

The Epistemic Unity of Perception

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Abstract: Dogmatists and phenomenal conservatives think that if it perceptually seems to you that *p*, then you thereby have some prima facie justification for believing that *p*. Increasingly, writers about these views have argued that perceptual seemings are composed of two other states: a sensation followed by a seeming. In this paper we critically examine this movement. First we argue that there are no compelling reasons to think of perceptual seemings as so composed. Second we argue that even if they were so composed, this underlying disunity in metaphysical or psychological structure would fall below the threshold of epistemic significance.

Suppose you look around. You have a visual experience as of a red light ahead. It visually seems to you that there is a red light ahead. How are these related? A natural idea is that they are identical: for it to visually seem to you that there is a red light ahead is for you to have a visual experience part of whose content is that there is a red light ahead.

One might say the same about other sorts of experiences and perceptual seemings—e.g. tactile, auditory, etc. We call this conception of perceptual seemings the Identity View and give it the following general formulation:

Identity View: For it to perceptually seem to you that *p* is for you to have a sensory experience part of whose content is that *p*.¹

The identity between visual seemings and visual experiences can be expressed by replacing ‘perceptually’ with ‘visually’ and ‘sensory’ with ‘visual.’ The identities between other kinds of perceptual seemings and other kinds of sensory experiences can be expressed by making similar replacements.

The Identity View is not trivial. An increasing number of epistemologists deny it. According to them for it to visually seem to you that there is a red light ahead is for you to have a visual experience, *maybe* part of whose content is that there is a red light ahead, and for it to seem to you that there is a red light ahead and for these to be suitably related.

Again, one might say the same about other sorts of experiences and perceptual seemings—e.g. tactile, auditory, etc. We call this conception of perceptual seemings the Composition View and give it the following general formulation:

Composition View: For it to perceptually seem to you that *p* is for you to have a sensory experience, *maybe* part of whose content is that *p*, and for it to seem to you that *p* and for these to be suitably related.

As above, the distinctness of visual seemings and visual experiences can be expressed by replacing ‘perceptually’ with ‘visually’ and ‘sensory’ with ‘visual.’ And the distinctness of other kinds of perceptual seemings and other kinds of sensory experiences can be

expressed by making similar replacements. We say more about what the Composition View amounts to and who is committed to it in the first section below.

Our aim in this paper is twofold. First, we will argue that there are no compelling reasons to endorse the Composition View over the Identity View. Second, we will argue that even if the Composition View turns out to be correct, it has limited implications for epistemology. Here is a brief explanation of what we have in mind. Suppose you see that *p*. If the Composition View is true, then this visual state is metaphysically disunified: there is a visual experience and a seeming and these are distinct. Let's say that the visual state is, furthermore, epistemically disunified just in case the perceptual justification you acquire from it derives either from the visual experience or from the seeming but not from both. We will argue that even if the Composition View turns out to be correct, it does not provide any reason to think perceptual states are epistemically disunified.

1. More on the Composition View

In this section we make three clarifications about the Composition View.

First, the terminology we have used is not standard. There is no standard terminology yet, and we find ours natural enough. Any development of the Composition View will identify three things: the composite state and its two components. We are using 'perceptual seeming' for the composite state and 'sensory experience' and 'seeming' for its two components. Other writers use different terms for these. The following brief survey will serve to identify some proponents of the Composition View, some variations in the terminology they use, and some differences in how they conceive of its elements.

Jack Lyons is a proponent of the Composition View. He uses 'perceptual experience' for the composite state, and calls its two components 'seemings' and 'sensations.' He writes, 'let us use "sensations" to pick out the states with the rich, non-conceptual phenomenology distinctive of perceptual experience...Seeming happens later, in different brain areas, and involves the digitization, classification and interpretation of the information extracted in the earlier processing stages into conceptual terms...One could have sensations without their associated seemings and vice versa' (2015, 156). Chris Tucker also endorses the Composition View using the same terminology: "'perceptual experience" is best understood as picking out the composite of a sensation and an accompanying seeming' (2010, 532).

