shoemaker that *the* intentional object of the experiences is the thing in the world, this does not by itself directly undo PI. For, the fact that the intentional content is determined by the respective phenomenal experiences of my invert and I—mere supervenience of the former on the latter for each of our cases—is not undermined by the differing qualia in either case.⁵ In fact, the converse form of inseparatism—intentionalism/representationism—comes under more direct threat from the inverted spectrum, since it does present a failure of supervenience of the phenomenal on the intentional.

But insofar as the inverted spectrum presents a challenge to inseparatism *simpliciter*, it could undermine some of the motivations for PI. For if we grant the inversion, why think that intentional content *is* determined by phenomenology, if apparently just any phenomenology would be sufficient to have that same intentional content as long as one is situated in a certain way in the world *vis-à-vis* the intentional object? It is hard to see how any purported connection between the phenomenal and the intentional could be explanatory and illuminating if we grant all the inverted spectrum premises just as presented.

But, it is important to note that PI is to be associated with “narrow content”—that is, content that is specific to the unique point of view of the individual perceiver and cognizer, as opposed to public, “wide” or “broad” content. It seems to me quite natural to view specifically narrow content as “constitutively determined by phenomenology alone”—for, if phenomenally-based experience is unique to the perceiver (and most everyone, I think, agrees that it is) and so is narrow content unique to the cognizer, then *if*

⁵ I owe this point to Uriah Kriegel, via email.

there is some connection between phenomenology and intentionality, this would very likely seem to be a case of it.

But why think there is such a thing as phenomenal intentionality in the first place that could instantiate that kind of narrow content? *If* there is such a thing as PI, then sure, it'll be narrow in content, but can we do better than begging the question in its favor?

One way in which the narrow content of phenomenology can be articulated is in terms of the brain-in-a-vat (BIV) case, as Horgan, Tienson, and Graham have done (2005). Just as phenomenology is always narrow whether it is in your brain or an envatted phenomenological duplicate of yours, the PI in both, and in the same way, is narrow in scope of content.

Since phenomenal intentionality is entirely constituted phenomenologically, and since phenomenology is narrow, phenomenal intentionality is narrow too. Hence, there is *exact match* of phenomenal intentionality between yourself and your BIV physical duplicate. This exactly matching, narrow, intentional content involves exactly matching, phenomenally constituted, *narrow truth conditions*... On the other hand, exact match in narrow content between your own intentional states and the corresponding states in your BIV physical duplicate does not require or involve an exact match in *referents* (if any) of all the various matching, putatively referring, thought-constituents. (Horgan, *et al.* 2005: §1)

In other words, whatever is phenomenologically present to the mind (and brain) is there regardless of what goes on outside the mind. Even with the possibility of error in reference, there is still an intentionality *of* certain experiences. So the picture has it, what makes for the *possibility* for error, in whether the implicit reference to things in the world succeeds, is the (narrow) PI itself. What makes for *actual* success or error is the external world.

One could still be unmoved by BIV thought-experiments and consider it a bit question-begging to explain the sameness as involving a kind of intentionality. But there are other, more “reality-based” reasons to think of phenomenology as constituting a kind of intentionality. For example, the experiences involved in holding an apple and taking a bite of it are unified in the phenomenal experience *of* the object, not an unconnected congerie or concatenation of separate sensations *per se*. Also, experience is not of instants, but is *temporally thick*: “This is obvious in the case of hearing tunes or sentences, where

the temporal[ly extended] *pattern* is a palpable feature of the experience. [Such a] pattern is also a palpable feature of the seen moving apple, though less frequently noted as such. But it is no less true that stationary objects are *seen as* enduring and unchanging.” (Horgan and Tienson 2002: 521)

PI can naturally deal with disorders of perception such as agnosia, where objects are not recognizable as such to a subject, and of motion perception in which experience is as of a succession of “snapshots” rather than of moving objects. These would be considered basically as disorders of phenomenology in the brain, on which supervenes the abnormal intentional perception of external objects. The basic phenomenological disorder in each case determines the disordered perceiving-as, distinctive of intentionality, that is characteristic just of a *misrepresentation* of the perceived object(s). Understanding phenomenological disorders in this way as an exception-that-proves-the-rule may help demonstrate how the specifically intentional character of phenomenology in perception works in ordinary cases, as discussed in the previous paragraph: there is a *seeing as* of objects that is inseparable from the phenomenology.^{6 7} In conclusion, if PI makes sense as an independently-motivated account of narrowly-constituted phenomenology, then inverted-spectrum possibilities don’t straightforwardly undermine PI itself.

