

## Veridical Perceptual Seemings

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Abstract: What is the epistemic significance of taking a veridical perceptual experience at face value? To first approximations, the Minimal View says that it is true belief, and the Maximal View says that it is knowledge. I sympathetically explore the prospects of the Maximal View.

When I use the term “seemings” I mean to pick out a determinable of which various familiar experiences are determinate varieties. Examples include perceptual experiences of your environment, experiences of recalling events from your past, and experiences in which you intuit an abstract truth. In each case, there is some way you experience a subject matter as being, some way it seems to you. Here I focus on perceptual experiences.<sup>1</sup>

Readers of this volume will be familiar with dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism about perception. These are views about prima facie justification. Their core idea is that if you have a perceptual experience as of  $p$ , i.e., if it perceptually seems to you as if  $p$ , then you thereby have some prima facie justification for believing that  $p$ . The core idea provokes different debates.<sup>2</sup> Is there any merit to it at all? Supposing there is merit to the core idea, is it correct as stated or should it be revised or supplemented along various dimensions? Supposing all this is sorted out in favor of a specific version of the core idea, what non-epistemic features ground the epistemic significance therein attributed to perceptual experiences?

These debates are in the background of what I want to discuss here. My foreground topic is knowledge. Suppose you have an experience as of your environment being some way. Your experience might or might not be veridical. You might or might not take it at face value and thereby form a belief that your environment is how it seems to be. With respect to prima facie justification these matters can go either way. Suppose, however, your experience is veridical, and you do form a belief based on it by taking it at face value. What is the epistemic upshot? Everyone should agree that the belief you form is true. I’m interested in what else might result. Here are two positions.

The Minimal View: If you believe that  $p$  based on a veridical perceptual experience as of  $p$ , then your belief is thereby prima facie justified and true. Any additional epistemic status derives from additional factors.

The Maximal View: If you believe that  $p$  based on a veridical perceptual experience as of  $p$ , then your belief might thereby amount to knowledge. The belief might be knowledge *just because* it is based on the veridical perceptual experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Some writers distinguish perceptual experiences from something else they call perceptual seemings. There are disagreements about what those are. For some options see the papers in (Tucker 2013). I think drawing the distinction in the first place is ill-advised. For critical discussion and additional references to the literature see (Chudnoff and DiDomenico 2015).

<sup>2</sup> (McCain and Moretti 2021) is a recent book length treatment that weighs in on the issues I mention and that contains references to relevant literature.

Between these extremes there is plenty of room to develop one or another moderate view. Maybe you think belief based on veridical perceptual experience manifests a connection to reality that involves more than accuracy but less than knowledge. In this paper I set such possibilities aside and focus on the Maximal View. I find it attractive and want to explore what can be said in its defense.

Here is the plan. The Maximal View is not popular. In (§1), I explain why by describing the main challenges it faces. One prominent view about perceptual knowledge that is at least akin to the Maximal View is John McDowell's view that a belief might amount to knowledge because it is based on a suitable perceptual state. In (§2), I consider whether a line of thought suggested by McDowell's view of perceptual knowledge contains resources to meet the challenges described in (§1). I express some doubts that the challenges can be fully met this way. In (§3), I explore the prospects of an alternative approach. The approach draws on some ideas from the phenomenological tradition. After promising but tentative results, I conclude in (§4) with some reflections on the motivations for the Maximal View.

## 1. Problems for the Maximal View

I know that a seen pepper is red. The Maximal View implies that my belief might amount to knowledge because it is based on my veridical perceptual experience as of a red pepper.

Problems for the Maximal View derive from the fact that knowledge requires more than true belief based on good evidence. If my evidence is a veridical perceptual experience, then it might guarantee the truth of some beliefs based on it, but that is not enough for them to count as knowledge.<sup>3</sup> One problem is environmental luck:

The market is short on red peppers. They insert the few remaining red peppers in a row of mostly yellow peppers and install red lights where necessary to make it look like a full row of red peppers. I happen to look at one of the genuinely red peppers under normal illumination. What looks to me like a red pepper really is a red pepper. Though it happens to be true, my belief that the seen pepper is red could too easily have been false and does not amount to knowledge.