John Bengson, Enrico Grube, and Daniel Korman (2011,169) do not commit to the Composition View as we understand it, but they do draw related distinctions. They distinguish between a 'perceptual experience...which relates a subject to a propositional content' and '[a state of] sensory awareness...which relates a subject not to a propositional content, but to a property, relation, or individual.' One approach to developing a Composition View is to take their perceptual experiences as the composite states and their states of sensory awareness as one of the component states. Different versions of this approach can pursue different ideas about what you have to add to a state of sensory awareness to get a perceptual experience.

Earl Conee and Berit Brogaard also endorse versions of the Composition View. Conee argues that when the proposition that *p* seems true to *S*, *S* possesses some evidence for *p* and *S* has a certain sort of inclination to 'regard some mental event of *S*'s as presenting the truth of the content proposition' (2013, 54). Conee thinks that sensations

rather than seemings do the primary justificatory work in cases of perceptual seeming. Brogaard argues that ‘perceptual states and states of seemings are different kinds of mental states’ (2013a, 37). On her view, a composite state of perceptual seeming is built out of a ‘perceptual experience’ and an accompanying ‘interpretation’ of that experience (2013b, f7).²

Some writers use ‘perceptual seeming’ in a way that makes their commitment to the Composition View unclear. Michael Bergmann, for example, says ‘perceptual seemings are distinct from sensory experiences’ and ‘the sensory experience and the seeming that produces it are constantly conjoined’ (2013, 157-8). But Bergmann distances himself from those who ‘conflate seemings and sensory experiences into one thing they call a ‘perceptual seeming’ (2013, 159). Moreover, Andrew Cullison (2013) argues that perceptual seemings are caused by sensory experiences, but a sensory experience is not a proper part of a perceptual seeming. He thinks there is a causal relation between sensory experiences and seemings, but not a constitutive one. On one reading Bergmann and Cullison are proponents of the Composition View who use ‘perceptual seeming’ for a component state rather than the composite state. On another reading, they are adopting another view altogether. We take a relaxed view toward what it takes for there to be composition and so are happy to count them as proponents of the Composition View as we understand it.

The second clarification is about why we have qualified our formulation of the Composition View: a perceptual seeming that *p* includes a sensory experience, *maybe* part of whose content is that *p*. The reason for the qualifier ‘maybe’ is to allow for two possibilities.

Some proponents think both perceptual seemings and sensory experiences have contents but that they need not match. Brogaard, for instance, says, ‘If I am giving a talk to fifty-four people, my perceptual experience, if veridical, represents fifty-four people in the room but it doesn’t phenomenally seem to me that there are fifty-four people in the room. At best, it seems to me that there are many people or more than twenty people or fewer than one hundred people in the room’ (2013b, 276). Tucker writes: ‘I am happily committed to the claim that seemings have propositional content, and I often will talk as if sensations also have some sort of representational content’ (2010, f7) and ‘one can have a sensation and yet have a seeming with some unrelated content’ (2010, f13).

The ‘maybe’ qualifier is intended to capture another possibility as well: one might think sensations lack propositional content. For example, one might conceive of them as Bengson, Grube, and Korman conceive of what they call states of sensory awareness. Cullison also thinks that sensations lack propositional content. On his view sensations, perceptual experiences, and ‘raw feels’ all amount to the same thing and, he says, ‘Seemings should be *part* of the non-conceptualists’ strategy for arguing that we confuse perceptual experiences with other contentful mental states that are intimately connected to perceptual experiences’ (2013, 37).

The third clarification about the Composition View is that our formulation does not rule out the possibility of mere seemings. Perhaps sometimes it could just seem to you that *p*—but not visually, aurally, tactually, etc. Cullison, for instance, argues, ‘Something can seem true to someone without that person having a sensory experience’ (2013, 37). Given how we are using the term ‘perceptual seeming’ we would not call such a mere seeming a perceptual seeming. Other writers use different terms for them.

Huemer calls them ‘qualia free seemings’ (2013, 333), Tooley discusses seemings that lack ‘non-cognitive qualia’ (2013, 21), and Audi talks about ‘source-independent’ seemings (2013, 189). Audi adds:

Suppose that, when realizing someone may wonder why I believe *p*, I rationalize *p* by saying to myself, ‘It seems true to me,’ where a proposition’s seeming true to me is constituted *simply* by a seeming that *p*, embodying the relevant kind of affirmative sense toward it. If there is nothing more to say that connects the seeming to a source like perception, I would surely have failed. (193)

We are sympathetic. As proponents of the Identity View we do not think that such mere seemings are components of perceptual seemings. They are a different sort of mental state—either reducible to inclinations to believe or irreducible and *sui generis*. One of our main motivations for writing this paper is to isolate the view that perceptual seemings are justifiers from the view that mere seemings might be justifiers. More on this in section 3.

