**Dialogue and Cognitive Phenomenology[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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**Abstract.** Traditionally, phenomenal consciousness has been restricted to the realm of perceptual and otherwise sensory experiences. If there is a kind of phenomenology altogether unlike sensory phenomenology, then this was a mistake, and requires an accounting. I argue such cognitive phenomenology exists by appealing to a phenomenal contrast case that relies on meaningful and relatively meaningless dialogue. I explain why previous phenomenal contrast arguments are less likely to be effective on even neutral parties to the debate: these arguments rely on a ‘hard-to-understand’ sentence, which may elicit sensory crutches that one focuses on, thereby obscuring cognitive phenomenology. I argue for a positive characterization of the phenomenal contrast in terms of seeming to be aware of abstract relations that obtain between different contributions in a dialogue. This paves the way for arguing that what it’s like to entertain a cognitive content that p differs from that of q in their cognitive phenomenology.

**Key words**: cognitive phenomenology, phenomenal contrast, consciousness

**§1.1 Preliminaries.** The phenomenology of a conscious mental state is the phenomenon of there being something it is like, experientially, to be in that state. Examples abound: There is something it is like to see green or hear leaves rustling; something it is like to feel a tickling sensation or feel cold; something it is like to consciously imagine snow falling on a crisp moonlit night; something it is like to ‘hear’ one’s ‘inner voice’ or ‘see’ ‘inner speech’ when one thinks in words; and something it is like to feel content or at ease. Below is a list of the kinds of experiential states which the above are instances of, respectively.[[2]](#footnote-2)

(i) Perceptual experiences

(ii) Conscious bodily sensations

(iii) Imagistic experiences of a non-linguistic sort

(iv) Conscious linguistic imagery experiences

(v) Emotions

The phenomenology of the above mental states may be characterized as kinds of sensory phenomenology. We may initially characterize sensory phenomenology as such that it essentially involves seeming to be presented with images, broadly construed. The imagery is broadly construed in that it includes not just *visual* imagery but also auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile or bodily imagery.[[3]](#footnote-3) A reason to count, for example, (iii) and (iv) as sensory though they are not perceptual is that they seem to be fainter ‘echoes’ of perceptual sensory states. I remain neutral about whether some of the phenomenology of (i)-(v) may be subsumed or reduced to the phenomenology of some other of (i) – (v).[[4]](#footnote-4)

Philosophers today also agree there is, at least sometimes, phenomenology associated with thinking a conscious thought or entertaining a cognitive content, such as that snow is white. They also say there is something it is like to deploy a high-level kind concept, such as when seeing a tree *as* a tree, or to bear a type of propositional attitude, such as when consciously wondering it will rain tomorrow.[[5]](#footnote-5) One might call all of this ‘cognitive phenomenology’. Many believe that if there is any cognitive phenomenology, then it is reducible to the sensory phenomenology of (i)-(v) (e.g. Carruthers & Veillet 2011, Prinz 2011, Tye & Briggs 2011, and Koksvik 2015, among others). Others believe in cognitive phenomenology that is not reducible to that of (i) – (v), i.e. *proprietary* cognitive phenomenology (e.g. Strawson 1994, Siewert 1998, Horgan & Tienson 2002, Pitt 2004, Montague 2017, and Chudnoff 2015a, among others). Such irreducibly cognitive phenomenology is correspondingly characterized as phenomenology such that what it is like to have it does not involve seeming presentation of images, broadly construed.

Henceforth, I refer to proprietary cognitive phenomenology with the shorthand terms ‘cognitive phenomenology’ and ‘proprietary phenomenology’, unless otherwise noted.

Phenomenal contrast arguments conclude there is proprietary phenomenology by drawing attention to pairs of experiences that are sufficiently alike in their sensory phenomenal properties but that still differ phenomenally. I argue that a phenomenal contrast argument that improves upon the influential cases advanced by Pitt (2004), Horgan & Tienson (2002), and Siewert (1998), succeeds where theirs fall short (§1, §2). §3 provides a ‘glossed’ version of this argument. A glossed phenomenal contrast argument is one that includes an added gloss characterizing the nature of the phenomenal contrast, together with a premise that a contrast of this nature requires proprietary phenomenology.[[6]](#footnote-6) The original gloss I offer is that, when understanding a dialogue, the nature of the contrast is that one seems to consciously detect logical relations that make contributions to a dialogue cohere together in a meaningful way. I argue this requires proprietary cognitive phenomenology in entertaining a cognitive content.

These results are significant, first, because the target phenomenology is not confined to seemingly more abstract or less ordinary cases such as mathematical insight. The proprietary phenomenology is also distinctive. If there is *distinctive* proprietary phenomenology, then what it is like to entertain a cognitive content that p will differ from what it is like to entertain a cognitive content that q in their proprietary phenomenology (where p =/= q). My conclusion is in these ways stronger than that of the most sophisticated phenomenal contrast arguments currently in the literature.[[7]](#footnote-7) Second, proponents of phenomenal contrast arguments have not directly responded to some particular challenges raised by Koksvik (2015) and Fürst (2017) to the in-principle effectiveness of such arguments; I provide responses. Third, I give a new and simple diagnosis for why past ‘non-glossed’ phenomenal contrast arguments are ineffective on even neutral parties. If there are ‘non-glossed’ phenomenal contrast arguments that survive the regular objections (a la §2), then this is significant because glossed versions require an additional, often controversial, premise about the nature of the contrast. Fourth, a popular reductive representationalism of the kind defended by Dretske (1995), Lycan (1996), and Tye (2000) is committed to denying such proprietary phenomenology (Mendelovici & Bourget 2014, 213). If this is right, then the existence of proprietary and distinctive phenomenology may provoke naturalistically inclined philosophers to offer alternative accounts.

Chudnoff (2015) points out that finding phenomenology in some phenomenal state that is not present in some sensory state does not suffice to show cognitive phenomenology. Chudnoff’s main idea is correct: even if an experience, e1, has phenomenology not contained in a sensory experience, e2, this doesn’t show that e1 has cognitive phenomenology. For e1 might just have (iii)-type phenomenology that e2 does not. But we haven’t shown e1 has cognitive phenomenology. My strategy will be to argue that the relevant e1’s have phenomenology that isn’t *any* of (i)-(v) type phenomenology.