Alternatively, my environment might be normal, but I might have misleading evidence that it is not. This is the problem of epistemic defeat:

The market is now well stocked with red peppers. I vividly recall being fooled by red lights installed over a row of yellow peppers in the past. I notice a shifty store manager with a bundle of red lights. Without good reason to discount the defeating evidence of memory and circumstance, when I see one of the red peppers, I form the belief that it is

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<sup>3</sup> One might challenge the idea that my basis for belief could be having a veridical perceptual experience. It could be having a perceptual experience, which experience might be veridical, but the identity of my basis does not include its veridicality since I am not appropriately sensitive to this aspect of the experience. I'm setting this issue aside.

red anyway. My belief that the seen pepper is red is irrational and does not amount to knowledge.

These cases strongly suggest that if I know that a seen pepper is red, then my veridical perceptual experience as of a red pepper is at best part of what explains this fact. There must be additional factors ruling out environmental luck and epistemic defeat. If so, then the Maximal View is false.

This reading of the examples, however, depends on implicitly assigning circumscribed veridicality conditions to my perceptual experience as of a red pepper.<sup>4</sup> One idea along these lines is that my experience is veridical just in case there is a red pepper nearby. This would be obviously mistaken about any actual experience. Any actual experience as of a red pepper would represent much else about the pepper and the situation in which it is seen. Let's distinguish between full and partial veridicality. An experience is fully veridical just in case all its veridicality conditions are met, partly veridical if only some of its veridicality conditions are met. A more considered statement of the Maximal View should take this distinction into account as follows:

If you believe that *p* based on a *fully* veridical perceptual experience as of *p*, then your belief might thereby amount to knowledge. The belief might be knowledge just because it is based on the fully veridical perceptual experience.

This statement of the view still isolates one proposition—*p*—as expressing the content of experience informing the belief whose status is in question, but it also makes the epistemic significance it attributes to the experience depend on the satisfaction of veridicality conditions aside from those expressed by *p*.

This dependence on full veridicality is relevant to assessing the challenges to the Maximal View. When I have a perceptual experience as of a red pepper, clearly it is possible for me to *think* to myself that I'm in a normal environment and that I have no defeating evidence. Considering full veridicality conditions, then, maybe I don't need to think these things about my environment and evidence because my perceptual experience already represents them. If so, then the examples do not show that the Maximal View is false since they are not examples of fully veridical perceptual experience. In the next section, I consider a view along these lines.

## 2. Perceptual Self-Consciousness

John McDowell's discussions of perceptual knowledge suggest a way to defend the Maximal View. McDowell addresses the problems of environmental luck and epistemic defeat while defending the idea that a belief might be knowledge because it is based on a suitable state of perceptual consciousness.

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<sup>4</sup> It also depends on assuming that the ground of a fact must be a sufficient condition for that fact to obtain. I explore ways of defending a version of the Maximal View that depend on rejecting this assumption in (Chudnoff 2011, 2013). The aim here is to explore another option that is more in line with mainstream views about grounding (cf. Bliss and Trogden 2021).

To a first approximation, if perceptual consciousness secures knowledge, then that is because it is also a form of self-consciousness, namely consciousness of oneself as enabled to know. Here is one way McDowell puts it:

An experience in which the subject perceives that things are a certain way contains a potential for knowledge that the experience has that rational significance, even if the experience's potential for grounding a judgment that things are that way, which would be knowledgeable, is not actualized (McDowell 2018, pg. 93).

For it to make your belief that p based on it amount to knowledge, a perceptual state must constitute both perceiving a truth-maker for p and veridical consciousness of yourself as enabled to know that p. Veridical consciousness of yourself as enabled to know that p rules out epistemic defeat because it is a form of consciousness incompatible with the presence to mind of defeating considerations. Veridical consciousness of yourself as enabled to know that p also rules out environmental luck because its veridicality is also inconsistent with the presence in the environment of knowledge disabling circumstances. If my experience as of a red pepper puts me in a position to know that a seen pepper is red, for example, then I am in a perceptual state that constitutes perceiving a truth-maker for the proposition that the seen pepper is red and veridical consciousness of myself as enabled to know that the seen pepper is red. I couldn't be in this perceptual state in either of the two cases discussed in the previous section.