2. Against the Composition View

Arguments for the Composition View generally take the form of proposals about how best to think about perceptual seemings after abandoning the Identity View. Arguments against the Identity View do the heavy dialectical lifting. So in this section we critically review the main considerations that have been given against the Identity View. If these considerations fail, then there is no reason to adopt the Composition View.

We will formulate the considerations using our own terminology. And we will focus on the case of visual perception. So each consideration will take the form of an argument that visual seemings should be distinguished from visual experiences. We will talk about visual experiences as if they had propositional contents. So we will say things like ‘suppose you have a visual experience part of whose content is that *p*.’ We invite those proponents of the Composition View who deny that visual experiences have propositional contents to replace such formulations with their preferred alternatives. For example: ‘suppose you have a visual experience that makes you aware of qualities typifying states of affairs in which *p*’ or ‘suppose you have a visual experience that has a *p*-ish feel to it.’

We distinguish three paradigm arguments, all of which conclude that the Identity View is false: the speckled hen argument, the expert/novice argument, and the blindsight argument. Others to be found in the literature are variants of these.

Here is the speckled hen argument:

- (1) When you see a hen with 48 speckles you have a visual experience part of whose content is that there is a hen with 48 speckles.
- (2) But when you see a hen with 48 speckles it does not visually seem to you that there is a hen with 48 speckles.³

There are a few ways to respond to this argument. Both premises are questionable.

On the one hand, when you see a hen with 48 speckles you might have a visual experience part of whose content is that there is a hen with a speckle there₁, and a speckle

there₂, and a speckle there₃... and a speckle there₄₈ without having a visual experience part of whose content is that there is a hen with 48 speckles. The proposition that there is a hen with a speckle there₁, and a speckle there₂, and a speckle there₃... and a speckle there₄₈ entails the proposition that there is a hen with 48 speckles. However, in general even if p entails q one might represent that p without representing that q. So, having a visual experience part of whose content is that there is a hen with a speckle there₁, and a speckle there₂, and a speckle there₃... and a speckle there₄₈ does not imply having a visual experience part of whose content is that there is a hen with 48 speckles. The significance of this is that it is possible to explain the phenomenal difference between seeing a hen with 48 speckles and a hen with 47 or 49 speckles by appealing to the content of the visual experience, but this content need not be that there is a hen with 48 speckles as opposed to a hen with 47 or 49 speckles.

On the other hand, why not think that when you see a hen with 48 speckles it *does* visually seem to you that there is a hen with 48 speckles? One point is that you are not inclined to believe there is a hen with 48 speckles. But arguably visual seemings are distinct from inclinations to believe, and they do not necessarily imply inclinations to believe (even if, as a matter of fact, they often produce such inclinations).⁴ Another point is that if you do wind up forming the belief that there is a hen with 48 speckles, it would be unjustified, and so you must lack the relevant visual seeming. But this is doxastic justification. Maybe you do have propositional justification for such content but cannot properly base a belief on it.⁵ A final point is that perhaps visual seemings must be explicit in the sense that the content of a visual seeming is fully articulable (either in thought or through a verbal report) by its subject. Bengson argues that all seemings are like this.⁶ If this is a stipulative claim, then Bengson's usage of 'seeming' differs from ours. If this is not a stipulative claim—if the meaning of 'seeming' is anchored by pointing to examples such as visual seemings, aural seemings, tactile seemings, etc—then one might think Bengson's claim is rendered implausible by the very case under discussion. Of course whether one does think this depends on one's stance with respect to the Identity View. But that just shows we do not have an independent consideration against that view here.

In schematic form the expert/novice argument goes like this:

(3) When an expert and a novice look at an F they have visual experiences with the same content.

(4) But it visually seems to the expert that there is an F and it does not visually seem to the novice that there is an F.