Martina Fürst (2017) attempts to explain why phenomenal contrast arguments have not been effective at persuading philosophers engaged in the cognitive phenomenology debate. Her main idea is that one’s *initial focus* on phenomenology, due to one’s already held view or biases on the existence of cognitive phenomenology, will trigger self-confirmation effects such as selection effects of features of experience, change-blindness effects, and anti-selection effects for uptake in belief.[[8]](#footnote-8) So even if there is cognitive phenomenology, phenomenal contrast arguments are ineffective because there are systematic psychological processes in place such that an opponent of cognitive phenomenology will miss it. For example, a focus on sensory phenomenology might obscure cognitive phenomenology (ibid., §2.1). I merely note that a neutral participant to the debate can be genuinely undecided or open about the existence of cognitive phenomenology, and hence lack the biases required for Fürst’s points to apply.

I offer a novel but simple diagnosis for why classic phenomenal contrast arguments may be ineffective even for genuinely neutral parties. Here is a preview. To elicit a phenomenal contrast these classic arguments appeal to minimal pair sentences, at least one of which require an unusual or unexpected understanding, unusual words, difficult syntactic structure, or involve a stark contrast in meaning. This prompts sensory phenomenology to help understand them. Compare how we often can’t help but use imagination to solve a difficult problem or to retrieve a memory. Similarly, using concrete, visual examples or analogies that invoke sensory experiences often helps students understand subtle philosophical ideas. Since the sensory phenomenology in the classic cases play so crucial a role in being able to understand one of the minimal-pair sentences, and hence notice a phenomenal contrast, this enables change-blindness or other selection effects to take place, obscuring cognitive phenomenology. This is not to say all readers will utilize sensory crutches, or be sufficiently distracted by them to miss the cognitive phenomenology. But a phenomenal contrast argument that removes barriers to embracing cognitive phenomenology is preferable. I design my own contrast argument to avoid these pitfalls.

**§1.3 Classic Phenomenal Contrast Arguments.** My reasons why previous non-glossed phenomenal contrast arguments are less effective will be instructive for mounting a more cogent argument for cognitive phenomenology. A first simple case is Horgan & Tienson’s (2002) ‘Time flies!’ This can be read as a cliché, or as a command regarding a kind of insect. Try both.

On the more usual, cliché reading, I suspect many readers won’t have to imagine any particular scene to understand it. The second reading, about a command to use a stopwatch on insects, involves an unusual or unexpected understanding of the phrase. Because of this, some are prone to use a sensory crutch—perhaps involving (iii)-type, imagination phenomenology—to help understand it. Or one might ‘hear’ ‘Time flies!’ in a different, commanding tone on the insect reading, a difference in (iv)-type phenomenology. For those of us who can’t help but use a sensory crutch to understand the unusual reading, these are plausible explanations of the contrast.

Another simple case is Charles Siewert’s (1998, 279): ‘Before she had a chance to pass the bar, she decided to change directions, but she was not so pleasantly surprised with where she wound up.’ One reading concerns an aborted legal career, and another a trip around town. Try both.

Many readers don’t imagine scenes in their head on the initial reading—depending on the reader, perhaps the one concerning an aborted legal career. The second reading is more likely to elicit imagined scenes (iii-type), e.g., of someone walking down a cobbled street or turning away from a brewery. Why? For those like me, I suggest that a stark contrast in meaning between the two readings elicits in us a sensory crutch, which we focus on to understand differently. This may obscure any non-sensory phenomenology. The explanation may apply to ‘Time flies!’ as well.

Pitt’s (2004, §3) contrast cases are also worth interacting with. For he gives responses to the standard opening replies from doubters of cognitive phenomenology. Pitt’s strategy is to have readers experience what it is like to read grammatically well-formed sentences that one will fail to understand on first reading, and compare this with what it is like to read it after being instructed on how to understand it. Here are the examples Pitt discusses.

1) The boy the man the girl saw chased fled.

2) The boat sailed down the river sank.

3) Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo.[[9]](#footnote-9)

For most, the experiences of reading (1)-(3) change after one learns they mean the same as the following corresponding sentences.

1\*) The boy, who was chased by the man that the girl saw, fled.

2\*) The boat that was sailed [by someone] down the river sank.

3\*) Buffalo that are outwitted by buffalo outwit buffalo that are outwitted by buffalo.

For example, reading (1) the first time compared with a subsequent time after learning that (1) means the same as (1\*) will be phenomenally different. That difference, Pitt claims, is accounted for by *consciously thinking* that (1) the subsequent time. This does not occur on the initial reading(s) because of the strangeness of (1)’s syntactic structure, which leads to a failure to *consciously apprehend the meaning of* (1). Pitt would say that while the conscious linguistic imagery (iv-type phenomenology) is the same on both readings—one’s inner voice sounds basically the same when reading the same sentence each time—it still feels relevantly different reading (1) after learning it means (1\*). This phenomenal contrast is attributed to cognitive phenomenology.

The use of multiply embedded sentences fail for those of us who find them *too* hard to understand. For try as I might, I confess I just cannot understand

(1) The boy the man the girl saw chased fled.

Instead, what I *am* able to understand is

(1\*) The boy, who was chased by the man that the girl saw, fled.

After learning that (1) means the same as (1\*) one might, while reading (1) a subsequent time, imagine the scene expressed in these propositions. Or one isn’t able to grasp the meaning of (1) without hearing one’s ‘inner voice’ uttering something like (1\*) instead of (1). This is due to the strangeness of (1)’s syntactic structure.

Some philosophers might argue that the difference between initially reading (1)-(3) and after learning they mean (1\*)-(3\*), respectively, boils down to a difference in how one parses out the sentences.[[10]](#footnote-10) For example, they might say that upon learning that (1) means (1\*), one simply pays attention to parts of the sentence in a different order compared to the first reading (e.g. paying attention in (1) first to *the man* *the girl saw*, then *chased*, then *the boy*, then *fled*, in that order). This would be a difference in order of (iv)-type phenomenology. Perhaps there is also the presence of a general feeling of elation upon reading (1) with understanding, i.e. a difference in (v)-type phenomenology. Together these differences might seem to wholly account for the phenomenal difference between the initial and subsequent readings.

Pitt replies to the parsing objection by presenting a sentence with a more syntactically transparent structure but with obscure words:

(4) The rhodomontade of ululating funambulists is never idoneous. (Pitt 2004, 28-29)

This time, one does not understand the sentence initially not because of syntactically opaque sentence structure, but because of unfamiliarity with the words employed. When one learns that ‘rhodomontade’ means *rant*, that ‘ululating’ means *howling*, that funambulists are *tightrope walkers*, and that ‘idoneous’ means *appropriate*, one will understand (4). And the phenomenal contrast between reading (4) before and after acquiring the new vocabulary cannot be attributed to parsing, since one reads (4) in the same order as before.