Suppose some perceptual states constitute both perceiving truth-makers and veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know. Then plausibly some fully veridical perceptual experiences are such perceptual states. It is not clear what else other than my fully veridical experience as of a red pepper might be the perceptual state that constitutes both perceiving the red pepper and veridical consciousness of myself as enabled to know that the seen pepper is red. Full satisfaction of veridicality conditions with respect to my environment and my epistemic position is just what would make a perceptual experience into the sort of perceptual state McDowell describes. A natural idea for the Maximal View to adopt, then, is that if a veridical perceptual experience makes a belief based on it amount to knowledge, then that is because its full veridicality makes it into the sort of perceptual state McDowell describes. This would circumvent the problems of environmental luck and epistemic defeat. So, if there are such perceptual states, then Maximalists can recruit this fact in defense of their view.

This is a big if. It is one thing for a perceptual state to constitute perceiving a situation in which a nearby pepper is red. That is the sort of job perception is for. It is another thing for a perceptual state to constitute veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know that a seen pepper is red. That job requires cooperation from one's larger environment and one's other mental states, such as thoughts and memories. So, how exactly are perceptual states themselves supposed to constitute both perceiving truth-makers and veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know propositions about them?

The force of the question can be clarified by considering an inadequate answer. It goes as follows. Setting skeptical worries aside, there are cases in which I do self-consciously know that a seen pepper is red. Call these good cases. In good cases, I perceive a truth-maker for the proposition that a particular pepper is red, and I am veridically conscious of myself as enabled to know that the seen pepper is red. So, there are situations in which one both perceives a

truth-maker for p and is veridically conscious of oneself as enabled to know that p. Call the state of being in such a situation a good perceptual state. Good perceptual states are perceptual states that constitute perceiving a truth-maker for p and veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know that p. Fully veridical perceptual seemings are sufficient bases for knowledge because they are good perceptual states.

There are a few reasons why this is an inadequate answer. First, perceptual state is a kind whose extension is not open to stipulation. Calling situations in which one both perceives a truth-maker for p and is veridically conscious of oneself as enabled to know that p “good perceptual states” does not show how they are perceptual states. Second, there should be some internal connection between perceiving a truth-maker for p and veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know that p. Their co-occurrence in some cases is not enough to show that the class of those cases forms a natural kind. On its own this is a probative consideration. But, and thirdly, the worry deepens when considered along with the fact that the perceptual states we are trying to understand are supposed to be bases for ordinary beliefs formed in response to perception, such as the belief that a seen pepper is red. Those bases should be available in the ordinary course of things. For all the view on offers tells us about good perceptual states, however, they are only recognizable by those who know their definitions. Compare: normally sighted adults recognize instances of green; only the initiated recognize instances of grue. Fourth, and finally, the conception of good perceptual state under consideration yields a coordinate notion of veridical perceptual seeming that obscures the distinction between the Minimal View and the Maximal View. If there are no constraints on what is included in the veridicality conditions of a perceptual seeming, then it isn’t clear what debates over whether factors in addition to their satisfaction are required for knowledge could be about.

A potentially better answer to the question of how perceptual consciousness includes epistemically loaded self-consciousness derives from another idea of McDowell’s. In the paper already quoted, he writes:

Knowledge of one’s ground for a perceptually knowledgeable judgment is an act of the *same* capacity for knowledge that is in act in the perceptual knowledge constituted by the judgment; and more generally, the potential for knowing that an experience has a rational significance by virtue of which it can ground perceptually knowledgeable judgments is contained in the same experience by virtue of its being, as such, a partial act of that *same* capacity (McDowell 2018, pg. 95, italics in original).