Different versions of the argument fill out the schema with different examples.⁷ Here is one from Tucker:

Suppose you and I are looking at the face of some person who, unbeknownst to you, happens to be my wife. We would have a mental 'picture' of her in our minds. This 'picture' might look and feel exactly the same to us, i.e., our mental images of my wife would be *phenomenally identical*. These phenomenally identical images are (visual) sensations. Although there is no phenomenal difference with respect to our sensations, there is a phenomenal difference in the way things seem. It would seem utterly obvious to me that she is my wife. On the

other hand, it would not seem to you that she is my wife, and if anything, it would seem utterly obvious to you that you have no idea who you are looking at. Despite having phenomenally identical sensations, we have different seemings. A plausible explanation is that seemings are not identical to sensations. (2013, 7)

In this case Tucker is the expert. Premise (3) becomes: when he and we novices look at his wife's face we have visual experiences as of a face with the same visible characteristics. And premise (4) becomes: but while it visually seems to him that the seen face is his wife's, it does not visually seem to us that the seen face is his wife's.

Some philosophers believe that visual experiences have high-level contents.⁸ If they do, then that provides grounds for rejecting premise (3). The idea is that Tucker and we have visual experiences with similar low-level contents but different high-level contents. Tucker's visual experience includes as part of its content that the seen face is his wife's. Our visual experiences do not include this proposition as part of their content. And in general: experts and novices have visual experiences with contents that largely overlap—hence the manifest similarity—but expert visual experiences represent high-level contents that novice visual experiences do not.

One way to reject this line of thought is to reject the view that visual experiences have high-level contents. But if this is one's strategy, then why accept premise (4)? In general the expert will say that it seems to him or her that there is an F and the novice will not say this. But why take this to be evidence about the contents of visual seemings rather than the contents of inclinations to believe? Presumably there are some further considerations. For example, maybe there is a visual phenomenal contrast that could not be accounted for by a difference in inclinations to believe.⁹ Or maybe the case can be set up so that even though it seems to the expert that there is an F, the expert is not inclined to believe that there is an F.¹⁰ But if one takes these considerations to be cogent, then plausibly one *shouldn't* reject the view that visual experiences have high-level contents.

The proponent of the expert/novice argument faces a dilemma. Either the sorts of considerations favoring the view that visual experiences have high-level content are cogent or they are not. If they are, then premise (3) is problematic. If they are not, then premise (4) is problematic. Presumably proponents of the Composition View want to say that the considerations are cogent—but count in favor of attributing high-level contents to visual seemings *as opposed to* visual experiences.¹¹ But it is difficult to see how the relevant considerations provide independent support for portioning out contents across distinct mental states.¹²

Finally, here is the blindsight argument:¹³

(5) If a blindsighter judges there to be an F in his or her blind spot, it is because it visually seems to him or her that there is an F there.

(6) But a blindsighter does not have a visual experience part of whose content is that there is an F in his or her blind spot.

We take (6) to be uncontroversially true—a blindsighter lacks visual phenomenology in his or her blind spot. But we find (5) to be quite puzzling.

By almost all accounts visual seemings are phenomenally conscious.¹⁴ But the informational states that enable blind-sighted judgment have generally been construed as

paradigm examples of phenomenally unconscious—though perhaps, at least in imaginary cases, access conscious—mental states.^{15,16} Moreover, blindsighters typically report that they are randomly guessing what is in their blind spots rather than having visual seemings that support their responses to questions.¹⁷ We see no reason to think that it visually seems to the blindsighter that there is an F.

Suppose however that it does in *some* sense seem to the blindsighter that there is an F in his or her blind spot, and this seeming is *somehow* phenomenally conscious. Huemer, for instance, argues that a blindsighter may have a slightly elevated degree of belief that there is an F in the blind area because it '(slightly) seems that way' (2013, 333).¹⁸ This would be a mere seeming. Proponents of the Composition View might very well agree. But they would add: visual seemings just are mere seemings plus the appropriate relation to visual experience. So on their view there is the same intrinsic mental state and it is distinct from a visual experience. This addition begs the question however. We have been given no independent reason to think that visual seemings just are mere seemings plus the appropriate relation to visual experience—i.e. no independent reason for what amounts to the Composition View.