This strategy fails for those of us who, upon recently learning unfamiliar words, are prone to use sensory phenomenology as a crutch to interpret sentences containing those words. That is, one might just substitute in one’s mind the unfamiliar words with the more familiar: instead of reading (4) and understanding it, one really reads and understands.

(4\*) The rant of howling tightrope walkers is never appropriate.

Reading (4) the second time will be different because one ‘hears’ their ‘inner voice’ utter (4\*) instead of (4), a difference in (iv)-type phenomenology. Or one might imagine the scene of howling tightrope walkers (iii-type), perhaps accompanied by a feeling that it is inappropriate (v-type, where this may boil down to having a feeling of unease regarding the pictured scene). The phenomenal contrast might plausibly be attributed to some combination of (iii), (iv), and (v)-type sensory phenomenology, due to unusualness either of the words contained in (4) or the scene it describes.

Instead of trying to read (4) again immediately after learning the new vocabulary, one might suggest rehearsing the new words and their meanings regularly until their meanings come just as easily as the meaning of rant, howl, etc., and *then* read (4) again.

This fails. By the time the rehearsal process is complete, one’s memory of what it was like to read (4) initially will likely have faded enough that drawing conclusions about any purported phenomenal contrasts will be unreliable. Compare how audiophiles often admit they cannot reliably compare the sound signatures of different high-end earphones without listening to them one soon after the other. Surely our memory after the rehearsal process of what it was like to hear our ‘*inner* voice’ when reading (4) initially would be even worse, rendering comparisons, and thus attributions of cognitive phenomenology, unreliable.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The problem lay in the difficulty of understanding sentences with syntactically opaque sentence structures. These are more likely to induce sensory phenomenology characteristic of visual and auditory imaginings. Sentences with a transparent syntactic structure but obscure words likewise cause trouble. For these either prompt immediate sensory crutches, or else the time that elapses during a rehearsal process renders introspective comparisons from memory unreliable. Because the sensory crutches are so key to being able to read such sentences with understanding, this may enable systematic psychological processes to obscure cognitive phenomenology.

**§2.1 The Argument from Meaningful Dialogue.** To isolate cognitive phenomenology we must avoid the snares of the classic arguments. The idea is not that we should find text which, to understand, requires nosensory phenomenology whatsoever. For to understand any text we must first be presented with it, and to be presented with it we must see, hear or feel it (barring telepathic communication of it!).

I think *dialogue* fits the bill. There is a salient phenomenal contrast between reading meaningful and relatively meaningless dialogue. The constructed e-mail chain below includes no sentences with unusual or obscure words. The syntactic structure of all the sentences involved is simple and transparent. The topic is mundane and not particularly exciting. Attend to what it is like to read each contribution to the conversation *as you read it*. Please begin:

**Marilyn:** Let me know when done.

**Peter**: Copy, on it.

**Marilyn**: I can do the hit. Pitch them on me, but not going to put Jim on

it.

**Peter:** Must be. Per Schruti’s secretary, I turned him down flat (and politely) and inquired into opportunities next week.

**Marilyn**: Wait, this is a terrible topic. Who is Don? Is he with Clinton?

**Peter**: Not sure if we’re talking about Clinton’s latest accusations. If not will

just say we can’t join. Let me know!

**(A) Don:** Would either the Tuesday or Wednesday times work?

TUESDAY – 7a 8a

WEDNESDAY – 7a, 8a

**(B) Peter:** Sadly, it cannot as he is on a plane. Can I offer you someone else from our

team?

**(C) Don:** Can this happen tomorrow morning actually? It would be with Schruti Anand

for about 15 minutes.

**(D) Peter:** Checking! Thanks, Don! How long would the segment be? Would you be

interviewing?

**(E) Don:** My morning show has been covering the Bush fundraising issue. They’d like

to speak with Jim Nicholson. Tomorrow wouldn’t work but if he could do it in the next

few days that would be great.

Perhaps one’s phenomenology will be dominated by a sense of puzzlement (v-type) and linguistic imagery (iv-type). One will most likely not comprehend the full meaning of each participant’s contributions to the conversation *as one is reading each contribution*, at least not until the end of the conversation.

Please read the same script except this time beginning at the bottom, where Don says “My morning show…,” and work your way upward, ending where Marilyn says “Let me know when done”. Attend to what it is like to read the contributions in this conversation as you read them.

One notices a salient phenomenal contrast between reading each individual’s contributions to the conversation bottom-up versus top-down. One may even take some notes on the noticeable differences. The next section argues by process of elimination that this phenomenal contrast is neither plausibly nor wholly accounted for by a difference in sensory phenomenology.

**§2.2 Reducible to a difference in order of (iv)-type, linguistic imagery?** An obvious first objection is that the difference in phenomenology between the top-down and bottom-up readings is just due to the contributions being read in a different order, i.e., a difference in order of conscious linguistic imagery. One’s ‘inner voice’ thus ‘sounds’ different because of this: e.g. “My morning show…” is ‘heard’ at the very beginning on the bottom-up reading, but near the end on the top-down reading, a difference in (iv)-type phenomenology. To be concise I will only speak in terms of auditory linguistic imagery. My points apply equally well to visual linguistic imagery.

It is true that, between the top-down and bottom-up readings, most of the contributions are read in a different order. But every sentence *within a contribution*, and all the words the sentences contain, are still read in the same order. For example, one of Peter’s contributions always reads in one’s inner voice as ‘Sadly’, then ‘it’, then ‘cannot’, and so on in this order regardless of whether it is embedded in the top-down or bottom-up reading. And my claim is that what it is like as one reads the words of an individual contribution—which is the same on either reading—will be *different*.

One may instead point to the fact that the overall linguistic (iv-type) phenomenology is different because the contributions have a different order *relative to the whole conversation*. But in this second sense of ‘order’ we should notice that one of Peter’s contributions is presented in the same order on either reading: it is always the sixth contribution made to the conversation. And yet what it is like to read this contribution on the top-down vs. bottom-up readings is different. So on either sense of ‘order’—whether order of words read within each contribution, or order of contribution relative to the whole conversation—the (iv)-type phenomenology is pretty much the same, and so cannot account for the difference in phenomenology (at least for this sixth contribution).