There is a capacity that is exercised in making perceptual judgments amounting to knowledge. Perceptual consciousness includes consciousness of oneself as enabled to know because it is “a partial act of that *same* capacity.” So, if a perceptual state constitutes both perceiving a truth-maker for p and veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know that p, then that is because it is the partial exercise of a capacity that, when completely exercised, results in making perceptual judgments amounting to knowledge. When I am in a perceptual state that constitutes both seeing a red pepper and veridical consciousness of myself as enabled to know that the seen pepper is red, for example, then that is because my perceptual state is the partial

exercise of a capacity that, when completely exercised, results in my knowing by perception that the seen pepper is red.

Talk of capacities suggests there is an explanation here that is missing from the inadequate view considered above. But this isn't entirely clear to me. What is it for perceptual consciousness to be a partial act of a capacity for knowledge? Here are two options.

Option 1: Being perceptually conscious is part of the process of making a perceptual judgment amounting to knowledge. This is a natural understanding, and it is true, but it doesn't explain how perceptual consciousness intimates its own rational significance—comes to include epistemically loaded self-consciousness. One might reply that making a perceptual judgment amounting to knowledge is, or at least sometimes is, a self-conscious act, so there must be a form of perceptual consciousness that includes epistemically loaded self-consciousness. This reply, however, returns to the inadequate view already rejected. It moves from the co-occurrence of perceiving truth-makers and veridical consciousness of being enabled to know in good cases to the existence of a form of perceptual consciousness that constitutes both.

Option 2: The processes that determine the content of perceptual consciousness include partial exercise of a capacity for knowledge. This suggests the beginnings of a causal explanation. Perceptual consciousness results from exercising various capacities such as capacities for motion detection and shape constancy. Maybe it also results from partial exercise of a capacity for knowledge and this partial exercise of the capacity adds content about rational significance to content about motion and shape and the like. Perhaps an idea along these lines is workable, but to be empirically credible it would have to sharply distinguish how a capacity for knowledge determines perceptual content from how capacities for motion detection and shape constancy determine perceptual content.

Let's take stock. The main idea considered in this section is that a fully veridical perceptual experience as of  $p$  can be a sufficient basis for knowledge that  $p$  because it is a perceptual state that constitutes both perceiving a truth-maker for  $p$  and veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know that  $p$ . Though any ambition to give a non-circular account of knowledge is clearly off the table, this idea raises a non-optional explanatory question. Why does perceptual consciousness include epistemically loaded self-consciousness? I've found it difficult to see through to an adequate answer in terms of the kinds of capacities involved in being perceptually conscious. The next section considers an approach that draws on some ideas in the phenomenological tradition.

### 3. A Phenomenological Explanation

One might ask, from the position of a skeptic, for reasons to think some perceptual seemings include epistemically loaded self-consciousness. I'm concerned with an explanatory question. Suppose there are such perceptual seemings. How are they possible? What might explain their occurrence? Addressing this issue has potential to allay grounds for skepticism, but I set that project aside here.

The phenomenological explanation I consider is that perceptual consciousness and epistemically loaded self-consciousness are tied together by their common grounding in consciousness itself. The nature of consciousness explains their unification in the sorts of perceptual seemings whose full veridicality requires being in a good case. For ideas about

necessary structures in consciousness one naturally looks to the phenomenological tradition.<sup>5,6</sup> There is a diversity of opinion within that tradition, but the ideas I'll draw on are largely common currency. The first two occur with regularity in central texts by the likes of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre. I'll quote from Aron Gurwitsch, who deserves wider recognition.

Briefly put, the first idea is that consciousness necessarily includes self-consciousness. Here is Gurwitsch:

When an object is given in experience, the experiencing subject is conscious of the object and has an awareness of this very consciousness of the object. Perceiving a material thing, listening to a musical note, thinking of a mathematical theorem, etc., we are not only conscious of the thing, the note, the theorem, etc., but are also aware of our perceiving, listening, thinking, etc. (Gurwitsch 2009, pg. 451).