Now for the case of inverted Earth. In Block’s “Inverted Earth” thought experiment (1990), your twin is placed in Inverted Earth, where the colors of things *really are* inverted. But your twin wears inverting lenses so that things *look* the same color to him as they do to you. So the intentional (external) object differs between you and your twin while the experienced qualia remain the same in the two cases. Block’s point, like Shoemaker’s, is to defend the reality of qualia against qualiaphobes, but also to counter the move that Block calls “the fallacy of intentionalizing qualia.” The fallacy Block here attributes to the intentionalist is in maintaining that qualia supervene on intentional contents, and “that experiential contents that can be expressed in public

⁶ Compare Harman’s (1990) discussion of how the qualitative aspects of perception, per se, all seem to reduce to representational aspects of the *perceived*. From that, Harman draws a lesson as against qualia, but some of the very same considerations can be used in favor of the inseparatism in PI. More on that below.

⁷ So, are PIRP-ists, in advocating PI, committed all and only to narrow content? Not at all. Someone who believed all and only in narrow content would certainly embrace PI, but the PIRP-ist can easily make a distinction between kinds of intentionality that accounts for wide content and wide truth-conditions as well, which I will discuss in the next section.

language such as *looking red* are qualitative contents.” (1990) So the point of inverted Earth is to show a case in which qualia can remain the same even when the intentional objects differ. This is meant to defuse a response to the inverted spectrum case by intentionalists (who Block calls “functionalists”) who may suggest that “looks the same” in the intrasubjective case is sufficient to give us the “looks the same” in the intersubjective sense needed to secure common reference between people who are spectrum-inverted relative to one another. Block, like Shoemaker (1982), attributes to the intentionalists the error of equivocating between these two senses of “looks the same”—the intentional, intersubjective sense is object-oriented, whereas the qualitative, intrasubjective sense is with respect to the similarity spaces intrinsic to qualia themselves.

As might be expected, I suggest that the way the PIRP-ist should handle inverted Earth with respect to PI is by adverting to the narrow/wide intentionality distinction discussed above. Block says that “if an inverted spectrum is possible, then experiential contents *that can be expressed in public language* (for example, *looking red*), are not qualitative contents, but rather intentional contents. For suppose that spectrum inversion is rife...how could I justify the claim that red things look red to me but not to you?” (1990) This, of course, trades on a dichotomous conception of qualitative vs. intentional contents. The defender of PI, I say, should reject the exclusive choice between the two. Of course, public language is going to be based on intersubjective reference, and qualitative character only plays a role in determining the intentional content thereof insofar as it pertains to the individual judging sameness between one experience to the next similar experience. But the *word* is thereby going to have narrow, intrasubjective content to the individual that is constituted by whatever quale they happen to have associated with it, even if its wide content has it *applied to* things that are presented in the guise of an inverted quale to others. Thus, the PIRP-ist can easily and naturally account for both components. And, in drawing the narrow/wide content distinction, the PIRP-ist can make just the distinction involving “looks the same” that Block urges be made, only it can be defined as intrasubjective/narrow versus intersubjective/wide, as opposed to “qualitative” versus “intentional.” Further, I think this distinction is much more appropriate when painted in these terms, and to much better effect than is allowed by the resources of such as Block, Shoemaker, or of the pure intentionalist. Discussion of these

and other distinctive *advantages* of PI over other views on just these inversion questions will be the topic of the next section.

The Superiority of Phenomenal Intentionality in Handling Inverted Spectra and Inverted Earth

In dealing with how intentional content and phenomenology interplay, my overarching suggestion about the advantages of PI is that unlike certain other perspectives, such as the “externalist representationism” (as Loar 2003 puts it) of such as Harman and Lycan, PI has phenomenal character itself play its own natural role in the account, rather than having to leave it as a surd to be eliminated or reduced—PI lets phenomenology play a constitutive role rather than just going for externalist intuitions. One could put this by posing a choice: one could let intentionality be only rooted outside the head, motivated by purely externalistic intuitions having nothing to do with phenomenology, and require *two* senses of “color”—internal and external, one for the phenomenology and one for the colored *things*—or keep color, along with all of phenomenology, in the head and make the narrow/wide content distinction with respect to the intentionality thereof. This will be my main theme, which I will proceed to unpack.