The objector might press that this sixth contribution, even though it is the same in the first and second senses of ‘order’, is still ‘heard’ in a different order in a third sense: “Not sure if we’re talking about Clinton’s latest accusations…” is heard in one’s inner voice just after “Is he with Clinton?” on the top-down reading, but just after “WEDNESDAY – 7a, 8a” on the bottom-up reading. But while it’s correct that there is a difference in order of conscious linguistic imagery in this third sense of ‘order,’ I think it’s clear enough that the phenomenal contrast in reading Peter’s contribution here does not boil down to this difference. Rather, the phenomenal contrast between reading “Not sure if we’re talking about Clinton’s latest accusations…” on the top-down and bottom-up readings is much more plausibly the phenomenal contrast made by more fully consciously grasping the meaning of this contribution on the bottom-up reading (or more of the meaning, or a different meaning).

To see this, let me present a contrast to the above case. Attend to your ‘inner voice’ (iv-  
  
type) phenomenology present in top-down and bottom-up readings of the following sequence:   
 G  
 C

A

D

B

F

E

Noticeably, any phenomenological differences between the top-down and bottom-up readings of this sequence may plausibly be accounted for by an appeal to a difference in the order (at least in the third sense of ‘order’, above) of auditory conscious linguistic imagery (iv-type). For instance, one will ‘hear’ “D” just after “A” on the top-down reading but just after “B” on the bottom-up reading. This is unlikethe dialogue case, where the difference in phenomenology between top-down and bottom-up readings is not just a difference in order of conscious linguistic imagery. Why? The best explanation is that our grasp of the meaning of each item in the sequence changes in the dialogue example, depending on the order of the reading, but not in the alphabet example. For example, what it is like to grasp the meaning of “A” is the same no matter whether we ‘hear’ it as the third item in the sequence or the fifth. But our grasp of the meaning of (e.g.) “Can this happen tonight? It would be Schruti Anand for about 15 minutes” in the dialogue case doesnoticeably change depending on whether we read it top-down or bottom-up. This suggests that the phenomenal contrast is a contrast that consists in more fully consciously grasping the meaning of the item in the sequence, rather than just a difference in the order of conscious linguistic imagery. Even if it is claimed that the grasp itself is unconscious but causes the additional phenomenology, this new phenomenology is not reducible to (iv)-type phenomenology. I will consider more sophisticated objections regarding (iv)-type imagery later in the paper.

**§2.3 Reducible to a difference in (iii)-type, imagistic experience?** A second objection is that while what it is like to read a particular contribution to the conversation changes depending on whether it is read top-down or bottom-up, this may be accounted for by an appeal to imagistic experiences of a non-linguistic sort (having iii-type phenomenology). The idea here would be that one imagines different scenes in one’s mind depending on whether one reads the conversation top-down or bottom-up.

I suspect many readers will find it is possible to read the conversation without the use of conscious imaginings, as I did, because of the quite ordinary language used. As we saw earlier, it is difficulty or unusualness of one of the readings, or stark contrast in the meanings between the two readings, that prompts sensory crutches. If my own experience is generalizable, and because I stipulated the dialogue is an email chain, I found it natural and even practical to read it as if the participants were unembodied, focusing on their speech’s dry content instead. Unlike the earlier examples of ‘Time flies!’ or of passing the bar (exam/brewery), understanding the dialogue doesn’t require an unusual, unexpected, or stark contrast in interpretation of the sentences. Rather, one already had some sense of the meaning of each contribution on the initial reading, and just grasped more of the meaning on the second reading.[[12]](#footnote-12) The dialogue’s syntactic structure is transparent, the words used are quite ordinary, and the dialogue itself isn’t difficult to understand when read in the correct, bottom-up order. All the conditions which seem to induce us to employ and focus on sensory phenomenology to aid understanding in the classic cases are not present in the ordinary dialogue case. These conditions, which I’ll denote as ‘Hard to understand,’ are supposed to give a reason why imagery is used. In contrast, there’s no reason to think additional imagery is likely to be used when it’s not ‘hard to understand’:

1. Hard to understand 🡪 imagery, & Not hard to understand 🡪 not imagery.   
 2. Not hard to understand.  
 3. Therefore, not imagery.

Even if one experienced a difference in (iii)-type phenomenology, they likely were similar enough on either reading and so couldn’t account for the full phenomenal contrast. Perhaps the most salient physical item talked about in the conversation was the airplane. But imagining objects like these, if one did so at all, does not seem to differ much between the top-down and bottom-up readings, since we understand what an airplane is each time. At best, imagining the airplane on each reading occurred at different points between reading top-down and bottom-up. But there is a more salient phenomenal contrast that needs to be accounted for than mere difference in order of such imagery. Perhaps on the bottom-up reading one pictures Peter and Don talking to each other, and then further up the dialogue pictures Marilyn and Peter talking alone; but there is more of a phenomenal contrast than imagining who was talking to whom. And because I stipulated the conversation was conducted over e-mail, I suspect many readers won’t require imagining speaker’s faces at all. At least, one likely did not imagine their faces in as much detail as to differentiate who was talking to whom.

Perhaps the most decisive reply to an appeal to (iii)-type phenomenology is the existence of people who have aphantasia, who are unable to have the kind of mental images involved in conscious visual imagination. I predict that readers who have aphantasia will still notice a salient phenomenal contrast between reading the dialogue top-down and then bottom-up with understanding. A fuller conscious grasp of the meaningof each contribution in relation to the other contributions is a better explanation for this phenomenal contrast. Imagistic experiences of a nonlinguistic sort are not apt for the task. At least, it is a difference in phenomenology not reducible to (iii)-type phenomenology.

**§2.4 Reducible to a lack of (v)-type phenomenology in the bottom-up reading?** Suppose bewilderment is a positive state of cognitive disequilibrium or psychosemantic state. What of the idea that there is just a *lack* of, or less, bewilderment when reading the conversation bottom-up, as opposed to top-down? Given our experiences of reading the conversation bottom-up, this account doesn’t give the complete picture. For we seem to experience the *presence* of something new and different as we read the contributions to the conversation bottom-up.

**§2.5 Reducible to new (v)-type phenomenology that is present in the bottom-up reading?** One might think the phenomenal contrast chalks up to the presence of a generalemotive feeling of *familiarity* or *ease* during the bottom-up reading as one understands the conversation better, which is absent on the top-down reading. Perhaps instances of this feeling might be correctly categorized as (v)-type phenomenology. It may be similar to the general feeling of familiarity one might experience as one returns home after a day at the office, or to the feeling of ease when one finds a task to be effortless.

A general feeling of familiarity or ease seems again to miss the mark. To see this more clearly consider another contrast case.