Classic and contemporary developments of this idea belabor not reading more into it than is intended (cf. Gallagher and Zahavi 2021). The main point I want to emphasize is that the awareness Gurwitsch and other phenomenologists have in mind is supposed to be constitutive of phenomenal consciousness. Part of what it is for a mental state to be phenomenally conscious is for its subject to be aware of that state. The relevant form of awareness should be available to any phenomenally conscious subject and operative in every phenomenally conscious state of that subject. So, it should not require higher cognitive capacities, nor should it consist in optional acts of reflection. My seeing a red pepper includes my being aware of my seeing a red pepper just because it is phenomenally conscious, and not because I can or do think about it. That said, it could be that my awareness of my seeing a red pepper has a content that is enriched relative to the content of analogous states in phenomenally conscious lower animals. This point depends on attributing content to the relevant form of awareness, which brings us to the second idea.

The second idea is that the self-consciousness partly constitutive of phenomenal consciousness imposes conditions on what consciousness is like. Perhaps the most general condition, taken up by every major writer in the phenomenological tradition, is temporality. Again, here is Gurwitsch:

Experiencing an act, we are then aware of it prior to reflection and even without grasping the act at all as a temporal phenomenon, as beginning, enduring and growing, and fading. Our awareness of the temporal development of an act is one and the same with our awareness of its being experienced. Thus, in the case of an enduring act, we

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<sup>5</sup> It is a nice question what strength of necessity is involved in the claims I'll be considering. They are not conceptually necessary. Their advocates may have taken them to be metaphysically necessary or grounded in the essences of the basic kinds figuring in them. I suspect meeting the explanatory questions raised by the Maximal View only requires that they hold with the strength of true generics about those kinds, but I set this issue aside here.

<sup>6</sup> Toward the end of this section, I briefly consider whether the ideas drawn from the phenomenological tradition can be integrated with empirically grounded theories of consciousness. There is room for optimism.

are aware of the fact that the act experienced now is the 'same' as that experienced a moment ago. (Gurwitsch 2009, pg. 459).

One way to think about the idea is this. Awareness of something is always awareness of it as being some way, and the awareness we've supposed to be constitutive of phenomenal consciousness is always awareness of it as having one or another temporal structure. So, it is not enough that experiences have temporal structure. The temporal structure must be felt, and the idea is that it is felt in the awareness of experience we've supposed to be constitutive of phenomenal consciousness. The first idea discussed above is that my seeing a red pepper includes my being aware of my seeing a red pepper. The second idea introduced here is that my being aware of my seeing a red pepper is an awareness of my seeing as having a certain temporal structure: maybe it is felt as a new, or as continuing, or as fleeting, etc. These are attributions of different temporal characteristics to my experience. Because they are attributions of characteristics, I take it they imply that my awareness of my seeing a red pepper has representational content. It is this content that might be enriched relative to the content of analogous states in phenomenally conscious lower animals. For example, maybe human experience is felt as temporally structured in ways not available to lower animals.

Like the first two ideas, the third and final idea I'll draw on traces back to Husserl, and in this case, I prefer sticking to the source. Its later influence on the tradition is relatively muted compared to that of the first two ideas. The idea I have in mind is one Husserl discusses under the heading "modalization." In addition to a felt temporal structure, states of consciousness are felt as having a "mode of validity." I'll quote, then comment:

Consciousness, which gives its object in the flesh (originally), does not only have the mode of presentation in the flesh, which distinguishes it from presentifying consciousness and empty consciousness (both of which do not present in the same sense in the flesh); it also has a variable mode of being or a variable mode of validity. Original, normal perception has the primordial mode, "being valid simpliciter"; this is what we call straightforward naïve certainty. The appearing object is there in uncontested and unbroken certainty. What is uncontested points to possible contestations, or even to breaks, precisely to those we have just described, and by becoming bifurcated, they undergo a modification in their mode of validity. In doubt, both presentations in the flesh contending with one another have the same mode of validity, "questionable," and each presentation that is questionable is precisely in dispute and contested by the other (Husserl 2001, pgs. 74 – 75).