3. Epistemic Unity

Despite the forgoing some philosophers might still be attracted to the Composition View. The question we want to pursue in this section is this: supposing the Composition View were true, what significance might it have for the epistemology of perception, and in particular the epistemology of perception embraced by dogmatists and phenomenal conservatives.

According to James Pryor, 'whenever you have an experience as of p, you thereby have immediate prima facie justification for believing p.'¹⁹ According to Michael Huemer, 'if it seems to S as if P, then S thereby has at least prima facie justification for believing that P.'²⁰ These are the sorts of views about the epistemology of perception that we have in mind. But for our purposes a weaker thesis will suffice: in at least some cases, if it perceptually seems to you that p, then you thereby have prima facie justification for believing that p. Call this Weak Dogmatism.

Consider, then, the Composition View and Weak Dogmatism together:

Composition View: For it to perceptually seem to you that p is for you to have a sensory experience, *maybe* part of whose content is that p, and for it to seem to you that p and for these to be suitably related.

Weak Dogmatism: In at least some cases, if it perceptually seems to you that p, then you thereby have prima facie justification for believing that p.

If one accepts both views, then a natural question to ask is: what part of the perceptual seeming does the 'thereby' in Weak Dogmatism refer back to—the sensory experience or the seeming? Let's call whatever the 'thereby' in Weak Dogmatism refers back to a perceptual justifier. The question, then, is: what are perceptual justifiers—sensory experiences or seemings?

Epistemologists disagree about this. Some writers, e.g. Earl Conee, argue that perceptual justifiers are sensory experiences.²¹ Other writers, e.g. Chris Tucker and Andrew Cullison argue that perceptual justifiers are seemings.²² The view we will argue for is that—supposing the Composition View is true—perceptual justifiers are neither sensory experiences nor constituent seemings, but, instead, the total perceptual seemings that they compose.²³ So even if the Composition View were true, the epistemology of perception could proceed just as if it weren't. The Composition View draws a distinction that, whatever its metaphysical or psychological import, falls below the threshold of epistemic significance.

Our argument combines two familiar lines of thought. The first derives from recent discussions of the 'myth of the given.'²⁴ The second derives from Bonjour's thought experiment about Norman the clairvoyant.²⁵

Consider the following passage from Davidson's 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge':

Suppose we say that sensations themselves, verbalized or not, justify certain beliefs that go beyond what is given in sensation. So, under certain conditions, having the sensation of seeing a green light flashing may justify the belief that a green light is flashing. The problem is to see how the sensation justifies the belief. Of course if someone has the sensation of seeing a green light flashing, it is likely, under certain circumstances, that a green light is flashing. *We* can say this, since we know of his sensation, but he can't say it, since we are supposing he is justified without having to depend on believing he has the sensation. Suppose he believed he didn't have the sensation. Would the sensation still justify him in the belief in an objective flashing green light?

The relation between a sensation and a belief cannot be logical, since sensations are not beliefs or other propositional attitudes. What then is the relation? The answer is, I think, obvious: the relation is causal. Sensations cause some beliefs and in this sense are the basis or ground of those beliefs. But a causal explanation of a belief does not show how or why the belief is justified. (1986, 311)

Davidson poses two challenges to the view that there are perceptual justifiers—and so to Weak Dogmatism. The first is that the mere presence of a prospective perceptual justifier in someone's consciousness does not constitute the basis for a belief. That person would have to register its presence. Davidson assumes prospective perceptual justifiers might fall below what a person registers. The second is that prospective perceptual justifiers cannot stand in justifying relations to beliefs. Such relations only hold between mental states with propositional contents. Davidson assumes prospective perceptual justifiers lack propositional contents.

One form of the myth of the given is the idea that prospective perceptual justifiers can have the features Davidson takes them to have but be genuine perceptual justifiers nonetheless. The literature on perception since Davidson's paper has shown his conception of what prospective perceptual justifiers are to be highly optional.²⁶ There are

different ways one might depart from Davidson's conception. Here we are interested in the minimum necessary for undermining his arguments.

