Normative and Phenomenal Theories of Intentionality
Reductive Theories of Intentionality

- Try to explain intentionality in terms of non-intentional and nonmental properties
- e.g. causal and teleological properties
- ultimately, physical properties
Nonreductive Theories of Intentionality

• Try to explain intentionality partly in terms of mental (or closely related) properties
  • consciousness
    • Horgan/Tienson, Loar, Mendelovici…
  • normativity
    • Brandom, Peacocke, Dickie, …
Phenomenal Intentionality

- Aim: ground intentional properties in phenomenal properties

- Semi-reductive: explain intentionality in terms of non-intentional phenomenal properties.

- Nonreductive: explain all/most intentionality in terms of phenomenal intentionality.

- Whether phenomenal properties can be reduced is a further separate question
Normative Intentionality

- Aim: ground intentional properties in normative properties
- Semi-reductive: explain intentionality in terms of normative properties that don’t presuppose intentionality.
- Nonreductive: explain all/most intentionality in terms of normative properties that presuppose some intentionality.
Phenomenology and Intentionality

- Phenomenology: what it is like
- Intentionality: what it’s about

- What do phenomenology and intentionality have to do with each other?
Separatism

- Separatism: The two are largely independent.
  - Dominant in the 1970s and 1980s
- Inseparatism: the two are constitutively linked
  - Common in the philosophical tradition.
  - More popular since the 1990s
Horgan and Tienson

- The intentionality of phenomenology:
  - Paradigmatic phenomenal states (sensory experiences) are intentional.

- The phenomenology of intentionality:
  - Paradigmatic intentional states (beliefs and desires) are phenomenal.
Intentionality of Phenomenology

- Sensory experiences have intentional content inseparable from their phenomenal character.
  - E.g. a red-square experience represents something (a red square?) in virtue of phenomenology
  - Siewert: experiences are assessable for accuracy in virtue of phenomenal character
  - Opponents: raw sensory experience is nonrepresentational.
Phenomenology of Intentionality

- Cognitive states have phenomenal character inseparable from their intentional content.

- E.g. a judgment that $p$ has a what-it’s-like that reflects its content (*cognitive phenomenology*)

- David Pitt: beliefs that $p$ have a proprietary phenomenal character unique to $p$.

- Opponents: judgments that $p$ have only sensory phenomenology.
Phenomenal Intentionality

- PI: There is intentionality that depends on phenomenology alone.
- Same phenomenology, same intentionality (e.g. brain in vat).
- This is phenomenal intentionality.
Narrow Content

1. Phenomenal properties are narrow (in the head)

2. There are some intentional properties that depend only on phenomenal properties.

3. These intentional properties are narrow.

Upshot: Phenomenal intentionality has narrow content!
Grounding

• Say inseparatism is right — what explains it?
  • Phenomenology is grounded in intentionality (representationalism)
  • Intentionality is grounded in phenomenology (phenomenal intentionality)
  • Both are primitive, or grounded in a common base.
Representationalism

• Representationalism: phenomenal states are (grounded in) intentional states

• E.g. phenomenal red = representing red
Reductive Representationalism

- Reductive representationalism: phenomenal states are grounded in intentional states (no phenomenal element in base)
  - E.g. phenomenal red = representing red
  - phenomenal red = poisedly representing red
  - Aim: naturalizing intentionality naturalizes consciousness (but faces explanatory gap)
  - Dretske, Harman, Lycan, Tye (1990s)
Nonreductive Representationalism

- Nonreductive representationalism: Phenomenal states are identical to (or grounded in) intentional states, phenomenally characterized.
  - E.g. phenomenal red = phenomenally representing red
  - Then phenomenology and intentionality are linked without necessarily being reduced.
- Chalmers, Crane, Horgan/Tienson, Siewert (2000s)
Phenomenal Intentionality

- Phenomenal intentionality: A kind of intentionality constitutively determined by phenomenology.
- Intentional states grounded in phenomenal states
- Representing red is (grounded in) phenomenal red
- Believing that P is (grounded in) associated phenomenology
Reductive PI

• Reductive PI: Intentional states can be reduced to phenomenal states (no intentional element in base)

• E.g. Mendelovici: non-intentional phenomenology grounds the rest.