Consciousness which gives its object in the flesh is perceptual experience. Its "in the flesh" aspect distinguishes it from imagination ("presentifying" consciousness) and thought ("empty" consciousness). But two instances of in the flesh perceptual consciousness might differ from each other in their "validity." In this passage Husserl contrasts perceptual consciousness that is felt with naïve certainty and perceptual consciousness that is felt with doubt. The doubt he has in mind arises by a conflict in perception over time. Difference in felt validity is what Husserl means by modalization, which in addition to naïve certainty and doubtfulness includes possibility, probability, and certainty again but this time in a non-naïve form due to its resulting



from a resolution of conflicts. The key takeaway for present purposes is that these modes of validity are felt in the same way that temporal structure is felt. They are conditions self-consciousness might impose on consciousness. So, the first phenomenological idea is that my seeing a red pepper includes my being aware of my seeing a red pepper. And the second is that my being aware of my seeing a red pepper is awareness of my seeing as having a temporal structure. The third and final idea is that my being aware of my seeing a red pepper is also awareness of my seeing as having a mode of validity.

Why think that experiences are felt as having a mode of validity in addition to a temporal structure? Husserl presents examples and develops considerations that look like what are now called phenomenal contrast arguments (cf. Siegel 2007). Here is the kind of example he discusses. Consider the following two cases:

Case 1. You seem to see a movie star, approach to get a selfie, find out it is a wax statue, and as you walk away seem to see a famous television actor.

Case 2. You do see a movie star, succeed in getting a selfie, and as you walk away see a famous television actor.

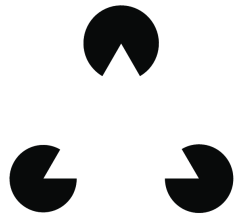
The visual experience as of a famous television actor in Case 1 has a certain temporal structure: it is felt as occurring after a visual experience as of a movie star. According to Husserl, and this seems plausible to me, the visual experience as of a television actor in Case 1 also has a mode of validity: it is felt as put in doubt by the previous visual experience as of a movie star. Husserl draws a further consequence, this time about the visual experience as of a television actor in Case 2. It also has a mode of validity: it is felt with naïve certainty. We might not have attended to this aspect of the experience without first contrasting it with the experience in Case 1, but once we do make the contrast, then, according to Husserl, we should recognize naïve certainty as a characteristic the experience has all along.

The modes of validity Husserl discusses under the heading of certainty—whether naïve or not—are naturally taken to be forms of consciousness of oneself as enabled to know. With this in mind, let's return to questions about explanation. Why do some fully veridical perceptual seemings constitute both perceiving truth-makers and veridical consciousness of oneself as enabled to know propositions about those truth-makers? The answer is that the relevant perceptual seemings are phenomenally conscious, and part of being phenomenally conscious is being felt as having one or another mode of validity. In the good cases in question, the mode of validity is certainty, and so is a mode in which the perceptual seeming includes consciousness of oneself as enabled to know. Since the perceptual seeming is fully veridical, its epistemically loaded veridicality conditions are met, and so it is the sort of perceptual seeming required by the Maximal View.

The phenomenological answer to the explanatory question appears to improve on the inadequate answer rejected in the previous section. The inadequate answer begins with the observation that we sometimes do perceive a truth-maker for  $p$  and are veridically conscious of ourselves as enabled to know that  $p$ , and it defines "good perceptual state" to mean being in a state in which those two conditions are met. Supposing there are such good perceptual states, then full veridicality of a perceptual seeming suffices for being in one of them. The problem

with this answer is that it doesn't show how it isn't just yoking together two accidentally related conditions, one of which is not genuinely perceptual. The phenomenological answer suggests that the nature of the form of consciousness that occurs when one perceives a truth-maker for p in a good case must include consciousness of oneself as enabled to know p. There is supposed to be a necessary connection imposed by the nature of our kind of phenomenal consciousness.