Suppose prospective perceptual justifiers are seemings. Whenever you are in such a state, some propositions or other seem true to you. If this is so, then Davidson's arguments fail. If things seem a certain way to you, then you are in a state that both partly constitutes what you register and that has propositional content. As pointed out above, the registration need not enable you to articulate all of that propositional content. Rather, it need only take the form of enabling you to make a judgment whose content agrees with some part or aspect of that propositional content and do so just by taking the state at face value. Say you wonder whether *p* and are in some state in which it seems to you that *p*. You do not need to form any belief about the state in order to make an informed judgment about whether *p*. You are in a position to judge that *p* simply by taking what seems true to you at face value. The state itself does the informing. Further, the content of the state clearly does stand in a logical relation to the judgment that *p*—because the state makes it seem that *p* and *p* logically implies *p*. So if prospective perceptual justifiers are seemings, then there is no reason to deny that they can stand in justifying relations to judgments or beliefs just because such relations only hold between mental states with propositional contents.

Now let us consider Bonjour's thought experiment about Norman the clairvoyant. Here is how he presents it in 'Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge':

Norman, under certain conditions that usually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant with respect to certain kinds of subject matter. He possesses no evidence or reasons of any kind for or against the general possibility of such a cognitive power, or for or against the thesis that he possesses it. One day Norman comes to believe that the President is in New York City, though he has no evidence either for or against this belief. In fact the belief is true and results from his clairvoyant power, under circumstances in which it is completely reliable.
(2006, 62)

Does Norman know that the President is in New York City? Bonjour argues that he does not know because he lacks justification for believing that the President is in New York City. Norman's belief is the result of a reliable process, but this is not enough to make it a reasonable belief for him to have. Something more is required.

What more? Suppose Norman *saw* the President in New York City. Then the belief that the President is in New York City would be a reasonable belief for him to form. It is worth exploring the gap between these two cases.

Bonjour's description of Norman leaves open exactly how one is supposed to imagine him. But the typical response is to imagine him just finding himself judging that the President is in New York City for reasons entirely beyond his ken. The clairvoyant power directly causes the judgment. This is what makes the case problematic. Beliefs that result from judgments one just finds oneself making for reasons entirely beyond one's ken are unreasonable.

On the face of it, the same goes for beliefs that result from judgments made in response to felt inclinations, felt attractions, felt impulses, and the like. In these intermediate cases there is some experience one might point to—the inclination, the

attraction, the impulse, etc. So beliefs in these cases do not result from judgments one just finds oneself making for reasons *entirely* beyond one's ken. But they are not the right sorts of experiences to rationalize the resulting belief—assuming one does not have any background information to the effect that they are reliable indicators of their content.

Seeing, however, is different. It is an experience one can point to that does rationalize the belief. The reason is that when you see something to be the case—e.g. that the President is in New York City—you have an experience that feels as if it makes you aware of the portion of the world about which you judge. Your experience does not just impress a judgment on you. Rather, it reveals, or at least seems to reveal, something in the world that makes the judgment correct. Similar things can be said about the other sensory modalities. And in general perceiving things to be a certain way—as opposed to having an inclination, attraction, impulse, etc—rationalizes belief because it experientially presents portions of the world to us.

The foregoing lines of thought count in favor of thinking that perceptual justifiers must be both seemings and experiences. They must make propositions seem true, lest we fall into the myth of the given. They must experientially flesh out those portions of the world about which they make propositions seem true, lest they carry no more epistemic weight than inclinations, attractions, impulses, etc. We conclude that if the Composition View is true, then perceptual justifiers are the total perceptual seemings that sensory experiences and seemings compose. Lyons challenges the idea that the composition of two non-justifiers might itself be a justifier.²⁷ If the composed state is nothing more than the conjunction of its two constituents, then the worry has some force. But in our view proponents of the Composition View should argue that the composed state has its own distinctive emergent presentational phenomenology.²⁸

One consequence of this view is that Weak Dogmatism does not fall prey to Audi's worry about the epistemic significance of mere seemings. Mere seemings have no epistemic significance. One might worry that this poses a problem to the epistemic significance of intellectual seemings—or intuitions. Aren't intuitions just mere seemings, i.e. seemings that are not fleshed out by sensory experiences? Not necessarily. It might be true that at least purely intellectual seemings are not fleshed out by sensory experiences. But it does not follow that they are mere seemings because they might be fleshed out by intellectual experiences.²⁹

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Notes

¹ We will write as if perception has propositional content but we think much of what we say can be

² Brogaard says, 'all seemings then are interpretations of experiences' (2013b, 277).