G

F

E

D

C

B

A

There is a phenomenal contrast between reading the letters in this sequence top-down vs. bottom-up. Part of this can be accounted for by a difference in (order of) conscious linguistic imagery. And the rest can be accounted for by the general feeling of familiarity or ease appealed to by the objector, the presence of which in this case is explainable by one’s history of reciting the alphabet in a particular order. This story provides an insufficient explanation for the dialogue case. Instead of just having a general feeling of familiarity or ease of understanding, we seem to be consciously acquainted with something new and *unfamiliar,* which was absent in the top-down reading.After all, we don’t have a history of reciting the *dialogue* bottom-up. The salient difference between this ordered alphabet example and the e-mail example is that one grasps the *meaning* of a given contribution more fully on the bottom-up reading of the e-mail chain, while there is no difference in the meaning grasped in the alphabet list. For there is no additional or difference of meaning to grasp! If we deny that grasping is conscious, we haven’t explained the phenomenal contrast. If we say an unconscious grasping might cause but not constitute the new and different phenomenology, then still, it is not reducible to (v)-type (and iv-type), emotive phenomenology.

**§2.6 Reducible to (iii), (iv), and (v)-type phenomenology combined?** Even if it’s right that the phenomenal contrast is not reducible solely to (iii)-type phenomenology, or solely to (iv)-type, or solely to (v)-type, one might argue it is reducible to all three together. Hence it’d still be reducible to sensory phenomenology. However, I (and hopefully the reader) experienced the phenomenology of consciously being acquainted with something new and different *without* experiencing all three types of phenomenology (for me, without iii-type). So it is not reducible to all three of (iii), (iv), and (v)-type phenomenology together, any more than it was reducible to them individually. I also argued above that it is not reducible to (iv) and (v)-type together.

**§2.7 Reducible to a special instance of (iv)-type phenomenology?** One might argue that the relevant difference between the top-down and bottom-up readings relates to linguistic imagery in the following way. The first step would be to agree that there is increased understanding of the dialogue on the bottom-up reading. The second is to say this increased understanding involves the ability to elucidate what one has read using additional words. And the difference in phenomenology is that in the bottom-up reading one has linguistic imagery of at least some of these additional words. For instance, on the bottom-up reading one understands that Clinton’s latest accusations relate to the Bush fundraising issue. So one has linguistic imagery of ‘the Bush fundraising issue’ as one is reading, or shortly after reading*,* ‘Clinton’s latest accusations.’ This doesn’t occur on the initial, top-down reading.

My initial response is that the linguistic imagery appealed to in this objection differs from the phenomenal contrast in terms of its modal properties. The phenomenal contrast I have tried to show between the top-down and bottom-up readings *must* occur in order to feel the difference made by understanding more of the meaning on the bottom-up reading. In contrast, the suggested simultaneous conscious linguistic imagery (e.g. ‘Clinton’s latest accusations’ and ‘Bush fundraising issues’) *does not always occur or have to occur* while reading bottom-up with understanding. This, again, is due to the selected dialogue’s being composed of contributions with syntactically transparent sentences and familiar words, as well as the ease of understanding that fundraising issues relate to accusations. There is also no stark contrast in meaning between a mention of unspecified accusations (on top-down reading, sixth contribution) and a mention of accusations specifically about fundraising issues (on bottom-up reading, sixth contribution). This is unlike the stark contrast between the two meanings, or the rarity or unexpectedness of one of the meanings, of ‘Time flies!’ The factors that prompt a use of sensory phenomenology to understand one of the readings in the classic phenomenal contrast arguments are not present here.

**§2.8 Introspection and Memory.** Koksvik (2015; 327, 331-2) would argue that our strategy of systematically ruling out the various kinds of sensory phenomenology as what constitutes the phenomenal contrast falls prey to our poor introspective abilities and memory of our mental goings-on.

Poor Identification and Memory:A large proportion of the episodes that contribute to

the richness of our mental lives are of short duration, and are not paid much notice. For

this reason, and because our introspective abilities are just not that acute, our mental

goings-on are often poorly identified. A mental goings-on which is not correctly

identified at the time of occurrence will not be correctly remembered later, and of those

that are correctly identified, many fail to be committed to memory. Our mental goings-on

are usually poorly remembered. (Koksvik 2015, 327)

It might seem Koksvik’s point applies even more so to my dialogue example than in classic examples like ‘Time flies!’ For there are more experiences and more time involved in reading the dialogue, so more possible contributors to phenomenal differences between the two readings of the dialogue. Hence there are more opportunities for memory to go awry or introspective abilities to fail.

Poor Identication and Memory either doesn’t apply to my argument or is false. It says that mental goings-on are *often* or *usually* poorly identified or remembered. This is compatible with our being able to remember and identify particular mental goings-on very well when instructed to pay careful attention. It is true that one’s memories may not be so good as to remember the sound signature of earphone 1, heard a day ago, to compare it to earphone 2 that one is listening to now, even with careful attention. But we are able to compare fairly accurately the sound signatures of earphones 1 and 2 if we listen to them back-to-back with careful attention. Likewise, we read the dialogue top-down and then bottom-up back-to-back. Moreover, sensory phenomenology is especially salient and easy to remember when paying attention. It’s plausible, for instance, that one can remember whether (iii)-type phenomenology of speakers’ faces was present when asked to reflect on one’s reading of the dialogue immediately after reading it. And surely, we can tell that some of the relevant phenomenal contrast was due to a difference in order of auditory linguistic imagery, rather than due to the presence of an itch during the second reading. That is, we can notice and remember whether the difference was in a particular kind of sensory phenomenology, contra Koksvik (2015, 325).

It is true that our mental lives are rich, but a lot of mental goings-on simply aren’t relevant to the phenomenal contrast, and we can tell. The key claims of Poor Identification and Memory seem plausible only if one weren’t paying careful attention. Not being able to pay careful attention is the bane of the classic phenomenal contrast cases. It is the difficulty of understanding those minimal pair sentences that may cause one to employ and focus on sensory phenomenology to make them easier to understand.