If phenomenal consciousness itself results from a partial act of the capacity for knowledge, then the phenomenological answer to the explanatory question might be a version of the answer that says perceptual experiences intimate their own rational significance by being partial acts of the capacity for knowledge. However that turns out, the phenomenological answer suggests a clear difference in the ways shape and motion on the one hand, and rational significance on the other, come to be perceptually represented. Perceptual experiences represent shape and motion relatively independently of how they relate to other experiences within a total phenomenal state or stream. Perceptual experiences represent their own rational significance largely because of how they relate to other experiences within a total phenomenal state or stream. The difference can be illustrated within perception:



## THE CAT

You see the top part of the triangular configuration as colored black. You also see it as a partly occluded disc. You see it as colored black independently of how you represent the other parts of the configuration. You see it as a partly occluded disc because of how you represent the other parts of the configuration. They are required for producing the illusory triangle which appears to partly occlude the disc. Without them, it would look like a disc with a wedge cut out. On the right, you see two shapes, each consisting of two approximate verticals connected by a horizontal. One looks like an H, the other looks like an A. You see them as two approximate verticals connected by a horizontal independently of how you represent their neighbors. You see one as an H and one as an A because of how you represent their neighbors. If Husserl's modes of validity are genuine aspects of perceptual states, then they are aspects that accrue to perceptual states via their participation in larger states, or streams, of consciousness.

The foregoing suggests that the phenomenological answer to how perceptual seemings come to include epistemically loaded self-consciousness requires additional theoretical backing. For example, it depends on generalizing theories of gestalt effects that occur within perceptual experiences to theories of gestalt-like effects that occur between perceptual experiences and other experiences. Aron Gurwitsch pursues this project in his *Field of Consciousness* (reprinted in Gurwitsch 2009).

The methodology of phenomenology, however, is out of step with the times, and further developments should seek integration with empirically grounded theories of consciousness. There are reasons for optimism on this front. First, empirical work on gestalt effects and holistic representations in perception at different levels of processing and across

different sensory modalities is part of the psychological mainstream (cf. Wagemans 2015). Models developed there provide well worked out starting points for generalization. Second, theories that accord structural organization an explanatory role have already proved fruitful in some extra-perceptual domains, for example in the domain of insight problem solving (cf. Ohlsson 1984, Knoblich et al 1999). Third, and finally, a recent variety of higher order thought theory of consciousness called perceptual reality monitoring suggests something like Husserlian modalization plays a role in making sensory representations phenomenally conscious (cf. Lau 2022), giving reason to think the idea has some neurobiological plausibility. I leave further consideration of the matter to another occasion.

#### 4. Why Bother?

According to the Maximal View, a belief that *p* might amount to knowledge that *p* because it is based on a fully veridical perceptual experience as of *p*.

Defending the Maximal View depends on assigning veridicality conditions to perceptual experiences that rule out environmental luck and epistemic defeat. Grounds for such an assignment can be found in ideas about perceptual phenomenology with some introspective plausibility, some historical precedent, and some empirical promise, but that lie well outside the mainstream of analytic epistemology. What motivation is there for pursuing this line of thought?

The basic observation motivating the Maximal View is that ordinary knowledge in ordinary circumstances can consist in simply taking the world as it presents itself for granted. You do not need to do anything special to know about your ordinary environment, you just need to take your perceptual experiences at face value. One might aim to accommodate the observation by saying that the *basis* for belief in such cases is fully veridical perception while denying that it is a belief's *being so based* that makes it amount to knowledge. The basis is one factor, the conditions making the belief amount to knowledge include additional factors. This would imply that people generally don't know how they know what they do know, that "I see a red pepper right there," does not fully answer the question, "How do you know the store has red peppers?" This might be a defensible view, but it is just as dependent on theoretical commitments as the Maximal View. To my mind, pursuing the theoretical commitments of the Maximal View is a worthwhile endeavor. It demands fuller exploration of the phenomenology of seemings. This can shed light on their suitability to playing epistemic roles aside from the one articulated in the Maximal View. For example, even if you think they are just prima facie justifiers, you will want some conception of what they are like that makes sense of this fact, and deflationary conceptions on which they are inclinations to believe or sui generis somethings other than sensations fall flat.

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