• But: isn’t all phenomenology intentional by nature?
Nonreductive PI

- Nonreductive PI: Intentional states are identical to or grounded in phenomenal states (intentionally characterized)
- E.g. (all?) representing red is grounded in phenomenally representing red
- Compatible with nonreductive representationalism: neither P nor I is prior to the other.
PI and Grounding Intentionality

- PI is sometimes put forward as an alternative route to grounding intentionality.
- Kriegel: There’s a causal/teleological route and a PI route.
• Worry: To naturalize I this way, we need to reduce I to P (implausible?) and naturalize P (hard!).

• Less ambitious alternative: ground all mentality in a limited range of PI states, with or without naturalizing P and I.
Mendelovici on PI

• Angela Mendelovici, *The Phenomenal Basis of Intentionality*

• All original intentionality arises from (and is identical to) phenomenal consciousness.

• Other intentional states are derived.

• Some judgments have immediate content, others have content derived from relations to these.
Difficulties?

- What about unconscious states?
- What about standing beliefs?

Mendelovici: These aren’t intentional.
Normativity and Intentionality

- Intentionality: What you’re thinking about.
- Normativity: What you ought to do or think.
Dependence

• Common view: normativity depends on intentionality:
  • what you ought to think or do depends on what you think.

• More recent view: intentionality depends on normativity
  • what you think depends on what you ought to do or think
• Meaning and content are inherently normative, tied to what we ought to do, say, or think.

• E.g. meaning plus rather than quus is tied to the fact that we *ought* to add rather than quadd when presented with ‘What is 68 + 57?’.
Two Theses

- Gluer and Wikforss: We must distinguish
  - meaning-engendered normativity
    - normativity depends on intentionality
  - meaning-determining normativity
    - intentionality depends on normativity
Meaning-Determining Normativity

- One common route: ground content in rational inferential role: the inferences one ought to make
  - Brandom: no truth-conditions, just inferential role.
  - Chalmers, Peacocke?: truth-conditions depend on rational inferential role.
2D Normativity of Meaning

- S is true in scenario w iff:
  - ‘If D then S’ is a priori, where D is a canonical specification of w.

- Apriority is normative. Unclear what the direction of priority is between the two sides of the ‘iff’.
Euthyphro Dilemma

• What you should infer from a belief depends on its content.

• So, it’s content can’t depend on what you should infer.
Dickie on Fixing Reference

- Dickie in *Fixing Reference*
  - Explain *aboutness* in terms of *justification*
Principles

- *Aboutness and truth*: If a belief is about an object, its truth or falsity depends on what the object is like.

- *Justification and truth*: if you form a justified belief, you will be unlucky if it is not true and not merely lucky if it is.

- *Aboutness and justification*: Beliefs are about an object iff justification converges on that object.
Aboutness and Justification

• “The beliefs a subject expresses using a singular term are about an object iff their means of justification converges on the object, so that, given how the beliefs are justified, the subject will be unlucky if they do not match the object and not merely lucky if they do.”
Which is Prior?

- Dickie spends much of the article arguing for the *truth* of aboutness/justification.
- She doesn’t say much about the priority between the two.
Euthyphro Dilemma

• Is a belief about o because of justification converges on o, or does justification converge on o because the belief is about o?

• Dickie: neither, it’s a no-priority view.
Alternative Version of Aboutness/Justification

• If a subject has justified beliefs about an object, those beliefs are non-lucky (unlucky if they do not match the object and not merely lucky if they do).

• E.g. reliabilism about justification, which grounds justification in content,

• Dickie: I reject this, there’s more to justification than content.
Third Version

• Maybe aboutness is not grounded in justification, but in the grounds of justification:

• e.g. a perceptual link with an object, motivation, cognitive hunger?
Dickie’s Account

• “My story isolates two key features of the relation—the information-marshalizing behaviour that generates the beliefs is guided by the mind's need to represent things outside itself; the resulting beliefs reliably match the properties of the attended object—and shows how, in virtue of these two features, the relation secures justificatory convergence and, therefore, aboutness.”
Justification Maximizing

• Or: one’s beliefs have those objects that maximize the non-luckiness/justification of those beliefs (with those objects).

• Cf. Interpretivism: One’s beliefs have those contents that maximize the reliability/rationality of those beliefs (with those contents).

• Content defined in terms of justification that may or may not reduce to content.