**§3.1 Seeming phenomenal awareness of abstract logical relations.** On the bottom-up reading, we understand the fuller meaning of each contribution to the dialogue (rather than a stark contrast in meaning). What might understanding more of the meaning of the dialogue consist in? Because the difference in understanding occurs due to reading the contributions backward and then in the correct order, it is natural to suggest we seem to consciously grasp logical or semantic connections between the contributions that one was unable to grasp when reading the conversation top-down. Suppose the grasp of logical relations were unconscious, or does not cause any additional phenomenology as of awareness or presentation of such relations. Then, given the arguments of the previous section, we are still without a satisfying explanation of the salient phenomenal contrast.[[13]](#footnote-13)

By logical or semantic connections, I do not mean necessary connections. For example, ‘Clinton’s latest accusations’ could be logically connected in the sense I’m interested in to something other than ‘Bush fundraising issues’ in another conversational context. Instead, I just mean the kind of logical relations that make different contributions in a conversation ‘fit’ with each other in virtue of their meaning and relevancy to other contributions.[[14]](#footnote-14) For example, ‘Can this [interview] happen tonight? It would be Schruti Anand [the interviewer] for about 15 minutes’ is relevantly logically related in the above dialogue to ‘Sadly, it cannot as he [the interviewee] is on an airplane’. But the question about whether the interview could be scheduled is not logically related to ‘The Earth is 5 billion years old’, in part because the assertion about the earth’s age is not in the dialogue, and because even if it were it would not logically relate, in the sense I’m interested in, to anything else said in the dialogue.

The seeming conscious awareness or presentation of this kind of connection doesn’t seem to be captured simply by having the contributions be located near each other. For the text of the contributions remain in the same location on the page on both the top-down and bottom-up readings. Neither is the awareness of this kind of connection captured by having two visual linguistic images simultaneously or ‘side by side’: e.g., linguistic imagery of ‘the Bush fundraising issue’ and ‘Clinton’s latest accusations’ side by side. For, analogously, I may be consciously aware of a coke can and my phone sitting side by side, but I am not thereby aware of any kind of *logical* connection between them. That is, one is not aware of these relations simply by being aware of spatial relations between the imagery, awareness of which seems not to require anything more than sensory phenomenology. Neither are we aware of these logical or semantic relations by simply being aware of temporal relations, which seem only to require sequential sensory phenomenology: Simply having auditory or visual linguistic imagery of ‘Clinton’s latest accusations’ and ‘Bush’s fundraising issue’ side-by-side temporally doesn’t capture what it’s like for us to seem aware of the relevant relation. In the moment of understanding we seem to be aware of *how* such imagery, or the propositions or concepts underlying them, are related in terms of their meaning, and this goes beyond mere awareness of temporal or spatial relations.

Another reason to believe these logical relations are abstract, besides not being spatio-temporal, is that strictly speaking they are the kind of relation that hold between abstract items, such as propositions or concepts (perhaps understood as Fregean senses). So, it is *abstract* logical or semantic relations that we seem aware of. Perhaps this implies we also seem presented with the abstract propositions or concepts that underlie the linguistic images (or that we’re aware of their abstract properties of meaning such-and-such), in addition to the imagery themselves. After all, we may have had different linguistic images while reading —e.g., <Bush’s fundraising issue>, <Bush’s fundraising problem>, <George W’s illicit money raising>—and yet seem aware of the same one thing that is behind all three—some abstract concept or sense.

Can sensory phenomenology make one seem aware of abstract properties or relations (or can a purely sensory state represent this kind of high-level content)? One might think so. For example, imagining a red stop sign might make us seem aware of the abstract property REDNESS just in virtue of having this (iii)-type imagery. Hence, cognitive phenomenology isn’t necessary for seeming awareness of an abstract property or relation.

That sensory phenomenology can make us seem aware of at least some kinds of abstract properties suggests an objection to the dialogue argument. Even if my earlier modal claim were true—as we are reading a contribution with fuller understanding, we don’t require additional imagery of the previous contributions that the current contribution logically relates to—we might still think we have linguistic imagery of the *current* contribution. One reads in one’s ‘inner voice’ the current contribution. And the suggestion is that, just in virtue of having this linguistic imagery, one seems aware of the abstract logical relation that obtains between the current contribution and a previous contribution. We might say the bottom-up instance of this imagery ‘sensorily points’ to a previously read contribution when we understand how they logically relate, whereas the top-down instance does not. Compare Anders Nes’s (2012) example of feeling anxiety that is about nothing in particular, and a feeling of anxiety that is ‘directed at’ airplanes and crashes.[[15]](#footnote-15) There would be a difference in what it’s like to read the current contribution in one’s inner voice bottom-up and top-down—a difference chalked up to sensory phenomenology. Perhaps such linguistic imagery that sensorily ‘points’ to other contributions can be characterized as seeming awareness of abstract relations, whether or not visual imagery could ever be correctly characterized as seeming awareness of abstracta.

Let us grant that sensory phenomenology can make us seem aware of the kinds of abstract properties and relations that are instantiated by or obtain between *concrete* things, such as REDNESS or spatial relations. But this does not show that sensory phenomenology can make us seem aware of the kind of abstract relations that, strictly speaking, obtain between *abstract* entities, such as the propositions or concepts that underlie the imagery. I have argued it is this kind of abstracta that is presented ‘before one’s mind’ and a candidate for *de re* thought, in a way that could supply a phenomenal contrast. But wholly sensory or imagistic states aren’t capable of doing this.[[16]](#footnote-16) This is due to their sensory or imagistic nature: if sensory phenomenology seems to present anything, it only seems to present sensible items that could inhabit or be instantiated in the concrete spatiotemporal world. A survey of our conscious sights, tastes, smells, auditions, bodily sensations, and emotions seems to support this. Even visual imagination seems to depict objects against a colored background, subvocalizations a faint voice ‘*in* your head,’ tastes in your mouth, smells in one’s nose, and anxious feelings in one’s body. My response to the current objection, then, is that if a phenomenal state can be correctly characterized as a seeming awareness of logical or semantic relations, then it must have non-sensory, cognitive phenomenology.

This move doesn’t assume a representationalism according to which content type *determines* phenomenal type: for example abstract content 🡪 cognitive phenomenology. Nor does it assume a phenomenal-intentional theory according to which phenomenal type determines content type. Nor does it assume a naïve realist theory according to which object type constitutes phenomenal type. Rather it requires the less theoretic-committal assumption that phenomenal type *correlates* with content/object type: for example, sensory phenomenology correlates with concrete content/object, and perhaps the kind of abstracta that are instantiated by concrete items. (This need not require a one-to-one matching between particular phenomenology and particular content.) So, there is cognitive phenomenology in seeming awareness of abstract relations that obtain between abstract entities. This is so whether we have additional imagery of previously read contributions as we read the current contribution, or if an overall phenomenal state which includes imagery also ‘points’ to previous contributions.