Shoemaker’s own approach to the inverted spectrum is to try to maintain a “functionalist” view of qualia, according to which the qualitative aspects thereof just do determine the functional role of that particular experience for an organism. He distinguishes that view from what he calls the “Frege-Schlick” view, according to which judgments of qualitative similarity in experience only make sense within the intersubjective case. The Frege-Schlick view is not a solipsistic one according to which there are no qualitative experiences in other people, but simply that intersubjective comparisons don’t make sense for qualia since they are essentially intrasubjective. The Frege-Schlick view would dissolve inverted-spectra worries for the functionalist, but at the expense of what Shoemaker calls *the commonsense view*: “Most of us, I suspect, cannot help feeling that a visual experience of mine can be like a visual experience of yours in exactly the same way it can be like another visual experience of mine, even though this intersubjective similarity differs from intrasubjective similarity in not being directly experienceable or rememberable by anyone.” (1982: §4) Shoemaker tries to

reconcile the functionalist view with the commonsense view by showing how functionalism does not imply the Frege-Schlick view, but the details get troublesome. Centrally, the possibility of inverted spectra combined with functionalism about qualia means that there can potentially be different realizations between people. The details get rather complicated, but the main issue seems to be that allowing two different qualia to possibly realize the same functional role requires also allowing each of those qualia to possibly be realized in some different functional role from what it in fact does. And this potential disconnect with respect to realization has the result of disconnecting the qualia from their functional roles entirely. Shoemaker addressed these issues in a 1983 “Postscript” to his paper, and in it concluded that “the Frege-Schlick view may be right after all.”

“Functionalism” is a term also heavily used by Block in his “Inverted Earth” (1990). Unlike Shoemaker, though, Block inveighs against functionalism rather than trying to save it. While Shoemaker wants to corral qualia into playing explanatory roles in a functionalist theory, Block wants to let them run wild, free of having to represent anything. But I want to suggest that Block’s invocation of “functionalism” leads to a blurring and conflating of the narrow and wide scopes of intentionality that I have already mentioned. What Block, at least, is getting at by that term, is a broad sense of *intentionality* that can and should be resolved into its narrow and wide components. Let me explain.

Block says that “‘red’ is a univocal public language word.” (1990) Yes, and this just because we assume our spectra are not inverted among us, hence that the PI and the intersubjective, referential intentionalities do not come apart—that is, they are in one-to-one correspondence among us. But Block’s “argument is not based on the idea that spectrum inversion is merely possible...[but that] we simply do not know if spectrum inversion obtains or not.” Nevertheless, in everyday life we certainly have the working assumption of noninversion, and in any case, whether inversion occurs or not is not detectable anyway by the public sense of intentionality at use by Block, so there’s no real temptation in sight to “intentionalize qualia” in Block’s “fallacy” sense.

In fact, the existence of PI seems quite compatible with Block’s “quasi-functionalism,” once Block’s blurring and conflating sense of “functionalism” is left

aside. When Block says that “the qualitative content of experience is *not* functionally characterizable,” he certainly means that in terms of the *public* component of intentionality, and this much is certainly true. But let’s not throw out the baby with the bathwater: it still makes ample sense to talk of the narrow intentional content constituted by the qualitative content itself, which in fact helps make sense of being mistaken about coreferentiality—on which the inverted-spectrum hypothesis itself depends!

The ability to make the intentionality distinction with respect to narrowly-constituted qualia and public meaning is distinctive to the PI conception, and in fact PI can thus help us stave off the Frege-Schlick view. In comparison, it’s unsatisfactory for Shoemaker to appeal to the Frege-Schlick view, because if it’s true, then it’s only open to us to compare our experiences intersubjectively in terms of intentional (that is, in the external sense) similarity. There’d be no fact of the matter about whether our phenomenologies match or not. And then, what seems to allow us to be mistaken about whether our *own* spectrum has inverted would be able to play no role in considering the phenomenal experiences of others as comparable with our own. But why should we be led to such extremes? Surely, if human beings are genetically similar to one another, with similar sensory and neural physiologies, one should expect us to have similar phenomenologies, and therefore generally comparable phenomenologies between us. So there’s more reason than just “common sense” to accept the “common-sense view” Shoemaker brings up, and it seems to be that something has to have gone wrong if we get to a place in which a materialist view saves qualia only to make irrelevant the very physical reasons we would have in believing in determinate sameness between qualitative experiences intersubjectively.

But Block, as well as Shoemaker, also seems to move toward the “Frege-Schlick view.” Block suggests that since “red” is a public language word, it has no qualitative definition. The colors themselves would seem to be ineffable in content. Perhaps they are incommunicable as such, but such is the nature of narrow content. But even if one cannot communicate to a person born blind what it’s like to experience colors, it doesn’t follow that qualitative experiences don’t have intentional content of their own. Once we resolve Block’s use of “functionalism” into its narrow and wide intentional components, Block’s

case against “functionalism” (insofar as it is motivated first and foremost by his qualiaphilia) needn’t require an externalized sense of *color* at all.

