

## Phenomenology and Perceptual Content

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In their seminal paper “The Intentionality of Phenomenology and the Phenomenology of Intentionality” (2002), Terence Horgan and John Tienson argue that there is phenomenal intentionality, i.e., “a kind of intentionality, pervasive in human mental life, that is constitutively determined by phenomenology alone” (p. 520). The phrase “constitutively determined” means that such intentionality “is not merely nomically determined; rather, intentional mental states have such intentional content *by virtue of* their phenomenology” (Ibid.).

However, their arguments are open to two lines of objection. First, in arguing for this determination claim, Horgan and Tienson are not sufficiently clear as to what kind of content it is that they take to be determined by, or to supervene on, phenomenal character. Second, Andrew Bailey and Bradley Richards object that, for their conclusion to follow, Horgan and Tienson would first have to establish the co-variation of phenomenology and intentional content, but even so, phenomenal intentionality would still emerge as less plausible than its converse, representationalism (2014, pp. 313-314).

I will address these two challenges by appeal to Husserlian ideas. A consideration of perceptual phenomenology (i.e., phenomenal character) shows that there is a kind of perceptual content that is, indeed, determined by phenomenal character. Such content is conceived in terms of fulfillment conditions, or what it takes to bring aspects of objects and scenes to different, and more complete, ways of givenness. We can establish the primacy of phenomenology, relative to such fulfillment-conditional content, by tracing it back to the basic phenomenology of visual and other sensations.

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