Some believers in cognitive phenomenology such as Chudnoff (2015b, Ch5) argue that it is often or always instantiated alongside (i) – (v)-type phenomenology. For one, one’s conscious mental life always seems to include sensory phenomenology. Given Furst’s (2017, §2.1) argument, one might worry that sensory phenomenology in a mixed phenomenal state might obscure its cognitive phenomenology. I will just reiterate that the logical connections between contributions seemed easy enough to grasp without requiring additional imagery of previous contributions, and without a particular *focus* on imagery. And ultimately, non-sensory phenomenology is required to seem aware of abstract logical or semantic relations. This ensures the cognitive phenomenology I’ve argued for, though it may come *alongside* sensory phenomenology, isn’t ‘impure’ in Levine’s (2011) sense. Impure cognitive phenomenology is ‘cognitively inflected’ phenomenology that’s present merely as a change in sensory phenomenal properties, or a change in how objects are *sensorily* presented (Levine 2011, 111-12).[[17]](#footnote-17) Moreover, since seeming awareness of a logical relation correlates with the (re)presentation or entertaining of a kind of cognitive content—logical or semantic relations—it is reasonable to think this is a sort of content phenomenology, such that there is something it is like to consciously entertain a (kind of) cognitive content.

**§3.2 Distinctive Proprietary Phenomenology.** So far I’ve concluded there is proprietary cognitive phenomenology in seeming to grasp logical relations that obtain between different contributions to the dialogue, as well as perhaps in seeming to grasp the abstract concepts or propositions that are so related. But is there *distinctive* proprietary phenomenology? That is, in this context, is what it is like to seem to grasp or detect one logical relation between contributions a and b different from what it is like to grasp another logical relation between contributions c and d, or a and c, and so on? It seems to me the answer is yes, if it’s true both that i) one detected different logical relations between the top-down and bottom-up readings, and ii) seeming to detect different logical relations is required to account for the phenomenal contrast between top-down and bottom-up readings. To refresh:

**(A) Don:** Would either the Tuesday or Wednesday times work?

TUESDAY – 7a 8a

WEDNESDAY – 7a, 8a

**(B) Peter:** Sadly, it cannot as he is on a plane. Can I offer you someone else from our

team?

**(C) Don:** Can this happen tomorrow morning actually? It would be with Schruti Anand

for about 15 minutes.

**(D) Peter:** Checking! Thanks, Don! How long would the segment be? Would you be

interviewing?

**(E) Don:** My morning show has been covering the Bush fundraising issue. They’d like

to speak with Jim Nicholson. Tomorrow wouldn’t work but if he could

do it in the next few days that would be great.

(i) is true. For example, on the top-down reading one sees that (B) is a simple apologetic reply to (A), while on the bottom-up reading (B) is an apologetic reply that relates to both (C) *and* (E) regarding how Jim Nicholsoncan’t make it to the meeting tomorrow morning because he is on the plane. Differences in sensory phenomenology won’t explain the complete phenomenal contrast for the many and related reasons given in sections 2 and 3. Suppose it were a matter of *no* seeming awareness of logical relations reading top-down contrasted with the *presence* of such seeming awareness reading bottom-up. Then appeal to a generic proprietary phenomenology of such seeming awareness on the bottom-up reading, which is absent top-down, is sufficient to explain the salient phenomenal contrast. However, one detects (distinct) logical relations on each reading. So, the presence of a generic proprietary phenomenology that is the same on both readings is insufficient to explain the phenomenal contrast. So (ii) is true, too. *Distinctive* proprietary phenomenology, in seeming awareness of *distinct* logical relations, is required.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Conclusion**. Classic phenomenal contrast arguments rely on sentences that are ‘hard to understand’. Sensory crutches are thus more likely to obscure cognitive phenomenology, making such arguments less effective on even neutral parties. My argument circumvents this problem and concludes there is distinctive proprietary cognitive phenomenology in experiences of understanding dialogue.[[19]](#footnote-19)

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2. The list is borrowed from Lormand (1996, 242-3) and Tye & Briggs (2011, 329). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. C.f. Bayne & Montague’s (2011, 1-2) characterization of sensory phenomenology, which includes imagery and moods. For my characterization to include moods, we might take moods to consist in some combination, kinds, or ‘colorings’ of the (i)-(v) type imagery—or, for simplicity, as a kind of persisting emotive (v)-type imagery. I pass over issues about the ontological status of imagery, or whether we are really presented with them. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. E.g. one might think, as Prinz (2011, 178) does, that conscious bodily sensations are a subset of perceptual experiences. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. E.g, Montague (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I follow Chudnoff’s (2015a, 3, 98-99) use of the term ‘glossed phenomenal contrast argument’. Chudnoff’s (2015a, 98) glossed contrast argument includes a premise giving an added gloss of the phenomenal contrast—the phenomenal contrast consists at least partly in a seeming awareness of abstract states of affairs—together with a premise that no possible combination of wholly sensory states can make one seem aware of abstract states of affairs. Similarly, Montague’s (2017, 2052) argument includes the gloss that a phenomenal contrast is essentially linked to the deployment of high-level properties (ibid., §3.1), together with a premise that such concept deployment is essentially linked to irreducibly cognitive phenomenology (ibid., §3.2, 3.3).

   By contrast, Strawson’s (1994, 5-6) case of Jack, a monoglot Englishman, and Jacques, a monoglot Frenchman, listening to the news in French, relies solely on premises about the phenomenal differences between mental states. Similarly, though Horgan & Tienson (2002, 523) *conclusion* is that a phenomenal contrast consists in a difference in intentional content, they do little more than appeal to a phenomenal contrast to argue for this; no supporting gloss is given. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. E.g., Chudnoff’s (2015a, 98-9; 2015b, Ch2). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. An example of change-blindness occurs in ‘mudsplashing’, in which some high-contrast shapes are splattered over a scene, making it difficult to detect changes in other parts of the scene. Selection effects involve paying attention to certain features of a scene which may affect the beliefs formed from perceiving the scene: e.g., in a scene of a black man with pliers, one may pay attention only to the features pliers share with guns, resulting in one’s believing that the man is armed with a gun (Siegel 2013: 240). Another example of a self-confirmation effect is from Shoemaker (1996), in which a fraternity inductee comes to believe he is in pain when an ice cube is pressed against his throat due to an expectation of pain. Fürst suggests something like this may generate false beliefs about the *presence* of cognitive phenomenology, too. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. My objections to Pitt’s version of a machine-gun sentence apply also to Horgan & Tienson’s (2002) ‘Dogs dogs dog dog dogs’. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This is an instance of Carruther & Veillet’s (2011, 52) parsing objection to Strawson’s (1994, 5-7) phenomenal contrast case, between Jack who listens to the news in French when he doesn’t know French, and Jacques who is also listening but knows French. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This assumes that we may havelinguistic imagery (e.g., an ‘inner voice speaking’) even when reading without understanding. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Compare with linguistic intellectual gestalts, such as Chudnoff’s (2013, 182-3) example of an incomprehensible passage made comprehensible after being given a keyword:

    A newspaper is better than a magazine. A seashore is a better place than the street. At ﬁrst it is better to run than to walk. You may have to try several times. It takes some skill but it is easy to learn. Even young children can enjoy it. Once successful, complications are minimal. Birds seldom get too close. Rain, however, soaks in very fast. Too many people doing the same thing can also cause problems. One needs lots of room. If there are no complications it can be very peaceful. A rock will serve as an anchor. If things break loose from it, however, you will not get a second chance.