For, what if one, on independent grounds, ends up denying color externalism? (e.g. Hardin 1988, 2003) In that case, the mere possibility of inverted spectra would seem to undermine the meanings of color words, in any sense, being public at all. And Hardin’s irrealism⁸ about color certainly wouldn’t seem to present a *prima facie* barrier to him accepting the possibility of inverted spectra. Yet I don’t think the possibility of inverted spectra would or should lead Hardin to deny outright that there are public meanings of color words. This much is just an illustration of why we need the narrow/wide distinction with respect to the intentional content of phenomenology, and why furthermore the wide component of qualitative meanings should not be given primacy over their narrow meanings.

And doesn’t it seem odd that a qualiaphile like Block would have the referents of color terms be just the colored *things*, *a la* Quine (1963)? Block’s whole “Inverted Earth” scenario is in fact committed to an externalized sense to colors *as well as* the internal, qualia-based sense—the supposition is that *things really are* inverted in color. But with the use of PI, we could simply understand Inverted Earth as a place differing from Earth in its surface reflectances. It seems to me unduly externalist to say that a person wearing inverting lenses on Inverted Earth is just *wrong* to say that the sky is blue. The inverting lenses are at one end of a continuum at which the other end is the *thing* reflecting or emitting certain wavelengths of light. At any point on that continuum, it’s true to say that the *thing* is causing a blue quale in you. So in any of those cases, it’s blue in the narrow intentional sense. And since the PI account need never externalize color-contents, contrary to Block’s “slow-switching” account of the change of reference of color terms for a person with inverting lenses on inverted Earth, one need not implausibly conclude that what one means by one’s color terms gradually shifts even if the kinds of qualitative experiences one has does not change.

Finally, it is important to note that cases like inverted Earth could just as well be taken to count against “wide functionalism” in content (Takenaga 2002). There is reason to not conflate intentional contents with intentional objects (*ibid.*, §2), and to resolve an

⁸ In personal communication, Hardin has endorsed this term.

“ambiguity in the ‘of’ of intentionality.” (*ibid.*, 202) Macbeth can have an experience of an intentional content—a dagger—in spite of there being no corresponding mind-independent intentional object. It is independently quite reasonable to think that the representational content of an experience is part and parcel of just the quale. If you put on a pair of color-inverting spectacles and look at the sky, you will have an inverted qualitative experience of yellow. But inseparable from that is that your experience is *of the sky as yellow* (see Takenaga §4). And there is not only PI’s own independent attraction, but also the apparent fact, as this very sort of case shows, that purely wide content functionalism cannot account for all intentional contents, regardless of what narrow content itself is made of. So, specifically *because of* spectrum inversions, there is reason to accept the existence of narrow intentionality, and that which is constituted by phenomenology.

Conclusion: Some General Lessons

In conclusion, invoking PI as a kind of narrow intentionality gives us a ground for drawing helpful distinctions. Whereas Block’s invoking of “functionalism” conflates and blurs the two dimensions of intentionality, PI provides a well-motivated way to distinguish them.

PI can also serve as a way to draw the narrow/wide distinction itself, as well as elucidate the relation between the two. This can be done using the template provided by Stephen White’s (1982) account of narrow content as a function from context to wide content (also developed by Jerry Fodor). On this theory, narrow content is anchored in context of acquisition. We then need an account of how it works in the narrow-to-wide direction. As Kent Bach (1998) puts it, we need to “define the operative notion of content, and specify the narrow contents informatively rather than by abstraction from wide contents.” PI gives us just that operative notion of content, based on phenomenology. The narrow contents are specified just by the phenomenal character of individual experiences, rather than from wide contents. Then, the wide content of the phenomenological terms will be a function of the individually-based similarity spaces of

phenomenal character to that of the quality space of the population as a whole.⁹ If the color spectra could be completely scrambled between people, rather than simply inverted, this sort of function from phenomenology to wide content would not seem to be possible, or at least would be unreliable without knowing *ex hypothesi* that phenomenal contents did not match intersubjectively. But the possibility of spectrum *inversion* can be handled in the context-to-content model, taking PI as the anchor for the content of individual cases: color meanings thereby come down ultimately to qualia and not to ostensive definitions. And this is as it should be, I think.