³ See Tucker (2010, 534-5), Brogaard (2013, 282-3), Audi (2013, f10), and Markie (2013, 256).

⁴ Cf. Bealer (1996), Brogaard (2013b), Chudnoff (2011, 2013), Evans (1982), Huemer (2001), Lyons (2005, 2015), Searle (1983), Tucker (2010, 2013).

⁵ Cf. Smithies (2012).

⁶ Bengson writes: ‘Whatever a seeming is, it is explicit in the sense that its content is available, at the moment in which the content seems true, as the content of a conscious thought fully articulable by its subject’ (2015, 24).

⁷ See Bengson (2015, 24-5), Brogaard (2013, 283-4), and Lyons (2005, 243-4).

⁸ See e.g. Siegel (2006), Bayne (2009), and the papers collected in Hawley and MacPherson (2011). For discussion and criticism see Brogaard (2013a) and Reiland (2014).

⁹ The term ‘phenomenal contrast’ derives from Siegel (2006). Earlier examples of phenomenal contrast arguments include Strawson (1994), Siewert (1998), and Horgan and Tienson (2002). For an argument of the sort gestured toward in the text see Chudnoff (2011, 2013). Here is a quick example of the kind of case we have in mind. Both expert and novice are fully aware that they are hallucinating. Each hallucinates an elm. But while the expert’s hallucination includes elm in its content, the novice’s does not. Neither is inclined to believe the content of her experience.

¹⁰ For example, consider the experience of just the expert in the case described in footnote 9.

¹¹ Lyons (2005) emphasizes this point.

¹² According to Lyons (2009, personal communication) there are additional, empirical reasons that do tip the scale in favor of portioning out contents across distinct mental states. In particular, there are functional and neuroanatomical differences between early and late visual processes. Early visual processes operate on low-level information. Late visual processes operate on high-level information. So maybe one mental state with low-level contents corresponds to early visual processes and another mental state with high-level contents corresponds to late visual processes. This transition from a distinction between early and late stages in visual processing to a distinction between mental states with low-level contents and mental states with high-level contents, however, strikes us as too quick. One mental state with both low-level contents and high-level contents might result from a process that enriches its content in different stages.

¹³ For arguments from blindsight see Tucker (2010, 530) and Brogaard (2013, 279-280). Lyons (2015) writes, ‘perceptual seemings without sensations would be like blindsight with confidence’ (159). Tooley (2013, 313) doubts that there is any work to be done by ‘seemings’ in explaining blindsight cases.

¹⁴ The only exception we know of here is Lyons (2005), who argues that perceptual seemings are just high-level outputs of perceptual modules and these outputs are sometimes unconscious.

¹⁵ See, for example, Siewert (1998) and Block (2002). In personal communication Tucker has clarified that he rejects this view of these informational states. We do not see what independent grounds there are for doing so however.

¹⁶ Brogaard (2013, 280) and Tooley (2013, 313) make similar observations.

¹⁷ The original study on blindsight is Weiskrantz, Warrington, Sanders, and Marshall (1974). See also Stoerig (1997) for discussion of the evidence on blindsight. On p. 296 of Poppel, Frost, and Held (1973) the text reads, ‘actually [the blindsight patients] believed that their performance was always completely random.’

¹⁸ As noted before, Tucker (2010) also argues a blindsighter can have seemings in his or her blind spot.

¹⁹ See Pryor (2000, 536).

²⁰ See Huemer (2001, 99).

²¹ See Conee (1988, 2013).

²² See Tucker (2010) and Cullison (2013).

²³ Brogaard (2013, 277) argues for a similar view. According to her only seemings that are appropriately related to perceptual, introspective, or memory experiences are justifiers. See also Reiland (this volume).

²⁴ See Sellars (1956) and McDowell (1994).

²⁵ See Bonjour (1986, 62).

²⁶ See Evans (1982); Searle (1983, Ch. 2); Peacocke (1992, Ch. 3); Burge (1986); McDowell (1994); Pryor (2000); Huemer (2001); Siegel (2010).

²⁷ Lyons (2009, 70).

²⁸ See Bengson (2015) and Chudnoff (2013) for different takes on the nature of presentational phenomenology.

²⁹ For a development of this sort of view of intuition see Chudnoff (2013).

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