    Now read this again with the keyword: kite. Reading with the keyword, I found I could not help but have additional visual non-linguistic imagery to aid in understanding. Perhaps this is because I had to effortfully keep the keyword in mind while reading this passage, to convert it into a comprehensible passage. Perhaps, alternatively, it is because one goes from reading a passage with no discernible theme to one with a clear theme (kites); but arguably, the top-down and bottom-up readings of the dialogue have similar themes (see fn.15). Or, most plausibly to my mind, it is due to Chudnoff’s passage describing many salient physical items, which all change in their meaning with the keyword, while mine has fewer, perhaps only one (the airplane). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Compare how Chudnoff (2015a, 100-101) rules out alternative glosses or accounts of the phenomenal contrast between mathematical insight experiences, and experiences with no such insight. Chudnoff positively motivates his gloss—one seems aware of an abstract state of affairs—by introspective comparison between Goldbach’s conjecture and [If a < 1, 2 – 2a > 0]. My corresponding positive motivation for my gloss—that one seems aware of logical or semantic relations—is the naturalness of appealing to seeming awareness of different meaning relations given that we read the same dialogue in two different directions. Further motivation for my gloss includes the inference to the best explanation arguments in sections 2.2 and 2.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. I am neutral about whether the phenomenal contrast in dialogue is accounted for by the kind of holistic phenomenology that Chudnoff (2013) is interested in. This is because it is not clear to me whether holistic phenomenology is accounted for by seeming awareness of abstract relations that obtain between parts and wholes. For I’m not sure whether the relation between parts and wholes is abstract. It seems to me this depends on whether the parts or wholes represented are concrete or abstract. One reason to think the relations in Chudnoff’s examples are concrete is that he appeals to visual experiences of shapes on the page. A reason to think the relations are abstract is that the visual experience he thinks has holistic, cognitive phenomenology is the one that is had as part of an overall intellectual experience of a mathematical proof (2013, 184). However, the proof is a visual proof depicted on a page. So the proof may be thought to be concrete as well. Chudnoff does not argue for this, but if it turns out that some holistic phenomenology can be characterized as seeming awareness of abstract relations between abstract parts and wholes, then my argument may be seen as an elucidation of his argument. That is, my discussion of seeming awareness of abstract relations could then reinforce his conclusion that some holistic phenomenology must be cognitive phenomenology—the kind of holistic phenomenology that involves seeming awareness of abstract relations obtaining between abstract entities. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Anders Nes (2012) uses metaphors describing imagery as being ‘directed at’ or ‘circling around’ a theme or thought. He contrasts this with imagery that isn’t so directed when one doesn’t understand the sentence expressing the theme. Nes (2012) concludes that an account of the phenomenal contrast requires an appeal to the conceptual content of the theme. He remains neutral about whether this phenomenal ‘thematic unity’ consists in proprietary phenomenology, or purely sensory phenomenology. My argument suggests an elucidation of Nes’s metaphors: the phenomenology of thematic unity is explained by seeming awareness of logical relations between (propositions or concepts underlying) the sensory imagery and (propositions or concepts underlying) the theme. This would require cognitive phenomenology.

    Since Nes’s examples contrast the presence and absence of themes, he does not conclude that different themes contribute different phenomenology (2012, 97-8). Arguably, the dialogue bottom-up has one theme—that of scheduling an interview with Jim Nicholson about the Bush fundraising issue—and top-down a different theme—that of working together to plan an opportunity related to Jim. If correct, my example shows that even slightly different themes contribute different proprietary phenomenology. And this is because one seems aware of different logical relations on the top-down and bottom-up readings. Nevertheless, the dialogue’s salient contrast is at least not entirely explained by different phenomenal thematic unity. For the imagery isn’t all ‘directed at’ *one* unifying theme. Instead, one sees how each contribution to the dialogue, as one is reading it, is variously related to *multiple* contributions read before on that reading. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. N.b., Chudnoff’s (2015a, 102; 2015b, 59) premise 3 is a similar move regarding abstract states of affairs in general. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Montague (2016, 180) likewise says ‘impure’ cognitive phenomenology is cognitive phenomenology only in a deflationary sense, and rejects classifying ‘seeing-as’ phenomenology as impure. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. This conclusion is stronger than the best glossed arguments that appeal to an *absence versus presence* of seeming awareness of abstract states of affairs, which don’t conclude the proprietary phenomenology is also distinctive: e.g., Chudnoff (2015a, 98; 2015b, 55).

    And though Montague (2017) doesn’t appeal to seeming awareness of abstracta, her examples contrast the absence versus presence of representing high-level concepts: e.g. merely seeing a tree and seeing a tree *as* a tree. An appeal to a generic proprietary phenomenology of deploying a high-level concept seems sufficient given this kind of contrast case, absent further argumentation.

    Perhaps Montague’s phenomenal contrast argument could be supplemented with an example like the duck-rabbit case, involving representing *different* high-level concepts, to conclude there is *distinctive* proprietary phenomenology. A drawback of this is that the stark contrast in concepts deployed may induce different sensory phenomenology—e.g. different attentional patterns (Carruthers & Veillet, 2011)—to help one see the picture differently, potentially obscuring cognitive phenomenology. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. My argument most clearly supports the view that there is cognitive phenomenology associated with representing the kind of abstract relations or properties that aren’t, strictly speaking, instantiated by concrete things. Now, abstract logical relations may be said to be ‘high-level’ relational properties, unlike ‘low-level’ properties such as spatial or temporal relations, color, and shape. So my conclusion is compatible with (but doesn’t entail) the definition of cognitive phenomenology that Montague (2017, 2058) argues for: as phenomenology associated with representing high-level properties, including natural and functional kinds. These are instantiated by concrete things. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)