One of the most important advantages of PI I want to draw attention to is its potential to accommodate some of the various intuitions and desiderata that drive the competing responses to the inverted spectrum. For example, some of the very considerations Harman deploys against distinctively qualitative contents of experience, and against the possibility of inverted spectra, favor intentional representation but could just as well be taken by the inseparatist to favor PI, and thus instead of eliminating qualia, have them play a central role in constituting intentional content.¹⁰ Instead of having to choose between qualia and intentional representation, wouldn't it be a more expansive view, not to mention more theoretically fruitful, to see them as complementary? Likewise, PI in its role of grounding the context-to-wide-content function may help Shoemaker and others of his persuasion get a sufficiently functional account of the nature of qualitative content.

Finally, to round out this theme, Block's (2003) program of "phenomenism" is one that has phenomenal character outrunning representational content: "Phenomenists believe that phenomenal character outruns not only representational content but also the functional and the cognitive, *hence they believe in qualia.*" (*ibid.*, my emphasis) It almost sounds as if Block feels he must fight off all threats of representationism *just to defend the reality of qualia*. But if PI were in his conceptual repertoire, it doesn't seem he'd need feel that way: PI shows how, far from representational content encroaching on the domain of the qualitative, the narrow representational content of PI points to just the qualitative experience that grounds it. Block confronts internalism, the "form of

⁹ See also Horgan, *et al.* 2005: §§3.2, 3.6.

¹⁰ In a similar connection, recall Moore's observation of the "diaphanous" quality of sensations as abstracted from sensations *of*.

representationism that holds that the phenomenal character of experience is its “narrow intentional content,” intentional content that is “in the head” in Putnam’s phrase.” (*ibid.*) But he says that “all versions of this view that I can think of that have even the slightest plausibility (and that aren’t committed to qualia) are functionalist.” (*ibid.*) And then follows the by-now quite familiar “troubles with functionalism” spiel. But Block doesn’t consider PI, a view which *is* committed to qualia, and takes qualia to be just what grounds narrow intentional content. Consideration of PI would change the shape of his discussion, certainly, although Block does give other reasons for thinking phenomenal character could outrun intentional content; and if it did, it would not actually undermine PI. But suffice to say, recognition of the possibility of PI would, it seems to me, not jar at all with Block’s qualiaphilia, and furthermore, countenancing that kind of intentional content may help the discussion from his perspective be more nuanced than is allowed by having to wash one’s hands thoroughly of anything smacking of “functionalism,” as in Block’s “Inverted Earth.”

PI, as elucidated and deployed thus far, could be put to ready use in giving fresh perspective on various other debates of the mind. For example, take Jackson’s Knowledge Argument: The situation is supposed to be one in which Mary the color scientist *learns something* new upon seeing colors for the first time, and furthermore that that shows that the phenomenal facts cannot be physical facts since by hypothesis Mary knew all the physical facts about color. David Lewis, for one, thought the Knowledge Argument to be quite formidable: “If it succeeds, then materialism is sunk.” (Lewis 1999) And that motivated him to go to some lengths to show that knowledge of new facts is not acquired, period, by Mary upon seeing color. But, the big problem I have with the knowledge argument is that the “knowledge” part, *and* the phenomenology part, seem to be irrelevant: without begging the question in favor of phenomenal knowledge, the issue is just that Mary has not *had* a certain experience, never mind what the qualitative particulars of that experience are. Here is the angle, which I think is quite helpful, that PI provides on the issue. What Mary knew were the wide-intentional facts about color and vision. They were not grounded in her own first-person experiences, but in reading or hearing about it in intersubjective terms. But there is also intentional content, grounded in phenomenology, in the first-person experiences wherever they are had. The narrow

component of color concepts, as described previously with respect to inverted spectra, can only be acquired by direct acquaintance and experience. So although Mary knew the wide-content intentional facts—that is, those sufficient to secure common reference to objects in common with others also in possession of that wide knowledge—she lacked the narrow, PI concept of the colors, *just because* she lacked the first-person experience of colors. So the conception of PI allows us to see the case straightforwardly in terms of knowledge by acquaintance versus by description *about two distinctive kinds of facts*, thereby showing why the knowledge argument fails to show that PI facts are not physical facts.

I hope all this shows that PI is a neglected concept although a very theoretically useful one. The primacy of phenomenal consciousness won't seem to go away for many philosophers thinking about the mind. PI, along with other related concepts within the purview of PIRP, embraces phenomenology while also giving an account of intentionality that shows where narrow content comes from—all without falling into the dreaded morass of “functionalism.” I think that someone should tell Ned Block about it.

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